

North Korea in 2012

○ Summary

📅 Reporting period: 2012.1.1~11.31

📍 Reporting regions: Three northeastern provinces of China, North Korean urban areas

🗨️ Interview subjects: >200 North Korean citizens, ethnic Chinese traders and defectors

🗨️ Interviewing method: 1:1 interview

Daily NK was at the forefront of reporting on North Korea in 2012, a time of change. The rise of a new leader in Kim Jong Eun raised hopes of change, and many keen observers from around the world looked to Daily NK for information.

What was achieved in the calendar year was done with the help of a great many sources inside North Korea and special correspondents based across the Sino-North Korean border in China. As is well known, however, there are not inconsiderable difficulties associated with this work. In particular, the North Korean government is extremely reluctant to allow any information to reach the outside world, meaning that caution and discretion are essential for anyone wishing to circumvent state controls. By diligently collecting and disseminating the voices of defectors and the North Korean people, Daily NK did that.

1. The Kim Jong Eun Era

In December 2011, the Kim Jong Il era finally drew to a close and the third generation succession of Kim Jong Eun became an established fact. Thereafter, the younger Kim became First Secretary of the Chosun Workers' Party, Supreme Commander of the Chosun People's Army and First Chairman of the National Defense Commission in quick succession, firmly seizing the institutional reins of power.

Simultaneously, the North Korean propaganda machine went into overdrive, lauding the new leader in an effort to establish his right to rule. He was celebrated as the rightful successor to Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il in a multitude of ways, while lectures were convened to assert and reassert the greatness of Kim Jong Il, thus implicitly declaring the unique legitimacy of the Kim family's self-proclaimed "Mt. Baekdu bloodline."

In order to assert the "successful" achievement of one long-standing state goal, the construction of a "strong and prosperous state" by 2012, the year when Kim Il Sung would have celebrated his 100th birthday, the authorities invested heavily in state projects including the remodeling of many areas of Pyongyang and the construction of prominent apartment buildings. To provide manpower and funds for these expensive undertakings, the government mobilized both the students of Pyongyang and the Chosun People's Army, while simultaneously extracting non-tax payments from the broader populace.

An 85-minute documentary film idolizing Kim Jong Eun's mother Koh Young Hee was produced and distributed, establishing her status as first lady during much of Kim Jong Il's lifetime. The authorities also tried to overcome one of Kim Jong Eun's major weak points, his age, by publicizing the presence of a wife, Ri Sol Joo. Images of the young Ri accompanying Kim Jong Eun as he performed his public activities generated worldwide interest.

The general conclusion of the North Korean population seems to be that while Kim is certainly very young and rather too inexperienced to rule well, as the son of Kim Jong Il he must be given a chance to prove himself.

2. Social Controls

In January, North Korea started stepping up efforts to limit a number of cross-border activities: defection, inflows and outflows of information, and smuggling. One way they sought to achieve this was by cracking down on cell phone usage. In the months following the death of Kim Jong Il they broadened the range and use of signal interference equipment, added CCTV cameras along key pathways in and out of the country, and extended existing areas of barbed wire fencing. China was complicit in these endeavors, partly to try and stop the growing

problem of violent crime committed against its citizens by renegade members of the North Korean military. To this end, electrified barbed wire fencing was established on the Chinese side of the border. The result is that it is now more difficult to cross the border, whether to alleviate family economic difficulties or defect.

Aside from additional measures targeting border security, the level of broader civilian regulation also increased in 2012. Anything that could aid the circulation of unwanted information was a target, from DVDs to illicit cell phones. The Party Propaganda and Agitation Department and National Security Agency were, and still are, working in tandem to address the issue.

3. Economy

Predictably, North Korea's chronic economic and food security shortcomings have persisted on into the Kim Jong Eun era, and as such constitute an ongoing threat to the system itself. As a consequence, one of the first tests of the new regime lay in its capacity to solve the country's economic problems, and new economic management measures did indeed emerge in the middle of the year. Known as the *6.28 Policy* and following closely in the footsteps of similar measures enacted in July 2002, the policy centered on both revising the management of cooperative farms and making payments to producers that better reflect market figures. On the prima facie evidence available, the policy appeared to show a modest, but nevertheless present, willingness to free up the latent creativity of individual work units by the application of incentives.

However, while on the one hand the policy was said to show the reformist side of new leader Kim Jong Eun, on the other there were those who saw little to differentiate it from existing economic policy, and presumed from the beginning that it would yield few results. For their part, the broad mass of North Korean civilians certainly harbored tentative hopes and expectations; however, more than any other group it is they who still remember the failed economic experiments of the past, most recently in 2009, and this cynicism shone through repeatedly in comments about its chances of success.

The year also saw serious natural impediments to progress: a period of drought followed by storms and flooding. This undermined the agricultural growing season, not least since it was parts of the main grain-producing region of Hwanghae Province that bore the brunt of both phenomena, as storms travelled up the west coast of the Korean peninsula before moving east across rice-growing counties.

Experts immediately began to fear that whatever farming reforms had been planned would be delayed as a result of the damage; whether this was the case or not, the reforms have not been widely implemented. The only verifiable result of the policy uncertainty engendered by this has been increasing market price inflation and the decreasing value of the North Korean Won against the Chinese Renminbi. Although market economic conditions improved slightly in the fourth quarter, prices are still high and the North Korean Won continues to hemorrhage value.

4. Ordinary Lives

The influence of South Korean popular culture continued to be felt in North Korea during 2012, with people expressing a clear preference for South Korean films and TV dramas, cosmetics, clothing and hairstyles. Chinese products continued to be the economical choice for those with one eye on price, but in the nascent middle class it is nevertheless easy to find people who will pay through the nose for South Korean versions of ordinary daily necessities such as soaps and toothbrushes. South Korean products enter the country through smugglers, but because much of the latent demand emanates from Chosun Workers' Party cadres themselves (not to mention their complicity in financing the smuggling networks), the authorities have not been able to take control of the problem.

In September, an extraordinary session of the Supreme People's Assembly was convened to enact changes to the country's education system. This brought about a number of interesting moves. Primarily, they decided to move from an eleven-year period of mandatory education to twelve years, and this made the recruitment of additional teachers a pressing task. As a result, rules governing the qualifications needed by teachers were

relaxed, and even persons without a teaching degree from a state institution became eligible to enter the classroom.

In addition, a new system of lower- and upper-high schools was introduced, replacing the existing six-year “senior middle school” system with three years of universal middle school followed by three years of either vocational or academic high school. North Korean residents fear that this nominally meritocratic policy step will be subverted to the cause of regime loyalty, with only the most loyal elements entering the academic stream.

If successfully implemented, the extended period of mandatory education is certain to affect many of the activities that follow a student’s compulsory education: the timing of entry into university, the timing of entry into military service, and the timing of dispatch to workplaces. The need to maintain military manpower levels is sure to mean extended service for a whole generation of those already serving.

Yet despite the evident upheaval, real questions remain about whether or not changing the character of the North Korean education system changes can solve the country’s chronic economic shortcomings, or whether it will merely create social tension for little or no reward.

5. Military

Nowhere has domestic tension been higher in 2012 than in the ranks of the military. The Kim Jong Eun regime moved fast to purge and replace a number of core military cadres during the year, presumably in order to weed out potential sources of dissent and install Kim Jong Eun loyalists in key posts. Most famously, in the first half of the year it was former Chief-of-Staff Ri Yong Ho’s who was purged, but this was just the tip of the iceberg. There were also large-scale military exercises in response to joint US-South Korean exercises, and the regime incited a number of massive protests against the leaders of both the United States and South Korea. The North also declared repeated states of emergency in order to forge and meld the public mood.

The military faced a number of other problems. Notably, in order to maintain the annual rate of manpower recruitment the authorities were compelled to reduce the minimum height for new recruits to just 142cm. Recruits kept leaking out of the military as well: stories emerged regularly during the warmer months of soldiers defecting across both the Sino-North Korean and inter-Korean borders, on more than one occasion after killing superior officers, fellow border guards, or both. On at least one occasion a defecting soldier was from an elite unit of the most loyal men convened to guard the railways and roads that splice through the DMZ, most notably en route to the Kaesong Industrial Complex.

○ The Kim Jong Eun Era in the Words of the North Korean People

January

- North Pyongan Province (1.9): North Korea recalls all 2012 calendars because they do not specify the date of Kim Jong Il's death (December 17th), and sets about producing new ones.

Source: "An order was handed down through Party organs, enterprises and people's units calling for the return of those calendars which had been distributed. Calendars stored by traders who were planning to go and distribute them outside of North Korea are also being recalled."

- Pyongyang (1.15): A source exclusively reveals that the authorities plan to honour Kim Jong Il with the title 'Grand Marshal' on February 16, which would have been the late leader's 70th birthday. The claim turns out to be true, and Kim's rank is duly increased.

Source: "The Ministry of the People's Armed Forces ordered each division to submit a request that the 70th anniversary of comrade Kim Jong Il's birth be welcomed by raising him to the rank of Grand Marshal. They were ordered to submit the proposals by February 5."

- Ethnic Chinese trader (1.19): The North Korean authorities recall some of the calendars that were distributed prior to the death of Kim Jong Il in December (as reported by Daily NK on January 9), but elect to edit the remaining calendars. This includes additional slogans and a new schedule of major events in December. The compromise policy is believed to have been due to the projected cost of a full calendar recall.

Source: "At the beginning of last week, the Propaganda Department got people's unit leaders to visit each home and hand out prints for residents to stick onto their calendars. The people were watched as they did so, to make sure they did it correctly."

- Pyongyang (1.25): The Central Party launches a campaign against public criticism of the leadership. Discussion of Kim Jong Eun's age and the limitations of Chosun Workers' Party rule, etc. are expressly cautioned against, and Party cadres become even more wary of speaking out of turn.

Source: "The Central Party is propagandizing the greatness of Kim Jong Eun in self-criticism sessions and coming down hard on anybody who is reported to have said anything hinting at doubts about his greatness. Every cadre is being careful not to get caught out by this, without exception."

- North Hamkyung Province and elsewhere (1.27): It emerges that the material cost of constructing statues of the late Kim Jong Il and new towers of eternal life are being passed on to the people. The continuing application of non-tax payments to fund national projects in this way is a source of friction, yet the regime has little choice.

Source 1: "Prior to the construction of towers on cooperative farms, propaganda is being used to establish the necessity of donating money for the construction projects. Some farm workers are selling their emergency stocks of food in order to devote funds to it."

Source 2: "Here, if you cannot submit the copper, families must gather 3,000 won to give instead."

February

- Yangkang Province (2.8): The Party decides to hold a fireworks display over 'Jong Il Peak', the peak of Mt. Baekdu that stands directly behind the 'official birthplace' of Kim Jong Il, to mark the approaching Gwangmyungsung Day, the former leader's birthday on February 16. However, a source reports that a rumoured lack of state distribution for the upcoming holiday is causing people to question why a grand fireworks display can be arranged, but not bags of biscuits or candies.

Source: "Soldiers are coming by train to Hyesan from other areas to take part in the celebration." However, "People are saying that this year there will be no oil or snacks (state distribution of foodstuffs in commemoration of the holiday)."

- Yangkang Province (2.13): Kim Jong Eun suddenly retreats from a policy of extracting the cost of state idolization projects from the people. The decision is part of the state's desire to portray Kim as a man of the people.

Source: "On the 10th an order from comrade Kim Jong Eun was handed down saying that the burden of necessary materials and money for the construction of towers of eternal life and the [statue of Kim Jong Il in Pyongyang] must not be passed on to the people. So the work of returning that money and materials already obtained is now going on apace... Local secretaries and other officials are returning to households in the order they appear in the official ledger of moneys obtained, giving it all back and getting signatures proving that it has been returned."

- North Korean trader (2.14): The authorities advise all traders, exchange students and other workers based in China to return to the North for the anniversary of Kim Jong Il's birth if at all practicable to do so. The reason given for the move is because fewer people than expected voluntarily returned for the Kim Jong Il mourning period that ran from December 17 to March 25.

Source: "Some people, including exchange students, have already returned to the Fatherland, and those who really cannot go are preparing gifts or bouquets to send back."

- Yangkang Province (2.16): Provincial Party cadres receive a box of gifts ahead of Kim Jong Il's birthday, while common people from a few regions also receive so-called "special distribution." However, plenty of people in other regions go without anything. This is because in modern North Korea, the provision of such "state distribution" is actually the sole responsibility of individual county administrations and industrial enterprises.

Source: "On the 13th there was an event at which a box with Kim Jong Eun's name on it was conveyed to cadres including the Chief Secretary, People's Safety Ministry head, the secretary responsible for the National Security Agency and also Party delegates." However, "(The common people) did not hope for any kind of gift of 'consideration' on the 16th, and until yesterday they had not given out any sweets or even a drop of oil. All they did was giving about 1kg of snacks to elementary school students."

- Pyongyang (2.19): The first portraits of Kim Jong Eun are hung, a process that begins at revolutionary history museums run by the core North Korean security agencies. Also, Kim Jong Eun pin badges go into production, at the birth of what will become a key front in the inter-agency battle to show maximum loyalty to the Kim family.

Source: "To mark comrade Kim Jong Il's 70th birthday, the National Security Agency and People's Safety Ministry have started to hang portraits of Kim Jong Eun produced by Mansudae Art Studio in revolutionary history museums. The work of hanging the portraits is being led by the National Security Agency," while, "The Chosun People's Army Art and Culture Agency has now started producing Kim Jong Eun portrait pin badges. This is a loyalty competition now, and everyone is jumping in with both feet."

- Yangkang Province (2.21): Local authorities launch a furious rear-guard action, declaring that the absence of state distribution for many on the 70th anniversary of Kim Jong Il's birthday on February 16 was "for the provision of yet bigger gifts on the Day of the Sun," the 100th anniversary of Kim Il Sung's birthday on April 15.

Source: "So, enterprise managers and people's unit heads told people that the 'national economy is not in good shape, and to give gifts on the day of the General [Kim Jong Il]'s birth and on that of the Suryeong [Kim Il Sung] would not have been possible.' We are being told that 'Comrade Supreme Commander [Kim Jong Eun] cannot even sleep at night because he is busy preparing a big gift for the approaching birthday of the Suryeong [Kim Il Sung].'"

March

- Yangkang Province (3.5): The government orders the formation of 'Day of the Sun Gift Preparation Committees' at the provincial Party level and subordinate 'Day of the Sun Gift Subcommittees' at the city and county scale to prepare for the 100th anniversary of Kim Il Sung's birth.

Source: "The 'Day of the Sun Gift Preparation Committee' was formed at the start of this month by the provincial Party Committee to prepare for the Suryeong's birthday, and groups of areas were banded together to form 'Day of the Sun Gift Subcommittees'. There was no distribution for February 16, and possibly because the Central Party received reports of popular discontent about this and asked some searching questions of provincial cadres, now they are running around trying to get ready for April 15 special distribution. Traders are mostly bringing in soybean oil, soap and towels through Chinese customs. They are printing 'Day of the Sun 100th Anniversary' on the towels."

- Pyongyang (3.7): The security forces halt entry to Pyongyang for non-residents of the city for all but the most essential tasks. The early lockdown of the North Korean capital creates interest in what is going to happen early in April, the biggest month in North Korea's recent history.

Source: "They have been strictly controlling the entry of people from the regions into Pyongyang since the General passed away, but since the 1st of this month they have been almost completely prohibiting it."

April

- North Hamkyung Province (4.10): Party cadres are instructed to ensure the distribution of at least fifteen specific products to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the birth of Kim Il Sung on April 15. Local cadres set about doing everything possible to meet the target, after learning that success or failure will be taken as a measure of loyalty.

Source: "Party secretaries in factories are totally lost; I mean, they have received the instructions but haven't been given any money. Some are borrowing the money, while others are collecting it from their workers to buy pork on the open market."

- Yangkang Province (4.29): It emerges that to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the birth of Kim Il Sung, the authorities ordered the holding of cultural events along similar lines to the famed 'Arirang' mass gymnastics in provincial centres. In Yangkang Province the icy weather meant that this created considerable annoyance, prompting wealthier parents to pay significant bribes to avoid their children having to participate.

Source: "The provincial education office issued an order telling schools to organize the performance for themselves, so the students in charge of preparing the card section had a really hard time making it. The intensity of the dance practice was too harsh as well; there were many kids with nosebleeds from that. They said it was hell spending all day in the icy cold practicing. Even in April it is only about 10°C in Yangkang Province, and that's cold enough to be wearing padded clothes at midday. The students had to bring lunch, and those who failed to do so practiced the whole day hungry".

June

- North Pyongan Province (6.5): Children hoping to attend Chosun Children's Union 66th anniversary celebrations in Pyongyang from June 3rd to 6th not only have to pay substantial bribes, but also have to pass

rigorous medical examinations to gain eligibility for the event. This is because Kim Jong Eun is due to attend.

Source: "Because the Supreme Commander was going to meet the Children's Union representatives personally, physical examinations for those going to Pyongyang were strict. That said, more than nine out of ten kids who attended the Children's Union representatives' meeting were from powerful and wealthy backgrounds and were willing to pay more money, which led to competition. In the end, the selection process resulted in a test that separated the lower classes from the upper."

- Pyongyang (6.8): A propaganda documentary film about Kim Jong Eun's mother leaks before it can be shown domestically. The 90-minute film, 'The Mother of Great Military-first Chosun', is about Koh Young Hee and her role as de-facto first lady. Daily NK obtains a copy, and will later upload it in its entirety for public view.

September

- Pyongyang (9.18): CDs featuring songs sung by Ri Sol Joo are recalled over fears that information about Ri's past could hinder propagandist efforts to forge her "First Lady" image.

Source: "They are going out into every area of Pyongyang to collect every CD that contains a recording of Ri Sol Joo. It's causing a bit of a commotion in the markets. Her face is on CDs containing the song 'Sobaeksu', which is how people know that what is being collected is her music. The order to hand in all CDs containing songs sung by Ri Sol Joo was handed down right after Kim Jong Eun became a KPA Marshal. They didn't say why, they just said 'It's an order from the Central Party so just do it.'"

October

- Pyongyang (10.16): Though Pyongyang has been receiving an improved power supply thanks to the new Huicheon hydroelectric power plant, it becomes clear that the power supply is not being prioritized in the interests

of the majority of the people; instead, it is being used to lend a superficial gloss to the city core and brighten Pyongyang's newest apartment blocks.

Source: "It's true that the power supply here [Hadang district] is now up to 3 hours a day, but due to inconsistent supply timing the people are not any more comfortable. The electricity seems to cut out more whenever a new amusement park or building comes along. The central part of Pyongyang is the place where the buildings are bright and glowing every day. Local people looking at the bright lights of those Changjeon St. apartments, Mankyungdae and all the other amusement parks do tend to grumble."

November

- Pyongyang (11.8): The National Security Agency wins the race to distribute a new pin badge featuring the image of Kim Jong Eun. The new badge is handed out to senior staff, and is to be worn instead of the 'twin badge' of both Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il that most North Korean cadres had been wearing since Kim Jong Il's death in December 2011.

Source: "The Kim Jong Eun badges were produced by Mansudae Art Studio and are being distributed to central and Pyongyang metropolitan National Security Agency cadres. Their aim is to instil a sense of mission; namely, to be on the frontline defending Marshal Kim Jong Eun and Military-First Chosun. Those cadres who have these Kim Jong Eun badges are brimming with pride, as if they've received a medal, but others are puzzled since it has only been a few months since the double badge of Kim Jong Il and Kim Il Sung came out."

○ Repression in 2012 in the Words of the North Korean People

January

- Yangkang Province (1.1): The widely anticipated self-criticism sessions get underway to deal with those people

who transgressed in the eyes of the authorities during the mourning period for Kim Jong Il.

Source: "From the 29th, enterprises at every level and people's units started criticism sessions. Those who were not in attendance at commemorative events were branded 'traitors,' and those who were not sufficiently sincere during mourning events became 'reactionaries'. When the North Korean authorities say that people were insincere, it basically means a declaration of war on those who did things like not crying or only attending once. People are feeling very uneasy."

- North Hamkyung Province (1.3): It gets much harder to make contact with the interior of North Korea by cell phone from the start of January, something which is closely related to the formal launch of the Kim Jong Eun regime.

Article quote: "On the 2nd, for example, Daily NK received a call from a source in North Hamkyung Province, but all that could be heard was a humming signal with nothing on the other end. After an hour of trying, the source finally got through, but the call kept cutting in and out until she gave up after less than a minute."

- North Hamkyung Province (1.10): The self-criticism sessions which began after the mourning period for Kim Jong Il end, and the authorities begin to punish those who transgressed during the events.

Source: "The authorities are handing down at least six months in a labour-training camp to anybody who didn't participate in the organized gatherings during the mourning period, or who participated but didn't cry and didn't seem genuine."

- Yangkang Province (1.12): Local people living in one area along the Sino-North Korean border are ordered to produce barricades with which to protect the border and hinder defection.

Source: "The order to hinder the illegal activities of smugglers and defectors by making and delivering 1m-long

planks with big nails in was issued to Daehongdan County on the 5th. The plan is to bury them along the border riverbank and in areas where the water is very shallow. The authorities are shifting the cost of this onto the people so as to swiftly strengthen security along the border.”

- North Hamkyung Province (1.16): Extra barbed-wire fences are erected in areas around the border with China, in an apparent effort to reduce cross-border traffic.

Source: “There never used to be barbed wires fences on each side of the border in Musan, but recently they have been installing it. Extra barbed wire fences are being installed in most of the areas where people can come and go across the border. It reminds me of the DMZ.”

February

- North Hamkyung Province (2.10): The North Korean authorities begin to install new and additional surveillance cameras on main defection and smuggling routes along the border with China.

Source: “More surveillance cameras are being installed to improve security along the border. The surveillance cameras have been brought in numbers to areas where escapes and smuggling often used to happen. The cameras are on poles 20m from the riverside in areas controlled by the Border Guards, but the camera wires are connected underground to National Security Agency hideouts. It is so that areas can be monitored from the rear.”

- South Pyongan Province (2.12): The actions of a new unit formed in mid-January to deal with the amount of 'illegal' media circulating in North Korea are revealed.

Source: “Unit 114 was formed following a January 14 order handed down by General Kim calling for a concentrated crackdown on suspicious songs, recorded materials and impure published media. The unit has been organized by the Propaganda and Agitation Department of the central Party, but the interesting thing is that

it also contains people from the National Security Agency. These inspections have not been announced to people's unit meetings and, since the inspectors are circulating undercover in the market, people are more frightened. One person who was caught selling CDs in the area in front of the market here told me that his investigation was done by a National Security Agency agent and someone from the Central Party Propaganda Department."

- North Hamkyung Province (2.26): More than 50 agents from the National Security Agency enter China via the border crossing linking Hoiryong in North Hamkyung Province with Sanhe, China, allegedly to weed out North Korean defectors living on the Chinese side.

Source: "Border crossers started becoming more of an issue in China just recently, and as soon as that happened the Central Party issued a special order to 'use this opportunity to totally remove the very roots of illegal border crossing.' 50 agents who had been working in anti-espionage for a long time were chosen, and they left for China on the 22nd."

- North Hamkyung Province (2.27): Local authorities offer to expedite the issuance of exit permits for people wishing to visit relatives in China if they agree to return to the country with one ton of food within 40 days. A considerable number of people obtain permits on exactly that basis in the first week, though it is unclear how many will meet the obligation.

Source: "At the start of last week, our people's unit head advised us, 'Anyone able to return to the country with a ton of rice before April 5th should apply for a short-term exit permit to the National Security Agency now.' More than 20 people per day are crossing over into China through Namyang Customs House after getting prior approval this way in Chongjin, Myongchon and Kilju. Others are finding lodgings in Onsung to wait their turn."

March

- North Hamkyung Province (3.12): The Ministry of the People's Armed Forces orders Sino-North Korean border guard brigades to completely swap stations, in what appears to be an attempt by the new regime to stop flows of illegal cross-border traffic and information. Most guard units are complicit in illegal border crossing, and the government hopes to break the link between local civilians and corrupt officers.

Source: "The Ministry of the People's Armed Forces has issued an order changing the station of border guard brigades; so, the 27th Brigade guarding the Tumen River area of the border and the 25th Brigade in Yangkang Province are swapping locations. I have been told that the brigade guarding the Amrok River area of Jagang Province and the one in North Pyongan Province are swapping bases in a similar way. The movement from Chongjin in North Hamkyung and from Hyesan in Yangkang is happening now. 'Eternity', the train used for carrying military equipment and personnel, started transporting their gear last week."

- North Hamkyung Province (3.13): Cell phone usage remains problematic, as the National Security Agency not only widens the scope of signal jamming on the one hand but also simultaneously establishes set areas without jamming on the other, seemingly in order to encourage the making of calls which can then be detected and the perpetrators arrested.

Source: "The National Security Agency is trying to scare people by telling them they are jamming calls, and that if you are caught secretly using a cell phone you will be severely punished. So, using a phone is itself not simple right now. North Hamkyung Province National Security Agency has formed an inspection unit that is cracking down all over."

April

- North Hamkyung Province (4.20): Jurisdiction over border security is moved from the Ministry of People's Armed Forces to the National Security Agency in a special order given by new leader Kim Jong Eun. The switch happens on April 16.

Source: "The day after Kim Il Sung's birthday, there was an announcement that the border guards had been moved to the National Security Agency. Officers came down to all [border] units on Kim Jong Eun's orders to inspect how they have been doing their jobs and complete the changeover. Commanding officers in the border units are having their Armed Forces ID cards thrown out and exchanged for National Security Agency ones. Civilians previously found to be involved in defections or smuggling are being reinvestigated, and there are plans to investigate whether some of them still have arrangements with serving soldiers."

- Yangkang Province (4.30): Two armed North Korean soldiers go on the run in China after killing a number of others from the same unit and escaping across the border from Hyesan into Changbai.

Source: "I don't know exactly why yet, but there was an incident on around the 23rd where two guards killed around six or seven of their colleagues and escaped to China. The National Security Agency has dispatched a team to China to arrest them. The incident occurred right after the 15th when border guard management switched from the Armed Forces to the National Security Agency, and therefore not only the provincial but also the central National Security Agency is devoted to their arrest."

May

- Yangkang Province (5.1): It emerges that the two armed men noted above were subsequently arrested by Chinese border security forces on the evening of April 27 and repatriated the following day.

Source(s): "The two arrested People's Safety Ministry agents were brought back through Hyesan Customs House on the morning of a few days ago," and "They were surrounded by the border forces and captured before they could fire a shot."

- North Hamkyung Province (5.11): Following the transfer of border guard unit responsibility to the National

Security Agency, measures against the families of defectors are ramped up. This includes the kind of midnight arrests and disappearances that used to characterize the way political criminals and their families were taken to prison camps in past eras.

Source: "Right now the atmosphere along the border has gotten pretty brutal. Cases are happening where families of defectors or people who have ever been found making international phone calls just disappear without a trace. Last week in Hoiryong, three families categorized as 'households of a defector' were dragged off somewhere one night, and a few weeks ago a foreign currency earner who had called China by phone was dragged off and hasn't been heard from since."

- North Hamkyung Province (5.31): Japanese-made vehicles are disappearing from the streets of North Korea, fully six years after Kim Jong Il decreed that it must happen. A National Defense Commission order is issued pertaining to private cars and vans of 1.5T or less. Trucks of Japanese origin are to be retained, then phased out over the next couple of years.

Source: "In accordance with a 2010 National Defense Commission order saying that all Japanese cars had to be off the streets by last December, now you can hardly see any Japanese private cars or vans in the entire country.

June

- North Pyongan Province (6.27): Parental suspicions that the process of selection for recent events in Pyongyang to commemorate the 66th anniversary of the Chosun Children's Union was mired in corruption leads the Central Party to dispatch investigation teams to the provinces to look into allegations of impropriety.

Source: "As soon as suspicions that cadres had taken substantial bribes in the process of selecting representatives to attend the Pyongyang events started getting voiced, a Central Party investigation 'gruppa [team]' was formed and came down to the regions to launch an investigation. The investigating teams are made

up of core cadres from the Kim Il Sung Socialist Youth League, which, as the Chosun Workers' Party arm responsible for youth activities, oversees the activities of the Chosun Children's Union. There are some parents who entered complaints of unfairness to the Central Party because, even though they had bribed the cadres, their children were not selected as representatives. Once a rumour that attendees were being given accordions or notebook computers by the Central Party as gifts started going around, parents of kids who had failed at the selection stage could no longer stand it."

July

- Pyongyang (7.3): It emerges that Chosun Central TV footage of a news conference by a woman who 're-defected' to North Korea in late May after six years living in the South is having an unintended impact on the North Korean people.

Source: "People who knew Park before she defected noticed that she is looking much younger and healthier now. People living here in the Ranam area [of Chongjin] felt pretty envious, saying that judging by the fact that a woman in her 70s had better skin than a Party cadre, she must have been living very well before she came back."

- North Pyongan Province (7.13): The People's Safety Ministry is ordered to crack down on more than 500 popular songs that either have South Korean melodies with North Korean words or are deemed to be influenced by South Korean culture.

Source: "The authorities have tried to ban more than 500 movie theme songs that are either of South Korean origin or influence. The People's Safety Ministry has declared them 'anti-socialist' and started a crackdown."

August

- North Hamkyung Province (8.7): A documentary film about willing "re-defector" Park In Sook and the forcibly

repatriated Jeon Young Chul is produced, and people living in areas of the border region are required to view it.

Source: "On the 4th all the workers at [name withheld] factory complex were gathered in the factory cultural centre for the screening of a documentary film. It included footage of the press conferences where Park In Sook and Jeon Young Chul gave testimony, along with some additional interview footage, images and descriptions. The basic point of the film was that if you turn your back on the socialist Motherland and wander aimlessly in search of a way to survive, you will eventually end up involved in something serious that you cannot escape, like the 'Statue Demolition Society' [Jeon was charged with plotting to destroy a statue of Kim Il Sung]."

October

- North Hamkyung Province (10.10): China is found to be electrifying the barbed wire in areas of its north-eastern border with North Korea in a fresh attempt to stop both defections and crimes perpetrated by Chosun People's Army border guards.

Source: "The Chinese are expanding the electrified barbed wire that used to only be on the main routes for people coming in. They are putting it all over the place. There is 220V running through it 24 hours a day, so it cannot be touched. It takes a higher voltage to hurt people: 380V or so. 220V won't do that, which makes it clear what the role of the fence is."

- Pyongyang (10.11): Ordinary people are reminded in official lectures that they may not make unapproved contact with tourists. The official line is that anyone who engages in conversation with foreigners or begs from them will face strict legal censure.

Source: "They've been issuing instructions about foreign tourists in enterprise and people's unit lectures since the start of this month. The lecturers have been saying that 'If there is no guide present, even if all the foreigner does is ask you for directions, you must tell a People's Safety Ministry agent first'. The lecturers put it like this:

'foreigners are envious of our ideology and will try to undermine it,' and emphasize that 'we should not communicate with them because they could be enemy forces in disguise trying to attack our socialist ways and spread bad ideas.'"

November

- North Hamkyung Province (11.6): The National Security Agency dispatches a team of agents to track a growing number of persons failing to return to North Korea on time at the end of legally sanctioned trips to see family in China. The team, which is made up of around 50 agents, goes to work in places commonly frequented by North Korean visitors such as restaurants and hostels.

Source: "I hear that these days there are quite a lot of people failing to return to North Korea at the end of their visa period, so the security forces have dispatched a team to arrest them. It was dispatched to Dandong and Shenyang on the 30th of last month. They arrested four people last week near Shenyang and repatriated them. There are always people who fail to return, so the team is an annual event. However, just now the number of non-returnees is growing, so they sent over a larger team this time."

- North Hamkyung Province (11.7): Defense Security Command, a branch of North Korea's system of cross-cutting military oversight, has begun an inspection of units charged with overseeing the integrity of the Sino-North Korean border following a major defection scandal.

Source: "Recently, a ranking officer and two of his men from the border guards that look after the Yalu River were caught helping a family of four to defect. Seizing on this opportunity, ten personnel from Defense Security Command were dispatched to inspect all border guard units one-by-one. The inspection team is to focus on those soldiers who take money to facilitate smuggling, river crossings and defections, neglect their duties or move drugs. They are starting where the incident occurred, and expanding from there."

- North Hamkyung Province (11.12): Evidence that the National Security Agency is pursuing a concerted policy of luring defectors back to North Korea emerges. The case of Kim Kwang Hyok and Ko Jong Nam, a second “re-defector” couple who give a press conference in Pyongyang on November 8, is said to represent the fruits of this effort.

Source: “After the press conference had been on TV, this provincial National Security Agency official made the comment that ‘this re-defection was down to us; that couple got caught up in our ‘re-defection plan’ to attract defectors back.’ A cadre from Musan County said something similar, ‘what kind of person would come back of their own free will? It’s one of the National Security Agency’s.’”

○ **The Economy in 2012 in the Words of the North Korean People**

January

- North Hamkyung Province (1.2): A directive completely forbidding the use of foreign currency in markets is handed down.

Source: “As part of the last instructions of Kim Jong Il, those who circulate foreign currency including Yuan and US Dollars will be punished more severely than those who deal in drugs. They said it is part of General Kim Jong Il’s last instructions and didn’t say what the reason is, so it is being strictly enforced,”

- North Pyongan Province (1.11): Markets, having been temporarily suspended while the country was in mourning for Kim Jong Il, return to normal operations on or around January 6.

Source: “The authorities allowed the markets again, but even as of the beginning of last week things were not going smoothly as we didn’t know how to mark the prices, if the markets would be operating normally or whether we would get in trouble for selling used or foreign items. People who were around after Kim Il Sung’s death were

uncomfortable because of the mourning period self-criticism sessions and did not go to the market, instead buying things like rice and daily necessities through individual sellers they already knew. However the market is back to normal now, just as it was in the past.”

- Yangkang Province (1.18): There is an upswing in prices and exchange rates in North Korea as East Asia moves towards the lunar New Year’s holiday, which falls on the 23rd.

Source: “The number of people in the market is rising and trade is getting more active, and so the Yuan exchange rate and rice price are both on the up. Although the self-criticism period was over, we still had to keep an eye on the security forces so the number of sellers in the market was not what it used to be, but from a few days ago people started using the market as normal and rice and Yuan prices started rising a bit.”

- South Pyongan Province (1.26): The process of mass mobilization to gather organic fertilizer is accelerated under orders from Pyongyang.

Source: “There have been orders to collect farm manure by mobilizing personnel to actively participate in the movement. In conjunction with the farm fertilizer project there have been reports calling for used agricultural tools for farms to help with production.”

February

- North Pyongan Province (2.6): Official demands that state pricing structures be adhered to bring traders into conflict with market management officials.

Source: “Friction has started up again between market managers and traders because of orders at the start of the year to make sure that everything is sold at the state-designated prices. They do this every year, but this year they are confiscating products and transferring them for sale in state stores, which is worse.”

March

- Yangkang Province (3.18): The ban on foreign currency use implemented in the wake of Kim Jong Il's death is rendered impotent.

Source: "Almost all transactions are now being done in Chinese Yuan. Chosun rice is selling for five Yuan per kilo, Chinese rice for four. Small household things like clothes and shoes are being bought and sold in Yuan, too. The security forces' crackdown has all but disappeared. Even if People's Safety Ministry agents see people in the market conducting transactions in Yuan, they don't seem to mind." However, "Demand for the Yuan is rising now that Yuan and U.S. Dollar transactions are permitted in the market and market transactions are getting more active, so money changers are increasing the price of Yuan."

- North Hamkyung Province (3.30): Orders are issued demanding the collection of 10kg of scrap iron per person in advance of April's major national events.

Source: "The authorities are shouting about how we must collect more than 10kg of scrap iron per person from factories, schools and homes in every area of North Korea, including Pyongyang. Our local people's unit leader is putting strong pressure on us, saying 'don't come to me with reasons or excuses' and emphasizing that the authorities will regard not contributing to the celebrations in April as an ideological problem."

June

- North Hamkyung Province (6.20): Chinese traders begin operating with the permission of the North Korean authorities in the public market in Namyang, part of rural Onsong County on the Sino-North Korean border. This is big news, but it is impossible to say whether it should be seen as liberalizing, or an attempt to tax the income of foreign traders.

Source: "From the start of this month, Chinese traders have been coming through Tumen to trade with locals in Namyang market. They are staying from 9AM to 5PM. Somewhere between 50 and 70 of them come in for the day, and they take up around a third of the stall space."

July

- North Pyongan Province (7.10): First signs of plans to roll out a new system of economic management emerge as authorities notify local agencies of the so-called '6.28 Policy', which is entitled, 'On the establishing of a new economic management system in our own style.'

- North Hamkyung Province (7.19): People start exchanging a range of opinions on the subject of the '6.28 Policy.' Interestingly, those who are hopeful that it will bring reform and opening even start using the phrases 'Vietnamese-style' and 'Chinese-style'.

Source: "Following some pretty significant economy-related events like certain orders from comrade Kim Jong Eun, Central Party cadres getting training abroad and workers being sent abroad too, people have started hoping for change more than ever. Nowadays it is not just the cadres; it is the ordinary people as well who are arguing over opening. This is definitely different to when the General was still with us, a time when we couldn't even say the word 'opening'."

- Yangkang Province (7.20): The outline of Kim Jong Eun's rumoured agricultural reform agenda takes shape, and three counties in the Yangkang Province are selected to test the plan.

Source: "They have handed down the new policy to cooperative farms in Daehongdan, Kim Hyung Jik County [formerly Huchang County] and Kim Jong Suk County [formerly Sinpa County]. They are providing new seed varieties, fertilizer, weeding implements and what-have-you, and say they will give 30% of the grain to the

farmers. The state will take 70% of the target production and the farmers will get 30%, but if the farmers exceed the target then they get to keep the surplus; that said, obviously the key is the standard according to which the authorities set those targets. The farmers in the three counties are excited about it now that they have heard that they will be able to get 30% of the production and even the surplus as well. So much so that they think some people who left for the cities will come back to the area.”

- North Hamkyung Province (7.23): The authorities focus on promoting the appropriateness of the '6.28 Policy' via the fixed-line *Third Broadcast*, with reports even utilizing the controversial term “economic reform.”

Source: “They have been talking on the Third Broadcast since the beginning of last week about how ‘respected comrade Kim Jong Eun has selected economic reform measures so as to bring our economy up to world class status and greatly improve the people’s lives,’ sketching out the nature of the reform policy and saying that we must accept and pursue Kim Jong Eun’s economic policy plan.” However, “Given the barrage of economic reform propaganda we get every single morning, it does seem as though something will happen, but right now it is nothing more than a political sermon; people say that they can only know when actual policies emerge.”

August

- North Hamkyung Province (8.16): Workers in the so-called 'self-sustaining' areas of the North Korean economy find they are to see their existing system of food distribution replaced by the payment of additional wages.

Source: “According to a Central Party policy that was conveyed to us on the 8th, the system of food distribution for the workers in some factories and enterprises is going to be abolished, and all distribution to them will then be made in the form of wages. The system of distribution for those work units under the state plan will be retained as-is, while only those units that are *self-sustaining* will move to a system of wages only. Those units that are losing their food distribution system will receive big wage increases. However, it seems that there will be differences from factory to factory and even from job to job.”

- South Pyongan Province (8.21): At least some food distribution centres, places that have traditionally been used to distribute rations to people working for smaller factories and enterprises, begin to sell corn directly.

Source: "The food distribution centre here started selling grain on the 18th. They explained that this was just for those people working for factories operating on a 'self-sustaining' basis, but in reality there was no limitation on who could buy it. There is a fixed quantity of corn that any one individual can buy, though, so large purchases are impossible."

- Yangkang Province (8.24): The banking authorities abandon a month-long drive to obtain foreign currency from the citizenry by outbidding private money changers in the marketplace; instead, they decide to try and extract the same foreign currency by exchanging it for rice.

Source: "Even as recently as ten days ago, the Foreign Exchange Office was giving a better exchange rate than private money changers, but now that has stopped. Now they are taking foreign currency and selling rice instead, so people are calling it the 'Rice Exchange Office'."

September

- North Pyongan Province (9.10): Authorities announce domestically that the 'June 28th Policy' of economic management measures is to go into force nationwide on October 1.

Source: "We have been told by the authorities that the economic management improvement measures known as the '6.28 Policy' will be implemented from October 1. They said in lectures delivered in enterprises and people's units that the policy will be implemented along fixed legal and systemic lines."

- North Hamkyung Province (9.24): Rumours spread that Pyongyang is planning to decree new market prices in

the coming days, aiming to bring markets under control at the same time as moving toward introducing a revised economic management structure. However, the rumour never becomes reality.

Source: "I heard on the 20th that they would soon declare new state prices for all items. The state price of rice is going to be 4000 won, and corn will be 2000. I was told that items not listed are not going to be saleable, and that a list of precise items and prices is to be put out by the Supreme People's Assembly within the next few days. In particular, she said they are going to ban South Korean, American and Japanese products, and strictly crack down on the sale of vehicles."

- Yangkang Province (9.26): On-going food insecurity problems mount, meaning that in some areas even the security forces, a top priority group for the regime, are unable to secure sufficient supplies for the provision of rations to staff.

Source: "With the price of rice up at 6,500 or 7,000 won people can't even dream of buying it in the market right now. It's not just the ordinary people either; people working for the security services didn't even receive their full rations last month or this. The National Security Agency and People's Safety Ministry have to generate between one and two months worth of food from their own cooperative farms, but with the drought and then the flooding this has been impossible. Because they are finding it hard to get anything from the farms, staff members have not been provided with their distribution."

- Ethnic Chinese trader (9.28): North Korean traders in China hurry home after hearing word that the central authorities planned to merge uncompetitive factories and enterprises with stronger ones.

Source: "A whole bunch of traders who were in China on business trips started rushing back to North Korea. They had heard that the authorities planned to rationalize the number of small and medium size enterprises so they headed back in a hurry to investigate for themselves. The word is that they are going to get rid of those enterprises that don't turn a profit for the people and aren't helpful to the development of the country. A lot of

these workers are getting calls from their companies and going back. It's supposedly meant to be about getting rid of weak and loss-making enterprises in advance of bringing in the new economic improvement measures."

October

- North Pyongan Province (10.8): Plans to road test the agricultural element of North Korea's 'June 28th Policy' have been put on hold in some areas due to difficulties with implementation.

Source: "Cooperative farm cadres are saying that none of the experimental farms will be given 30% of their production this year because it has become difficult to meet the target. They are saying that the harvest is not good and they need to feed the military as a matter of priority, so first they'll guarantee the military rice then give the rest to the farmers."

- Pyongyang (10.21): Management lectures are delivered to enterprise managers in and around Pyongyang, suggesting that the 6.28 Policy has not been abandoned as some had feared.

Source: "Some days ago an official from the Central Party came here and gave us a lecture about factory management methods. At the end he asked if the audience understood, and we said we didn't get it. The main questions people asked were about the 'wage-based system'."

- North Pyongan Province (10.31): The price of rice stabilizes as the end of the autumn harvest brings corn to market. However, the corn crop is below average, raising fears of short-lived improvement.

Source: "The price has been falling steadily of late, and is currently 5,500won per kilo. Corn, which is a substitute for rice, has entered the market, easing prices and improving people's food supply. This has meant that rice prices stabilized. With all this talk of reform and opening measures there has been a lot of anxiety and prices everywhere were up around 7,000won at one point. This caused a lot of resentment, but some of that has

been relieved now.”

November

- Yangkang Province (11.2): The knock-on effect of a poor growing season arrives on the potato farms of northerly Yangkang Province, where farm labourers receive just two thirds of their normal annual distribution.

Source: “In most years we get three months of potatoes in autumn, but this year that didn’t happen. Whereas last year we got 200kg for three months, this time around we got just 120kg, enough for two months.”

- Yangkang Province (11.16): Workers in Hyesan are left out in the cold after their workplaces fail to provide yearly rations of cabbage and other ingredients needed for the manufacture of *kimchi*, the universal food of choice for nearly all adult Koreans and one that is traditionally made at home by each family.

Source: “Before, people used to get 20-40kg of cabbage per head from their workplaces, but this year there’s been nothing. Workplaces normally distribute cabbages grown in-house as a side-line, but we’ve heard nothing this year so we aren’t making *kimchi*.”

○ **Daily Life in 2012 in the Words of the North Korean People**

January

- Pyongyang (1.13): Residents of luxury apartments in Pyongyang start leaving their homes for the heated homes of relatives or other warmer locations because their heating systems are, in a manner of speaking, too advanced.

Source: “People previously had no supplies of water so didn’t have drinking water and could not go to the bathroom without difficulty, but now that there are heating problems too people are inevitably leaving their homes.

This year, many are locking their homes up and leaving for warmer places. When I went to Pyongyang just three years ago, the people still stayed in their apartments even without heat, but now half of them are gone, perhaps to East Pyongyang where the pre-1980s homes are heated with charcoal briquettes.”

- South Pyongan Province (1.17): The authorities order five days of food to be distributed nationwide starting later in the month, the first such distribution in a year of planned celebrations.

Source: “With New Year ahead, an order to distribute five days of food to the people from the 20th has been handed down to every city and county public distribution centre. General Kim issued a special decree ordering the distribution of five days of food to the people for New Year. People are waiting with some doubt, but maybe we’ll be able to eat rice cakes this New Year if they do it.”

- North Hamkyung Province (1.20): The murder of four public security officials is revealed, seemingly in an unusual and astonishing act of vengeance against the repression that invades every aspect of daily life.

Source: “During the mourning period, one official from the provincial National Security Agency, one from the prosecutor’s office and two from the People’s Safety Agency were murdered in Chongjin. There was a note found lying next to the body of the executed National Security Agency official which said ‘Punished in the name of the people.’”

- Ethnic Chinese trader (1.23): Many ordinary people receive five days of rations consisting of half white rice and half mixed-grains. However, distribution is patchy.

Source: “Even within Pyongsung people got different rations depending on what street or neighbourhood they live in – some got three days worth, others got five. Our People’s Unit gave three days. But that wasn’t the problem; in one area people got grain rice mixed with corn, and the really unlucky amongst them were disappointed to find that their rations had already gone bad. On the way here I also heard from people living in Sinuiju who were

given corn soup rather than rice of any sort,”

February

- North Hamkyung Province (2.7): Train services are cut back due to electricity shortages.

Source: “The train, which used to go at least twice a week, has been cut to just once a week since the start of this month because of electricity shortages. So, nobody is thinking twice about climbing on the roof to avoid missing it, even in this cold winter.”

March

- Gangwon Province (3.22): Widespread displeasure emerges at mobilization for various events planned for April and the growing funding burden being placed on households.

Source: “It is tough for us to even make 2,000 won per day from trading, but the authorities are asking for 20,000 won from us to buy paint to do the exterior walls of apartments! I thought a new man would make the situation better but it has gotten worse. This year it is called the ‘total mobilization period,’ and they have told us that those who do not participate with sincerity will be evaluated politically.”

April

- Yangkang Province (4.2): Local farm administrators have told farm workers to personally provide the chemical fertilizer for use on the fields this spring. However, it is an entirely impossible request, and amounts to a demand for a non-tax payment to the state.

Source: “The authorities have told farm workers to present 5kg of chemical fertilizer per person for the current

farming season. Officials from the local farm management committee are telling them to give money if they don't have the goods. But for a family where both adults are farm workers that means 10kg. If it were compost derived from human waste they wanted then farmers could make it, but this kind of fertilizer cannot be made like that. It's theft, pure and simple."

- North Hamkyung Province (4.5): Rural areas are shown to be suffering a shortage of able farm workers. Not only that: those young adults who are working the farms have been stunted by years of undernourishment.

Source: "It is not something new that only the elderly and infirm are left in the rural areas of North Korea, but it is annoying that in recent years those young adults designated to work here have not only decreased in number but also do not even work properly. At this time people are needed to sow seeds, organize the rice fields and do the ploughing; however, because people are getting mandatorily dispatched to workplaces they just spend their time doing as little as possible and can even be a headache because they try to steal corn."

- Pyongyang (4.18): In his public address celebrating the centenary of Kim Il Sung's birth later the same day, Kim Jong Eun will claim that the 'foundations for strength and prosperity have been laid' in North Korea, yet many citizens cannot even obtain tap water on the morning of the big day itself.

Source: "Even on the morning of April 15 people had to fetch their own water because nothing was coming out of the taps. I wonder how long it will be before we have the benefits of proper tap water? What good is it talking about prosperity and improving people's lives when they can't even fix the water?"

- Pyongyang (4.22): Complaints emerge regarding the potentially dangerous nature of some of the new apartments built at breakneck speed in Pyongyang to meet the 2012 deadline imposed by the 100th anniversary of Kim Il Sung's birth.

Source: "Originally, there was no progress going on with new construction because of a serious shortage of

materials, so they ordered it to stop while the interiors of finished apartments were dealt with. Despite the order, work brigades lacked the construction materials to finish the interior construction so they started passing responsibility on to the residents. Most of them are reluctantly doing the interior construction, having been told by the work brigades that they are just going to have to get on with it. The residents, scared as they are that they may lose their homes again after losing them once when they were ripped down in the first place, are just living in them while working on the problems.”

May

- Pyongyang (5.3): Troupes are formed to take part in the year's Arirang mass games performance, leading to a game of wait-and-see between parents determined to ensure that their children are not required to perform.

Source: “Each school began working on its own list of participants for Arirang after the Labour Day holiday on May 1. There was some hope that the mass games might not be held in the Kim Jong Eun era, but alas that was not to be. Therefore, all the parents of school-aged children are now working on plans to get their children exempted from the games: well-off parents are secretly paying bribes to hospital staff for medical certificates that can get their children off. Genuinely infirm children are being sent to recuperate in the country, which completely removes any chance of being selected for the games. People are pretty brazen now when talking about having to pay expensive bribes and the like to get their children off some of these lists.”

- South Pyongan Province (5.15): People pour into rural areas to take part in annual mobilization for farming activities.

Source: “The whole nation is out there supporting the farms; enterprises affiliated with state agencies, upper middle school and college students and military bases. People are not allowed to be at home or in the streets. Restaurants are not open either. Everybody is out on the farms. It's just like martial law, really brutal. 5 or 6 safety agents set up a desk in the street and stop people passing by, taking their identifications and confiscating the

bikes they are on and sending them to nearby farms. People can only pass if they have a confirmation slip from a cooperative farm management committee.”

- North Hwanghae Province (5.18): Food shortages in the North Korean agricultural heartland of Hwanghae Province lead to starvation deaths. A significant percentage of cooperative farm workers are said to be too malnourished to work, while others leave farms in order to seek help.

Source: “Local people are in pain from hunger, but the only help that households short of food are receiving from the authorities is 1 or 2kg of corn; it’s emergency relief but only sufficient to stop them starving. Seeing the situation getting worse and with help from the authorities being so inadequate, there are people leaving for other areas to get help from family. Hangaeri in Shingye County alone has seen a total of six children and elderly people die of starvation. At the same time, all the authorities are doing is telling everyone to try and overcome the difficulties.”

- Yangkang Province (5.20): Market traders selling South Korean products are becoming more readily visible in the region’s markets.

Source: “Since the start of this year, there have been noticeably more people selling South Korean clothes in the markets, because that is what people want to buy.”

- North Hamkyung Province (5.25): Attempting the impossible, North Hamkyung Province Party authorities try to pursue a number of construction projects in and around Chongjin despite the fact that mass mobilization for farm labour is on-going.

Source: “Most students and labourers have been mobilized for the farming support battle, yet in the middle of that the provincial Party is ordering the construction of apartments with more than 15 floors for 10,000 households in the Pohang district of Chongjin! They are simultaneously doing large scale repairs in Pohang Square,

constructing a coastal road and Youth Park, doing work on Chongjin Port and on a waste water purifying facility for Sunam Stream.”

June

- North Pyongan Province (6.11): Drought in western areas of the Korean peninsula persists and threatens to decimate the autumn harvest, so the annual, nationwide period of mass mobilization for farming activities is extended for a month.

Source: “To try and avoid damage caused by extreme drought, people’s units are working to irrigate the fields for two hours from 5AM and then for three more hours from 5PM to 8PM. Even elementary school students are not exempt. The orders are that all the people who eat have to come forward and participate in the irrigation effort, so even 10-year old kids are out there with water buckets on their shoulders. They’re really tired and their lips are all dried out. The forecast says there will not be rain, and the crops in the fields are dry, so Party cadres are preparing for a one month extension; it’s a ‘70-day Battle’.”

- North Hamkyung Province (6.28): The more the number of labourers being exported by North Korea increases, the more careful the authorities are becoming about which ones may receive the privileged positions.

Source: “The process of choosing expatriate workers is very sensitive, even though the only target is Pyongyang-based factory and enterprise workers. Single workers are rushing to get married, so Pyongyang has caught marriage fever!”

July

- Gangwon Province (7.2): A North Korean source from Wonsan in Gangwon Province travels north through central regions by train, and emerges to describe a difficult scene in many areas due to on-going drought

conditions.

Source: "I was under the impression that southern areas [Hwanghae and Gangwon provinces] were the ones in a serious state, but actually people all over the place are hungry. Even the potatoes have been affected by the drought. The situation is getting pretty bad."

August

- Yangkang Province (8.6): A documentary film 'Marshal Kim Jong Eun's Guidance in All Areas of the People's Economy' is broadcast on Chosun Central TV every day for a spell. The film shows scenes praising Kim Jong Eun's achievements over the past six months.

Source: "In showing the Moran Hill Orchestra performance and Rungra People's Resort opening it includes footage of him and his wife. The nation's people are suffering and dying due to the severe drought in May and recent rainy season floods, but the Supreme Leader is playing childishly at an amusement park, arm in arm with some woman or other. The people find it pretty wrong. Things are really tough, and people deplore the way we are meant to trust some little guy whose actions are so unfit for a leader."

- North Pyongan Province (8.15): The North Korean authorities formally repeal a 20-year old public ordinance that forbids women from riding bicycles in urban areas.

Source: "This August, approval for women to ride bicycles was handed down by the state. People have welcomed it, saying that 'penalties imposed by the father are being lifted by the son.'"

- North Hamkyung Province (8.22): Residents of the Pohang district of Chongjin grow angry at attempts to deprive them of their right to move into new apartment buildings being constructed in the area. It is a rare example of public disorder; however, it is not aimed at the state itself.

Source: "This rumour started going around that the apartments they are building would first go to decorated soldiers, veterans and discharged military officers, and then the rest would be distributed to ordinary people. As soon as that happened, a group of 40 or more people, many of whom had already seen their former homes demolished and thought they had priority on the housing list, got really angry. The crowd went repeatedly to both the local administrative office and the district people's committee to demand that a list of those assigned homes be made public."

September

- Yangkang Province (9.14): A group of twenty North Koreans defects across the Yalu River in the first week of September, marking the largest known group defection since the launch of the Kim Jong Eun regime.

Source: "Twenty North Koreans from Hyesan crossed the river in a group on the 7th. I hear that the departure was carefully planned ahead of time."

- Yangkang Province (9.16): Daily NK learns that authorities plan to restructure the education system via the upcoming Supreme People's Assembly (SPA) session, bringing in a revised system of mandatory education involving five years of elementary school, three years of middle school and then three years of high school. The precise details will turn out to be slightly inaccurate, but the official reason for the SPA session proves to be correct.

Source: "The compulsory education system is going to be partially revised by the Supreme People's Assembly session scheduled for the 25th. The period spent in elementary school is to be extended by one year, and then today's middle school process is to be divided up into three years each of middle and high school."

- Yangkang Province (9.20): A typhoon travelling across North Korea late in August brings about the collapse of the Ryongha Tunnel in Unheung County, Yangkang Province, crippling rail services to and from the border city of Hyesan.

Source: "The Ryongha Tunnel caved in as a result of Typhoon #15. The No.1 Train from Pyongyang to Hyesan is still not operational. It is not only railroad workers under Hyesan Railroad Bureau that have been mobilized to fix the tunnel; soldiers from local bases are out there too. The central committee is pushing for completion of the work before the Supreme People's Assembly (SPA) session on the 25th, but nobody knows how many more days it might take."

October

- North Hamkyung Province (10.8): The Education Committee, a Cabinet entity charged with overseeing state education in North Korea, reveals that it plans not only to divide the country's existing six-year 'middle school' system in two, as announced following the Supreme People's Assembly session on September 25th, but also to divide the final three years into two types dependent upon grades.

Source: "Based on the details of the education policy from the Education Committee, it is clear that all students from kindergarten to lower middle school will be taught the same curriculum, but the upper middle school process will be divided into two separate types under which the curriculum will be totally different. Students will be placed according to their test results. One will be an academic stream for students with good grades who are going to attend college, and the other will teach vocational classes."

- North Hamkyung Province (10.9): The North Korean authorities try to expand the country's pool of teachers to meet the demands of the revised system, and the level of qualification required to become a teacher is concomitantly reduced to aid in the effort. Those who are selected are told they will receive guaranteed state food

distribution.

Source: "In early August a notice went up advertising a round of qualification checks for would-be teachers, then the education department did the tests through mid-September. The competition was fierce; the rate was 8:1 in Hoiryeong following the news about a policy of preferential treatment including food distribution," the source said. "Every teacher, even those who had been newly selected at Chuseok [the Korean traditional holiday that falls in September or October annually], was given 5kg of grain. That's a 15-day supply."

- Gangwon Province (10.28): Sadness envelopes Gangwon Province after the South Korean authorities stop broadcasting analogue television signals on the South Korean side of the border at 2PM on the 25th.

Source: "Those people who used to watch South Korean TV in secret are very disappointed that it has suddenly been shut off. People want to know whether there is another way to get the signal. But even if there is, it's not easy to buy the right equipment. First this strange writing came on the screen, and then the broadcast cut out. The advice is that we are going to have to buy an LCD (digital) TV or install some new receiver, but for ordinary people without much money it will be hard to do that."

November

- North Hamkyung Province (11.8): Pent-up demand for South Korean music, films and TV dramas in North Korea drives demand for unique clothing styles. Self-employed seamstresses keenly seek out South Korean fashion magazines in order to learn about the newest looks.

Source: "There are more and more self-employed seamstresses getting copies of fashion magazines from South Chosun through local traders going back and forth to China. They take the magazines, make copies of the clothes they see in them, and then sell those clothes to people with money, like Party officials and rich families. We are not just talking about women, either. Men here always used to wear black or dark brown jackets and the

'people's uniform' [known in the West as the 'Mao jacket'], but recently they have started wearing nicely coloured suits. I guess this has been going on since South Chosun culture got popular; young people are going to seamstresses to ask for certain styles they are seeing in the TV dramas."

- Pyongyang (11.9): A new electronic card payment system for use by holders of domestic currency is introduced, adding to the existing system solely designed to serve those with foreign currency.

Source: "The authorities are distributing a North Korean Won version of that foreign currency-only payment card that has been in use for a while now. A whole lot of people are worried that it might mean they want to ban the use of foreign currency. Of course people with real money will be able to keep using the foreign currency card, but they can't help but feel there is pressure being put on foreign currency usage when the authorities are encouraging domestic currency card payments."

○ **The Military in 2012 in the Words of the North Korean People**

March

- Pyongyang (3.20): People's unit, enterprise and military base lectures featuring the upcoming launch of 'Gwangmyungsung-3' launch begin on March 17.

Source: "There are just a few countries which have been able to complete a satellite with their own technology, but General Kim Jong Il laid the groundwork here, and this noble work has been completed by comrade Supreme Commander Kim Jong Eun. Soon they'll be hanging new slogans all over the country about the General and Commander-in-Chief."

April

- North Hamkyung Province (4.13): The authorities announce four hours after a long-range rocket launch that it failed to put a satellite into orbit, and this inspires multiple unverifiable rumours about cause.

Source: "There are rumours that the 'cause of the failure of the rocket launch was not because of a technical fault but because cadres who are against the Kim Jong Eun system deliberately manipulated the machinery.' There is another that cadres purposefully hindered a successful launch to discredit the leadership. There are expected to be purges among the Party leadership involved with the rocket launch if the cause of the failure is established. The problem is that cadres are talking about it; I heard from a cadre in Pyongyang municipal Party."

- North Hamkyung Province (4.24): Word emerges that a military parade by the Worker and Peasants Red Guard, part of North Korea's 7.7 million strong reserve forces, has been arranged to celebrate the anniversary of the founding of the Chosun People's Army on the 25th.

September

- North Hamkyung Province (9.2): The North Korean authorities organize unusually intense civil defence training exercises to coincide with both the U.S.-South Korea combined 'Ulchi Freedom Guardian (UFG)' exercises and the retroactively declared 52nd anniversary of the birth of the 'revolutionary military-first leadership' on August 25.

Source: "The 'Center' (presumed to be the National Defense Commission and/or Ministry of the People's Armed Forces) handed down an order, 'On preparing for the emergency mobilization of the entire military and all people'. In accordance, even in the provinces, people were mobilized in a state of high tension for evacuation, anti-aircraft and live-fire training exercises. The training was conducted in a warlike situation, with soldiers living in tunnels and the Local Reserve Forces and Worker and Peasant Red Guard responding to emergency calls to arms, live-

fire manoeuvres and forced marches.”

October

- South Hwanghae Province (10.18): The Kim Jong Eun regime starts meting out serious ideological re-training after a soldier shoots and kills two of his superiors before escaping across the Military Demarcation Line at Dorasan in Gyeonggi Province.

Source: “That news travelled far and wide because the soldier killed two of his commanding officers before defecting. The General Political Bureau (GPB) has ordered all units to ramp up ideological education.”

- North Pyongan Province and elsewhere (10.22): The country embarks on three days of anti-aircraft training and evacuation drills.

Source 1: “We are doing wartime defence training exercises starting today. The authorities propagated the idea that ‘Lee Myung Bak declared war on us first by visiting Yeonpyeong Island’ and then they instructed each unit to adopt a war footing.”

Source 2: “An order was issued by the Party’s Central Military Commission requiring nationwide anti-aircraft training for three days from today. During this period every citizen, including those working in factory enterprises, will conduct emergency evacuation drills and there will be blackouts.”

North Hamkyung Province (10.29): All sections of the military, security forces and ordinary citizens are embroiled in wide-ranging military and civil defence exercises following the declaration of a ‘quasi-state of war’ on October 26.

Source: “Our soldiers are engaging in wartime exercises so that they are all ready to fight: they have been given emergency food supplies sufficient to last a week and dispatched to underground tunnels and into the border

regions. Equipment including tanks, armoured and support vehicles has been concealed in tunnels and bunkers. Soldiers aren't just wearing their armoured headgear at all times; they are also sleeping in their military uniforms. In particular, those along the frontline must stay in their tunnels continuously for the duration of the exercises, while the navy lives on its vessels and pilots remain with their airplanes."

November

- North Hamkyung Province (11.2): Chosun People's Army units in northern regions compete with unusual intensity to secure stocks of grain from local cooperative farms, which are in the middle of threshing the year's harvest of rice and corn.

Source: "Army procurement officers are everywhere here now that we have finished threshing the corn and are starting to deal with the rice. Teams of officers and armed men are staying here in farming villages to fight over the grain. This year the Army has come to the farm a week or so earlier to compete for the grain. Considering how determined they are it is clearly their intention not to lose out on a single grain of rice. There is a limited amount of grain available and it is a fight between procurement teams."

○ North Korea in 2012 through the Eyes of the Propagandist State Media

Naturally, the North Korean state media also reported on domestic events during the reporting period. However, they maintained a long North Korean tradition of inaccurate reporting, instead picking and choosing topics that served the interests of the leadership and aided in preserving the system. To place the difference between truth and reality in stark relief, what follows are the major state media events of the reporting period through the lens of the Daily NK articles that accompanied them.

"Military Rallies in Keumsusan Square" (1.10)

The Chosun People's Armed Forces held a massive loyalty rally in the square in front of Keumsusan Memorial Palace for new leader Kim Jong Eun on the 9th, Chosun Central News Agency (KCNA) reported today.

According to the report, Central Military Commission Vice-Chairman Lee Young Ho (People's Army Chief of Staff) swore loyalty to Kim Jong Eun at the event, stating, "Raising high comrade Kim Jong Eun as Supreme Commander, the fatherly Suryeong and the General are eternally with us and the history of the Juche revolutionary armed forces will continue on."

He vowed, "The very best guards, we will pile up a thousand, ten thousand sorties with ten million sacks of guns and ten million bombs to circle the comrade Supreme Commander and defend him with our lives; life-or-death guards for Kim Jong Eun.

"We will sharpen the edge of our revolutionary knife and if the enemy invades even 0.001mm of our Motherland's skies, land or sea our entire army will roll out like thunder to exterminate all the enemies to the last man and continue the historical work of reunifying the motherland."

"Kim Jong Il Statue on the Way" (1.12)

A special report issued today by the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Chosun Workers' Party has announced a list of four measures to be taken to commemorate the life of Kim Jong Il, including the construction of a commemorative statue and the enshrinement of his corpse.

The report was carried by Chosun Central News Agency (KCNA) and appeared on the front page of Rodong Shinmun this morning:

"The four instructions are as follows;

▲ Great leader comrade Kim Jong Il is to be placed just as he was when he was living in Keumsusan Memorial Palace, the most sacred shrine to Juche.

▲ A statue of great leader comrade Kim Jong Il is to be constructed.

▲ February 16, the birthday of great leader comrade Kim Jong Il and the most important holiday for the entire people, is to be renamed 'Gwangmyungsung Day'.

▲ Images of great leader comrade Kim Jong Il's are to be respectfully placed in every district, and towers to his eternal life are to be constructed.

"These decisions reflects the aspirations and earnest requests of the entire people, Party and People's Army soldiers to successfully complete the work of the Juche revolution pioneered from Mt. Baekdu," the report explained.

"Kimjongilia Festival on for 2.16" (1.17)

Rodong Shinmun today reported that North Korea will commemorate the 70th anniversary of the birth of Kim Jong Il on February 16 with a festival of Kimjongilia, a type of begonia created for and named after the late leader.

According to the publication of the Chosun Workers' Party, "As the entire people's poignant longing for and inexhaustible trust in respected comrade Kim Jong Il just keeps getting stronger, Gwangmyungsung Day will see the opening of the splendid 16th Kimjongilia Festival in the revolutionary capital, Pyongyang."

"KJI Medal Drives on Quest for Loyalty" (2.5)

The Standing Committee of North Korea's Supreme People's Assembly has created a medal emblazoned with a picture of Kim Jong Il to mark the 70th anniversary of the former leader's birth, Chosun Central News Agency reported on February 4th.

The medal will be a state commendation given to those workers, soldiers, labourers, military units, organs, enterprises and social groups that “accept the last instructions of Kim Jong Il and perform exceptional services in the struggle to construct the state.”

KCNA went on, “The Kim Jong Il medal is, along with the Kim Il Sung medal, the highest honour in the country,” before adding that the SPA Standing Committee had also created three other new honours; the Kim Jong Il Award, the Kim Jong Il Youth Award and the Kim Jong Il Children’s Award.

“Kim Jong Il Moved to Grand Marshal” (2.15)

The decision was revealed today, the 15th, pursuant to a decision taken yesterday by the combined Party Central Committee and Central Military Committee, National Defense Commission and Supreme People’s Assembly.

23 other military officers were simultaneously promoted, according to Rodong Shinmun. These include Kim Jeong Gak, the head of the General Political Bureau of the Chosun People’s Army, who has become a vice marshal, Kim Young Cheol, the head of the General Bureau of Reconnaissance, and Party secretary Park Do Chun, both of whom have become generals.

“New Badge of Kim Jong Il Released” (2.17)

North Korea has begun the production of a new version of its ubiquitous badges, this one featuring the image of Kim Jong Il featured on the painting used to lead the late leader’s funeral cortege in December.

Chosun Sinbo, the publication of Chongryon, the Association of North Korean Residents in Japan, revealed the news today. In an article entitled, ‘Pyongyang Residents with their Memorial Insignia’, it stated, “In Pyongyang on Gwangmyungsung Day, you could see people sporting the badge featuring the image of General Kim Jong Il’s portrait.”

"The General's insignia was presented on Gwangmyungsung Day, and people wore it together with that of the Premier," the article went on, noting that a group of employees at 'Hana Music Information Center' wore the new badges as they went about their business on the 15th.

"NK Sternly Rejects Criticism over Repatriations" (2.26)

North Korea broke its silence on the subject of defector repatriation today, with 'Uriminzokkiri', the propaganda website operated by the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland, insisting that both it and China are merely discharging their sovereign duty.

"Daily NK' and 'North Korean human rights' groups keep blowing the trumpet for this while conservative politicians, conservative groups and every Tom, Dick and Harry in town is keeping the rhythm," it asserted in a piece entitled 'Foul Diplomatic Act'.

"Of late, the South Chosun authorities have been making even more of an almighty uproar over 'defectors' than usual, while rashly attempting to internationalize the 'defector repatriation problem'," it went on to allege.

The South Korean government, the piece added, "Is making a disturbance out of a problem whose basic notion, that of a 'refugee', has not even been established."

"Overproduction Everywhere You Look" (2.29)

Under the title, 'Innovative results born of an ardent longing for the fatherly General', Rodong Shinmun today spoke in glowing terms of the activities of a food production facility in Pyongyang, the forestry authorities in South Pyongan Province, a pump factory in Anju and a gold and iron facility in Buryeong.

“Collective innovation”, “proudly accelerated production”, “assured high quality and speed” and “beat cutthroat competition’ were all phrases on show as the Chosun Workers’ Party publication strove to paint a picture of people’s economic success.

“Modernization of the production process has seen production of soybean paste (miso) and soy sauce rise”, one article said of Pyongyang Combined Food Enterprise, while Buryeong “reached a one-day record of 1.5 times average production.”

“President Lee’s Face Gets a Splattering” (3.9)

North Korea has elevated its propaganda offensive against the government of President Lee Myung Bak, pasting the image of the South Korean leader’s face on targets used for practice broadcast on Chosun Central TV on March 8th.

According to Chosun Central TV, the footage was taken during a military exercise involving members of the Union of Chosun Democratic Women and athletes from the military-run April 25th National Defense Sports Club [of which the football team of a similar name is one part].

The move comes following North Korea’s recent responses to the case of a South Korean unit based in Incheon which printed battle slogans on an image of Kim Jong Il and Kim Jong Eun that later appeared in the domestic media.

“Kim Jong Eun Gets Party Delegate Role” (3.27)

Chosun Central News Agency (KCNA) and Rodong Shinmun both revealed today that Kim Jong Eun is to be a Workers’ Party delegate for the Chosun People’s Army (KPA) at the upcoming 4th Workers’ Party Delegates’ Conference, which is set to open in April.

The decision was taken at a meeting of military Party delegates at the 4.25 Culture Center in Pyongyang yesterday, according to the reports.

Delivering the news, Rodong Shinmun, the publication of the Workers' Party, announced, "The hall was engulfed in endless delight and emotion at the taking of the Chosun Workers' Party Central Military Committee Vice Chairman and Chosun People's Army Supreme Commander, our Party and military's supreme leader comrade Kim Jong Eun, as Chosun Workers' Party Delegates' Conference delegate."

"Rodong Seizes on Kim Speech Reports" (4.24)

Rodong Shinmun today used its front page to emphasize the degree of overseas media reporting of Kim Jong Eun's private speech to the Party Central Committee on the 6th and debut public speech in Kim Il Sung Square on the 15th, declaring the "birth of yet another uniquely great man."

The Workers' Party mouthpiece announced in the main article, entitled 'The Kim Jong Eun Era Has Weighed Anchor in Chosun', "The speech given by respected comrade Kim Jong Eun at the military parade celebrating the Day of the Sun was published as special news more than 12,000 times and viewed by hundreds of thousands of people on five different continents."

"Kim Jong Eun's powerful speech emanating from the fountain of a new one hundred years of Kim Il Sung Chosun history shook the whole world," it went on.

"America's CNN said that Kim Jong Eun's speech reminded them of the Suryeong's historic victory speech," it added (Kim Il Sung gave the speech in question on October 14th, 1945), before continuing, "The New York Times declared that leader Kim Jong Eun's nature and gestures reminded them of Premier Kim Il Sung."

"Kim Releases 2nd Statement" (5.10)

North Korea has made public the text of a second statement in the name of Kim Jong Eun.

Chosun Central News Agency released the statement yesterday; saying that Kim wrote it on the management of national territory for officials from the Party, state economic organs and workers' unions. It was also published on the front page of today's Rodong Shinmun, the ubiquitous daily publication of the Chosun Workers' Party.

The statement is Kim Jong Eun's second. The first was released on April 6th targeting Party Central Committee members on the subject of 'Kim Jong Il's elevation to 'eternal Party General Secretary' and the completion of the Juche revolution'.

"We must implement the last instructions of the General to the end, without so much as giving an inch, without yielding even a step," Kim wrote in his latest statement, "to make the land look suitable for a strong socialist state."

"We must manage Pyongyang nobly, as the capital of the revolution and as a magnificent, beautiful world city," he commented, pointing to the statues of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il on Mansudae Hill, Keumsusan Palace and Mankyungdae as areas for planting into public gardens.

He also emphasized the need to run regional cities as models, as well as discussing a range of modern land management and environmental issues including land conservation, tideland reclamation, reforestation, water management and the improvement of the country's roads.

"Kim Jong Eun Calls for Youth Loyalty" (5.21)

Kim Jong Eun attended an event commemorating the 66th anniversary of the founding of the Chosun Children's Union at Kim Il Sung Stadium in Pyongyang yesterday, marking the first time since June 1994 that a North Korean leader has attended such an event.

Kim's second public speech, given at the event and subsequently published by Rodong Shinmun this morning, did not contain any surprises, instead focusing on encouraging attending children to remain loyal to the regime.

"June 6th is both a day for the Chosun Children's Union and a precious day for our Party and entire people," Kim declared. "Nowhere else in the world are there young students like ours, hundreds of thousands all wearing the red necktie and standing united in one organization, growing steadily into the heroes of tomorrow."

Kim then went on to say, "Even in the days when the motherland was going through the trials of the March of Tribulation, our Children's Union members overcame the difficulties, studied hard and actively undertook our school, our guard post and political activities as they dripped the sweat of patriotism."

"Awards Conferred for Saving Kim Portraits" (6.26)

The North Korean authorities have reportedly handed out medals and awards to the parents, teachers and heads of local youth organizations of a student who supposedly lost her life trying to save portraits of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il from floodwaters.

Rodong Shinmun revealed the story on the 26th, saying that on June 11th a 14-year old girl, Han Hyun Kyung, had to escape her home in a gorge in Shinheung County, South Hamkyung Province after it was flooded during heavy rains. Despite the danger, the piece claimed that she managed to rescue portraits of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il and pass them to her mother before passing away.

The piece then noted, "A total of seven people have been rewarded upon the orders of the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly; the student's teacher, mother and school principal, father and school vice principle, local Youth League leader and middle school Chosun Children's Union leader." It also gave the types and levels of the medals and awards conferred on the recipients.

"NK Propaganda 'Embraces Wandering Child'" (6.29)

Uriminzokkiri, a major North Korean propaganda website targeting South Korea, yesterday asserted that recent 're-defector' Park In Sook (aka Park Jung Sook) is living happily with her son in Pyongyang, and it's all thanks to the generosity of the Party.

In an article entitled, "Wandering Child Comes Back," Uriminzokkiri asserted, "Park Jung Sook could not overcome her temporary difficulties and betrayed her country, kind neighbors, and relatives, tumbling into the path of crime. However, our country did not condemn her sins, but took her into its loving embrace with great mercy so that she could live again."

It continued, "The motherland was truly a caring mother. Park In Sook was even given a luxury apartment in the middle of Pyongyang, where she is allowed to live with her son, who attends Kim Won Kyung Pyongyang Music University."

"It is an old saying that anyone who betrays their country cannot be forgiven, but a child is forgiven of its sins," it concluded. "The country will welcome them with a warm embrace, so that the child does not feel withered."

"90-Year Old Marshal Sings Kim Praises" (7.19)

First generation revolutionary Lee Ul Sol, the only other living 'Marshal of the Chosun People's Army' besides Kim Jong Eun, has been employed by the North Korean authorities to idolize the new North Korean leader, even though he is roughly 50 years his junior.

In a full-page, front-page Rodong Shinmun article on Kim's promotion today, Lee is quoted as saying, "Comrade Kim Jong Eun will soon be a symbol of every one of our motherland's victories and its glory," before going on to

add that "the veterans of our revolutionary liberation will loyally accept his lead with single-minded devotion."

He also notes, "The first generation of revolutionaries will always step forward to accept the military-first leadership of comrade Kim Jong Eun."

However, Lee is now around 90-years old, having been born in 1921 and fought alongside Kim Il Sung against Japanese occupation. He is the only surviving one of three veterans (Oh Jin Woo and Choi Kwang being the others) made 'marshal' in October 1995.

"Kim Sets about Reinforcing Party Substructure" (7.25)

There have recently been reports of a number of meetings held by major Party sub-organizations for the purposes of reinforcing loyalty to Kim Jong Eun.

Starting with the Kim Il Sung Socialist Youth League in Pyongyang on July 12, there has also been a meeting of top officials from the General Federation of Korean Trade Unions (17), the Union of Agricultural Working People (18) and the Union of Democratic Women (19).

The four groups in question play a major role in handing down the directions of the Workers' Party to the people and observing their activities. However, the famine of the 1990s weakened this system, something that Kim Jong Eun is now attempting to reconstruct as part of his plans for a Party-dominant regime.

"Kim's Spouse Publicly Named as Ri Sol Joo" (7.26)

According to Chosun Central News Agency (KCNA) and domestic North Korean media outlets, the woman is called Ri Sol Joo. Her name was finally revealed in a piece about Kim's attendance at an event tonight to commemorate the completion of Rungra People's Resort on an islet in the middle of the Taedong River.

The report noted, "During the playing of the welcoming song, our Party and people's supreme leader, respected Marshal Kim Jong Eun entered the hall with his wife, comrade Ri Sol Joo."

Although Kim's wife Ri's name was mentioned a further three times in the evening KCNA piece and she was noted as having received the assembled guests, she was not the focus.

"Kim Back to KPA as UFG Approaches" (8.7)

Chosun Central News Agency (KCNA) stated in a report on the visit released today, "Supreme Commander Kim Jong Eun reviewed a division under KPA Base No. 552. He gave them binoculars and automatic weapons as gifts and then took a commemorative photo with the soldiers."

Reviewing the command center at the base, Kim observed, "Commanders must develop the ability to quickly analyse the circumstances and make the right decisions in a combat environment," before adding, "All soldiers should use documents and supplementary tasks to develop familiarity with the combat mission."

"Attention must be paid to political ideological education," a satisfied Kim went on. "Revolutionary, class and moral culture should be embedded in the hearts of the soldiers so that they can carry on even after their discharge."

This represents Kim's first military inspection in two months, but was inevitable ahead of the UFG exercises, which run from the 20th to the 31st of this month and which the North Korean media tends to portray as an exercise in invasion preparation by the American "imperialists" and their South Korean "puppets".

"Kim Ends Military Tour with Twin Statues" (9.2)

Rodong Shinmun reported the news today, explaining that Kim “sought out the statues of the great Suryeong and fatherly General kept by the Ministry of People’s Armed Forces to pay his deepest respects on the way back from observing the eastern front.”

The piece also revealed in both text and photo that Kim was accompanied on the visit to the statues, which were erected outside the Ministry building to commemorate August 25, the date upon which Pyongyang claims the military-first revolutionary leadership was launched 52 years ago, by wife Ri Sol Joo. The pair laid flowers at the foot of the statues.

“Delegates Visit Statues amid Flurry of Speculation” (9.9)

According to this morning's edition of Rodong Shinmun, the Chosun Workers' Party publication, Supreme People's Assembly delegates from all corners of North Korea convened in Pyongyang on the 24th in preparation for today's legislative session,

Keen to reinforce the image of a party loyal to the Kim family, the report focused on the assembled delegates' subsequent visit to statues of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il positioned in front of the Ministry of the People's Armed Forces in the city.

The report noted that the bouquet of flowers featured the common propaganda slogan, "Great comrades Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il will be with us forever."

“Kim Calls on NSA to Stop Info Flows” (10.7)

Kim Jong Eun ordered a renewed effort to track down elements hostile to the regime during a recent visit to the HQ of the National Security Agency in Pyongyang,

According to a report carried by Chosun Central News Agency (KCNA) on the 7th, Kim Jong Eun, who was visiting to review a brand new statue of Kim Jong Il, underscored the importance of the National Security Agency to regime security, saying, "This is the very first time there has been a statue of the General standing by himself."

The statue of Kim Jong Il outside the National Security Agency building (aka Unit 10215 of the Chosun People's Army) was first unveiled at a ceremony on the 2nd, which Kim Jong Eun did not attend.

The KCNA article went on to cite Kim as saying, "The National Security Agency must engrave deep in the people's hearts the point that even a hint of illusion or submission to the enemy is the shortest road to death and self-destruction. We must extend the fight against the enemy's ideological and cultural infiltration and psychological scheming, and must ruthlessly crush those hostile elements with their childish dreams."

Kim Jong Eun also emphasized to commanding officers, "The agency's mission is critical to safeguarding the autonomy of our nation and people. You must immediately put in place a strategy to destroy the enemy's schemes; they are trying to divide the Party and the masses, standing in the way of the people's hearts and their wish to follow the will of the Party."

"Bourgeois Liberalism: Like a Drug for the Young!" (10.9)

The Chosun Workers' Party has weighed in once again on efforts to hold advanced capitalist cultural influences at bay. The move follows Kim Jong Eun's demand earlier this month that the wind of capitalism be kept out of North Korea.

In an article carried today, the Party's own publication 'Rodong Shinmun' declared, "The imperialists see the young as the main target of their cultural and ideological invasion scheme," before emphasizing, "This reality demands that we wake up to the imperialists' plan to undermine our youth."

"The 'fragrant wind' being stubbornly pushed upon us is like a drug for the young," it went on, adding, "If the new generations being raised today are swayed by the bourgeois wind of liberalism then they will become ethically corrupted by decadence."

Kim Jong Eun led off this latest attack on encroaching liberal values during his visit to National Security Agency headquarters in Pyongyang during the first week of October, a visit made to commemorate the erection of a standing statue of Kim Jong Il outside the building.

"State Radio Trumpets Kim's Telegram to Xi" (11.15)

Chosun Central Broadcast, Pyongyang Broadcast and Chosun Central News Agency all reported today on news that Kim Jong Eun sent a congratulatory telegram to Xi Jinping upon his ascent to become the new leader of China.

In particular, both Pyongyang Broadcast and Chosun Central Broadcast interrupted their normal programming at 12:58PM to convey the news, focusing on the fact that it was sent by "Respected comrade Kim Jong Eun, first secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea and first chairman of the National Defense Commission of the DPRK."

"Please accept my warm congratulations on the successful holding of its 18th National Congress and your election as general secretary of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the CPC Central Military Commission," Kim declared in the missive.

"It is an expression of deep trust and great expectation of all the party members, service personnel and people of China... at a time when the Chinese people's drive for socialist modernization has entered a new stage," he went on, adding, "It is my conviction that the fraternal Chinese people will surely achieve the strategic goal to build a comprehensively well-off socialist society by keeping the stability of society and sustainable economic development and improving the people's living standard under the leadership of the CPC with you as general

secretary."