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1. ROK on Six Party Talks

The Korea Times ("SEOUL URGES NK TO RESUME NUCLEAR TALKS", 2005-12-14) reported that the ROK called on the DPRK to return to the six party talks as early as possible. In a keynote speech at the first plenary session of the inter-Korean Summit, Unification Minister Chung Dong-young, the ROK chief delegate, told his DPRK counterpart Kwon Ho-ung that holding onto the agreements in the Sept. 19 joint statement would be the ``most effective method'' to achieve common benefits for the two Koreas.

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2. PRC on DPRK Nuclear Program

The Korea Times ("ENVOY URGES US-NK TRUST-BUILDING", 2005-12-14) reported that the ROK and the PRC are taking a very coordinated approach towards the DPRK nuclear crisis, and trust-building between Pyongyang and Washington is a key to resolving the issue, the PRC ambassador to Seoul said Wednesday. Ning Fukui also said the nuclear issue is gaining urgency but it would take some time to deal with the crisis because of the sophisticated characteristics of the six party talks.

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3. Inter-Korean Summit

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREA WANTS BAN ON KIM IL-SUNG TOMB VISITS LIFTED", 2005-12-14) reported that the DPRK has permitted the official ROK delegations to visit the Kumsusan Memorial Palace, where former leader Kim Il-sung lies embalmed. The call came at the 17th inter-Korean ministerial talks in Jeju Island on Wednesday. Kim Chon-sik, the ROK delegation's spokesman, said the DPRK in a keynote speech called for an end to a de-facto ROK ban on official visits to some politically sensitive places in the DPRK. The DPRK complained Seoul was not responding in kind after a DPRK delegation visited Seoul's National Cemetery during Independence Day celebrations this year, he said.

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4. ROK on DPRK Counterfitting

Chosun Ilbo ("SEOUL 'BELIEVES U.S. CHARGES AGAINST N.KOREA'", 2005-12-14) reported that the ROK government agrees with the US in strongly suspecting the DPRK of counterfeiting dollars, officials said Wednesday. ROK officials have publicly said the unilateral claim of one side does not confirm the allegation, which sounds like a demand for more concrete evidence. However, a Foreign Ministry official on Wednesday said Washington's claim was reliable but Seoul had been sitting on the fence out of concern that Pyongyang could bolt from the negotiating table if it sees Seoul taking sides with the US.

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5. US on DPRK Countefitting

Donga Ilbo ("CRIME NETS NORTH \$500 MILLION PER YEAR ", 2005-12-13) reported that the Los Angeles Times quoted a US government official as saying, "North Korea earns as much as \$500 million (about 500 billion won) annually from criminal activities such as counterfeiting currency, producing knock-off pharmaceuticals, and selling illicit weapons." However, the newspaper did not mention how it came up with the \$500 million figure.

[\(return to top\)](#) The Associated Press ("BANKS ARE WARNED ON NORTH KOREA ", 2005-12-14) reported that the Bush administration has issued a warning to US banks that the DPRK may try to use them to carry out illicit activities. The advisory from the Treasury Department's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network represents the latest effort by the US to financially clamp down on the DPRK. "U.S. financial institutions should take reasonable steps to guard against the abuse of their financial services by North Korea, which may be seeking to establish new or exploit existing account relationships for the purpose of conducting illicit activities," according to the advisory, which was dated Tuesday. [\(return to top\)](#)

6. US on DPRK Human Rights

Agence France Presse ("BUSH TO MEET WITH NORTH KOREA RIGHTS ENVOY", 2005-12-14) reported that according to the White House, US President Bush was to have his first formal meeting with his envoy for human rights in the DPRK, Jay Lefkowitz, to chart the way forward on the issue, the White House said. "This will be an opportunity to talk about what is a high priority for the president, which is the human rights of those who are being denied their rights in North Korea," Bush spokesman Scott McClellan told reporters.

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7. DPRK on US Human Rights

Reuters ("EU MUST ACT AGAINST U.S. ON RIGHTS - NORTH KOREA", 2005-12-14) reported that the DPRK accused the EU for being soft on the US over its human rights record and urged the bloc to put forward a UN resolution condemning US abuses.

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8. DPRK on US Ambassador Vershbow

Reuters ("N.KOREA CALLS US ENVOY "WORST AMBASSADOR IN HISTORY"", 2005-12-14) reported that the DPRK said the US ambassador to Seoul, who labeled Pyongyang "a criminal regime", was the worst ambassador in history and should be recalled, its official media reported on Wednesday. "Ambassador Vershbow is the most bitchy and malignant ambassador in history," said a commentary in the state-run Minju Joson newspaper. "We doubt whether Ambassador Vershbow has enough knowledge about the DPRK to make such comments," the commentary said, according to the KCNA.

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9. DPRK Abductees

The Bangkok Post ("MALAYSIAN MAY HAVE BEEN ABDUCTED BY NORTH KOREA", 2005-12-14) reported that a Malaysian who went missing 27 years ago may be alive and living in the DPRK, press reports in Kuala Lumpur said this morning. Media said American army deserter Charles Jenkins, who is currently living in Japan and has identified a Thai woman who may have been abducted from Macau, confirmed he had seen Malaysian Yeng Yoke Fun in Pyongyang 25 years ago and is confident that she is still alive today.

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10. ROK Teachers and Students to Visit DPRK

Joongang Ilbo ("TEACHERS, PUPILS GO NORTH FOR FREE", 2005-12-14) reported that the ROK government said it had allocated 4.9 billion won (\$4.8 million) to pay all or most of the cost of trips, mainly by teachers and students, to the Mount Kumgang resort in the DPRK. The Ministry of Unification and Hyundai Asan, the operator of the tours, announced the plan yesterday. About 14,000 teachers in the nation's elementary, middle and high schools and 2,000 high school students are expected to take advantage of the offer, the ministry and Hyundai said.

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11. US Nuclear Development

Wall Street Journal ("COLD WAR ECHO: U.S. WEIGHS WHETHER TO BUILD SOME NEW NUCLEAR WARHEADS IDEA IS TO REPLACE AGING ONES WITH MORE RELIABLE TYPE", 2005-12-14) reported that some 15 years after the Cold War, and at a time when the US is demanding others restrain their nuclear ambitions, the Bush administration has been pressing Congress to fund research into a new generation of nuclear weapons. Lawmakers have twice turned down proposals to design a new nuclear "bunker-buster" bomb, to blow up buried caches of weapons. But last month, with little debate, Congress approved \$25 million for research into what is supposed to be a sturdier, more reliable warhead than those designed during the Cold War. If the work is successful, the US could someday spend billions of dollars replacing much of the current arsenal.

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12. Yasukuni Shrine Issue

Reuters ("EAST ASIA SUMMIT ENDS WITH JAPAN-CHINA HANDSHAKE", 2005-12-14) reported that East Asia's first summit of leaders ended on Wednesday with an agreement to hold annual talks on strategic issues such as trade and security -- and a rare handshake between the leaders of Japan and the PRC. On Wen's handshake with Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, PRC foreign ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao said: "Everybody saw clearly what happened at the meeting place, but China's attitude toward the question of history between China and Japan has not changed." Koizumi told reporters he did not understand the criticism.

[\(return to top\)](#) Kyodo ("KOIZUMI AGAIN BLAMES CHINA, S. KOREA FOR LACK OF SUMMIT TALKS", 2005-12-14) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi again put the blame on the PRC and ROK on Wednesday for refusing to hold a bilateral or trilateral summit with him because of his visits to the war-linked Yasukuni Shrine. The Japanese leader reiterated that he is ready to meet "anytime" with his PRC and ROK counterparts, but added, "I don't know what China and South Korea think about that." [\(return to top\)](#)

13. Asian Regional Organization

Washington Post ("ASIAN LEADERS AGREE TO NEW 16-NATION ASSOCIATION", 2005-12-14) reported that Asian leaders agreed Wednesday to create a new, loosely united regional group, including India and Australia, to work on combating Asia's economic, security and political problems. The 16-nation association, which will hold annual summit conferences, significantly widened the traditional circle of cooperation among Asian nations represented by the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and a sister group, ASEAN Plus Three, including the PRC, Japan and the ROK.

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14. Hong Kong WTO Meeting

Washington Post ("PROTESTERS MARCH AS WTO SESSION OPENS", 2005-12-14) reported that thousands of demonstrators from more than a dozen countries marched through Hong Kong on Tuesday, some scuffling with police and others diving into the city's harbor in protest, as a World Trade Organization meeting opened with wealthy and developing nations deadlocked in talks over a global trade accord. But on the opening day of the WTO's biennial ministerial meeting, meant to lay the groundwork for a global treaty by the end of 2006 that would cut trade barriers, police prevented the kind of violence that disrupted the 1999 meeting in Seattle and the 2003 event in Cancun, Mexico.

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15. Kazakhstan - PRC Pipeline

The Associated Press ("KAZAKHSTAN SET TO OPEN PIPELINE TO CHINA ", 2005-12-14) reported that Kazakhstan is due to open the valves Thursday on a major pipeline carrying oil to fuel-hungry PRC, establishing the energy-rich former Soviet republic's first oil export route that bypasses Russia. For the vast Central Asian nation, which is expected to become one of the world's largest oil exporters, the 625-mile pipeline opens a huge market. It is designed to carry 140 million barrels of oil annually to the PRC.

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16. PRC Bird Flu

Agence France Presse ("CHINA CONFIDENT OF CONTAINING BIRD FLU AFTER 15 DAYS WITHOUT OUTBREAK ", 2005-12-14) reported that the PRC is completely confident of being able to contain the bird flu epidemic after recording 15 consecutive days without a new outbreak, the nation's chief veterinary officer said. "In the face of a very complicated epidemic situation, we are fully capable of effectively containing the spread of bird flu in China," Jia Youling told a briefing in Beijing on Wednesday. "We have full confidence and strong determination."

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17. PRC on Village Shooting

The New York Times ("BEIJING CASTS NET OF SILENCE OVER PROTEST", 2005-12-14) reported

that one week after the police violently suppressed a demonstration against the construction of a power plant in the PRC, leaving as many as 20 people dead, an overwhelming majority of the PRC public still knows nothing of the event. In the wake of the biggest use of armed force against civilians since the Tiananmen massacre in 1989, PRC officials have used a variety of techniques - from barring reports in most newspapers outside the immediate region to banning place names and other keywords associated with the event from major Internet search engines, like Google - to prevent news of the deaths from spreading.

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18. PRC Graft Trial

The Los Angeles Times ("EX-CABINET MINISTER ON TRIAL IN BRIBERY CASE", 2005-12-14) reported that the former head of the PRC's powerful Land and Resources Ministry went on trial for taking bribes, in the country's highest-level graft scandal since 2001. Tian Fengshan was fired two years ago for discipline violations, the government said at the time. He is accused of accepting more than \$500,000 in bribes between 1995 and 2003, the official New China News Agency said.

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19. PRC Judicial Issues

The New York Times ("LEGAL GADFLY BITES HARD, AND BEIJING SLAPS HIM", 2005-12-14) reported that the Beijing Judicial Bureau convened a hearing on its decree that one of the PRC's best-known law firms must shut down for a year because it failed to file a change of address form when it moved offices. Gao Zhisheng, the firm's founder and star litigator, travels the country filing lawsuits over corruption, land seizures, police abuses and religious freedom. His opponent is usually the same: the ruling Communist Party. Now, the party has told him to cease and desist. The order to suspend his firm's operating license was expanded last week to include his personal permit to practice law.

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20. PRC Space Program

The Associated Press ("CHINA TO START MANNED LUNAR PROGRAM ", 2005-12-14) reported that the PRC will begin an effort to send astronauts to the moon in about 2017, with a landing some time after that, official media said Wednesday, citing a senior official of the lunar probe program. The Xinhua News Agency quoted Ouyang Ziyuan, the lunar program's chief scientist, as saying unmanned lunar probes will be ramped up in three stages until about 2017, when the manned program will begin.

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