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I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK at ASEAN Regional Forum

Dong-a Ilbo ("NORTH KOREA WILL ATTEND ASEAN FORUM", 2006-07-24) reported that the DPRK's Foreign Minister Paek Nam Sun will attend the ASEAN Regional Forum to be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, the DPRK Embassy in Malaysia announced yesterday. According to the embassy, Paek will arrive in Kuala Lumpur on July 27, the first day of the forum. However, no detail was revealed regarding Paek's schedule during the meeting.

[\(return to top\)](#) Agence France-Presse ("US WELCOMES SIX-PARTY NORTH KOREA TALKS AT ASEAN MEETING", 2006-07-24) reported that the US welcomed the prospect of six-party talks on the DPRK's nuclear weapons program on the sidelines of an ASEAN meeting next week, as momentum appeared to gather for seizing the opportunity. Japan and the PRC agreed Friday that all six nations party to the talks should meet at the regional forum in Kuala Lumpur, and the PRC indicated it opposed holding talks without Pyongyang, Japan's Kyodo news agency said. The US and the ROK had shown interest in holding five-way talks if the DPRK refused to return to the negotiating table. [\(return to top\)](#) China Post ("NORTH KOREA UNWILLING TO HOLD SIX-PARTY TALKS AT ASEAN CONFERENCE", 2006-07-24) reported that the DPRK has said it is unwilling to hold six-party nuclear talks on the sidelines of a regional security conference in Malaysia this week, but the country will meet bilaterally with the ROK, Malaysia's foreign minister said Monday. "I know that the South Korean (foreign minister) would be meeting his counterpart in North Korea," Malaysian Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar told reporters. [\(return to top\)](#)

2. DPRK on Missile Tests

Yonhap ("NORTH KOREA SAYS ITS MISSILE TESTS FOLLOWED FULL SAFETY CONFIRMATION", 2006-07-24) reported that the DPRK claimed Monday that it conducted full safety checks to ensure no aircraft, ships or civilians were put in danger before test-firing a volley of missiles early this month. Pyongyang fired seven ballistic missiles on July 5, including a long-range Taepodong 2 that was believed capable of reaching the US, in defiance of international warnings.

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3. US Sanctions on DPRK

United Press International ("U.S. PREPS NEW MEASURES FOR NORTH KOREA", 2006-07-24) reported that the US is considering a new package of economic and other sanctions against the DPRK, a top diplomat told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Thursday. Ambassador Chris Hill, the assistant secretary of state in the bureau of East Asian and Pacific affairs, would not say what those measures were, but told the committee the Bush administration has not backed off its hardline policy on the DPRK -- no bilateral talks with Pyongyang, and no concessions until the DPRK gives up its nuclear program and implements a complete moratorium on missile tests. There will be no inducements, Hill told reporters after the hearing.

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4. Japanese Sanctions on DPRK

Kyodo ("LDP TEAM TO COMPILE OUTLINE OF FINANCIAL SANCTIONS ON N. KOREA", 2006-0-24) reported that a team of Japan's governing Liberal Democratic Party agreed Monday to compile

by next Monday an outline of a bill to impose financial sanctions on the DPRK, lawmakers in the team said. The outline is expected to include a measure in which the government can ban financial institutions from conducting transactions with entities suspected of laundering money for the DPRK.

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5. DPRK Counterfeiting Issue

Chosun Ilbo ("BANK OF CHINA FREEZES N.KOREAN ACCOUNTS", 2006-07-24) reported that the Bank of China has frozen the DPRKs accounts at a branch in Macau due to Pyongyang's counterfeiting and money laundering activities, it emerged Monday.

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6. DPRK Flood Damage

Agence France-Presse ("60,000 HOMELESS AFTER FLOODS IN NORTH KOREA: UN", 2006-07-24) reported that an estimated 60,000 DPR Koreans were left homeless and 30,000 hectares (74,100 acres) of farmland destroyed in recent flooding, according to a UN relief agency. The UN World Food Program (WFP) said the worst-hit area last week was South Pyongan province in the central DPRK.

[\(return to top\)](#) Associated Press ("U.N.: N. KOREA CROP LOSSES POSE DANGER", 2006-07-24) reported that heavy rains in the DPRK have destroyed tens of thousands of acres of crops, threatening to worsen the impoverished country's food shortage, a UN agency said Monday. Recent flooding that damaged about 74,000 acres of arable land could lead to the loss of 100,000 metric tons of food, according to a World Food Program report. The estimated loss equals about 10 percent of the gap in the country's annual food supply, Paul Risely, WFP's Asia spokesman. [\(return to top\)](#)

7. Kaesong Electricity Supply

Chosun Ilbo ("KEPCO SHELVES N.KOREA TRANSMITTER PROJECT", 2006-07-24) reported that state-run electricity provider KEPCO has indefinitely postponed a ground-breaking ceremony for a transmission tower in the Kaesong Industrial Park, the inter-Korean joint venture in the DPRK. KEPCO CEO Han Joon-ho announced the decision Monday, ascribing it to icy inter-Korean relations after the DPRK's recent missile launches.

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8. Shinzo Abe on Kim Jong-il

Kyodo ("ABE DESCRIBES N. KOREA'S KIM JONG IL AS 'RATIONAL' LEADER", 2006-07-24) reported that Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe, in a speech July 23 in Yokohama, described DPRK leader Kim Jong Il as having a "rational" way of thinking and hinted at the possibility of being able to resolve the abduction issue with him.

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9. Kim Jong-il's Marital Status

Yonhap ("N. KOREAN LEADER KIM HAS NEW WIFE: SOURCES", 2006-07-24) reported that the

DPRK's reclusive leader Kim Jong-il has taken his former private secretary as his new wife, after his purported former wife died of cancer two years ago, reliable sources said Sunday. The marital status of Kim, who turned 64 in February this year, has never been officially confirmed, but it has been widely believed three women have been treated as his wives.

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10. US-ROK Security Alliance

Chosun Ilbo ("TO SOON TO DISSOLVE COMBINED COMMAND: USFK CHIEF", 2006-07-24) reported that the Commander of US Forces Korea Gen. Burwell Bell said Sunday that the allies should maintain the ROK-US Combined Forces Command, which is under his control, until the ROK has built an independent combat command. The Stars and Stripes quoted Bell as reiterating the key issue was outlining how the USFK should back up an independent ROK command that would "bear the principal war-fighting burden." "We're not even close to defining all that," he added.

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11. US-ROK Trade Relations

Yonhap News ("SEOUL VOWS NOT TO YIELD TO WASHINGTON OVER 'KAESONG ISSUE' IN FTA TALKS", 2006-07-24) reported that the ROK government will never compromise on the issue of industrial goods produced in the DPRK's Kaesong complex being considered as ROK-made in the ongoing free trade agreement (FTA) talks with the US, a top secretary to ROK President Roh Moo-hyun said.

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12. US-Japan Missile Defense Cooperation

The Associated Press ("JAPAN, U.S. TO DEPLOY MISSILE INTERCEPTORS ", 2006-07-24) reported that Japan and the US announced a plan to deploy advanced Patriot interceptor missiles at American bases on southern Okinawa island. The US government will have Patriot Advanced Capability-3 missiles operational by the end of the year and post 600 more troops on Okinawa, the Foreign Ministry said.

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13. Japan Defense Forces

Agence France-Presse ("PACIFIST JAPAN CANNOT 'SIT STILL' IF ATTACKED: DEFENSE CHIEF ", 2006-07-24) reported that Japan should not "sit still and die" if attacked, the defense chief said, in the latest call for the pacifist nation to boost its military after the DPRK's missile tests. Defense Agency chief Fukushima Nukaga, who recently suggested that Japan should consider "a limited assault capability," said Japan needed full discussions on ways to deal with threats.

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14. Yasukuni Shrine Issue

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN'S ABE DEFENDS WAR SHRINE DESPITE GROWING OPPOSITION",

2006-07-24) reported that Shinzo Abe has pledged never to waver in support for visit to a controversial war shrine, despite polls showing growing opposition to leaders' visits. Abe refused to say whether he would again visit the Yasukuni shrine. "I have paid homage at the Yasukuni Shrine to pray that the souls of those who fought and perished for the country may rest in peace and to show my deepest respect to them," Abe told reporters.

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15. Japan Elections

Reuters ("JAPAN'S ABE REINFORCES LEAD IN RACE TO BE NEXT PM ", 2006-07-24) reported that nearly two months before ballots are cast, Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe -- a proponent of an assertive security policy and traditional values -- looks unbeatable in the race to be Japan's next leader. A decision not to run by his closest rival, veteran lawmaker Yasuo Fukuda -- an advocate of better ties with Beijing and Seoul -- has firmed up Abe's chances of victory, analysts said.

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16. PRC Middle East Diplomacy

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA IN FREE TRADE TALKS WITH GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL", 2006-07-24) reported that the PRC and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have completed a round of talks on a free trade agreement as part of Beijing's efforts to secure long-term supplies of oil. PRC trade officials held talks with council members Saudia Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates in the eastern province of Zhejiang from July 19-22, the Beijing Morning Post reported.

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17. PRC Lhasa Railway

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA TO EXTEND TIBETAN RAIL LINK TO SOUTHERN GUANGZHOU", 2006-07-24) reported that the PRC's southern boomtown of Guangzhou will begin offering rail services to Lhasa following this month's opening of the historic railway to the Tibetan capital. Guangzhou will join the cities of Beijing, Chengdu, Chongqing, Lanzhou and Xining in offering direct rail services to the "roof of the world", Xinhua news agency reported.

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18. PRC Foreign Investment Regulations

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA EASES CAPITAL CONTROLS ON OVERSEAS INVESTMENT", 2006-07-24) reported that the PRC's foreign exchange authority has granted 4.8 billion dollars in overseas investment quotas as part of efforts to allow the greater convertibility of the yuan. The approval marked the first time that the State Administration of Foreign Exchange (SAFE) has allowed state commercial banks to invest funds in overseas investment projects on behalf of their clients, Xinhua news agency said.

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19. PRC Rural Unrest

The New York Times ("SCUFFLES IN CHINA AS TRIAL OF PEASANTS' RIGHTS ADVOCATE IS POSTPONED", 2006-07-24) reported that PRC officials postponed the criminal trial of a peasants' rights advocate as his supporters gathered in large numbers to protest what they say is a politically motivated prosecution. Some 200 people gathered outside a courthouse in Yinan County, Shandong Province, where Chen Guangcheng, who is blind and taught himself law, had been scheduled to go on trial on charges of destroying property and blocking traffic.

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