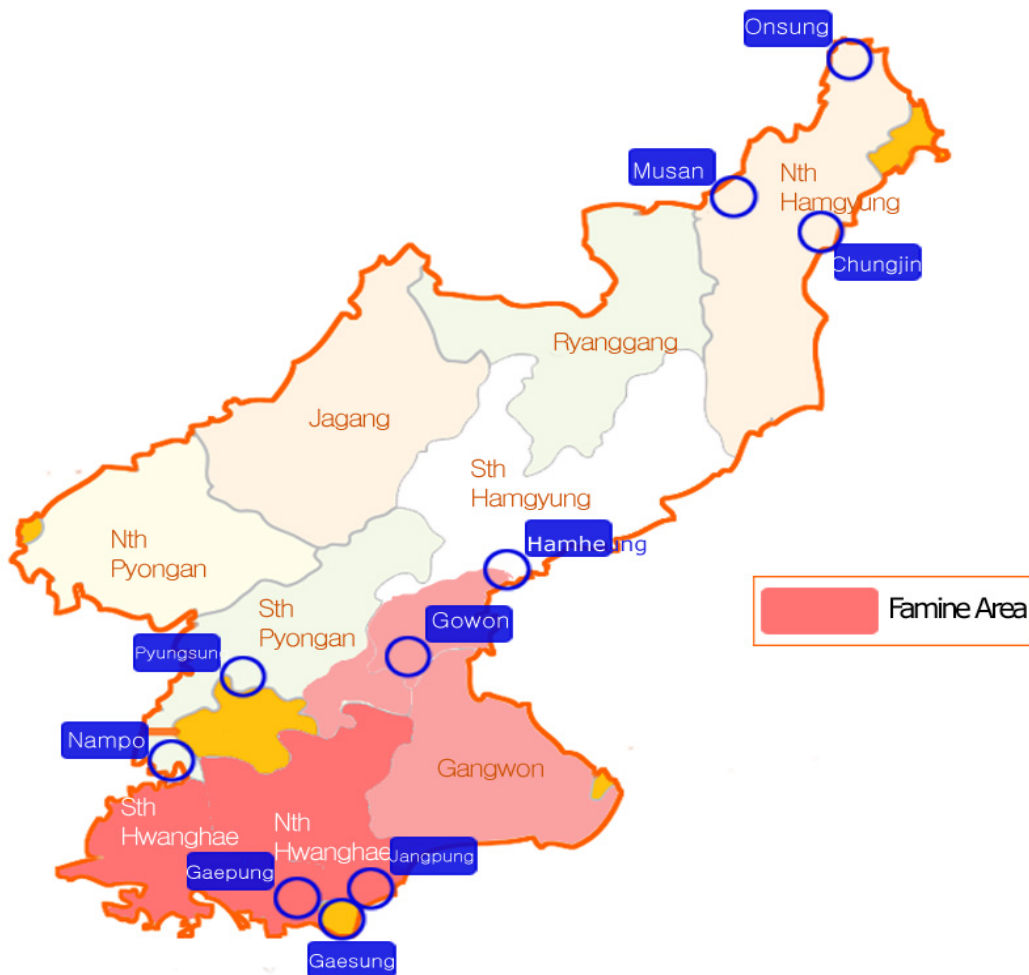


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“Research Institute for North Korean Society of Good Friends, in order to bring news of the food crisis in North Korea more accurately and quickly, will increase its e-newsletter frequency to more than one issue per week. As such, the release dates might shift. Thank you for your understanding and attention to this looming crisis. We at Good Friends hope to be a bridge between the North Korean people and the world.”

[MAP: Areas featured in the NKT no.145]



Security Situation in North Hwanghae Province , Getting Worse by the Day

The security situation in North Hwanghae Province, particularly in Gaesong City, Jangpoong County(장풍군), and Gaepoong County(개풍군) is getting worse every day.

While a growing number of people are dying of hunger due to severe food crisis, a series of crimes, such as theft, robbery, and fraud, is constantly taking place. Under such unstable circumstances, many people feel uneasy. Even during a short time of absence, door locks are broken and valuables and goods are taken. As the housebreaking theft like this frequently happens, people become reluctant and anxious to leave their house. In the meantime, residents of North Hwanghae Province are making efforts to find various ways to protect their houses from the theft, including putting additional locks on doors. What is worse, housebreakers are becoming more audacious; they do not scruple to hurt people beyond simply stealing goods. Especially considering the fact that people who remain at home during a day are mostly children and old people, thieves often use violence to threaten them and rob things. As a result, the children and old people who ever faced violent robbers remain traumatized. Due to such a lack of security, it is hard to see people on streets after 9:00pm. Women, in particular, are trying to avoid to come out of house.

Shin Chun-kwon, a 47-year old resident of Gaepoong County expressed his concerns on the recent social unrest that "It seems to me that people have nothing but evil. As there is nothing to eat at home, people do anything, including wrongs in order to survive." Meanwhile, People's Safety Agency is making efforts, such as sending out the Mobile troops to insecure areas, to enhance security in the region. Nonetheless, people still live with fear due to continuous theft and robbery.

Hamheung City Announces to Execute in Public for Any Case of Prostitution

As food shortages have worsened in 2008, the number of women who are involved in prostitution has increased. In fact, during the Arduous March, many women had fed their families through prostitution. Those miserable memories from the hardship ten years ago seem to be coming back. Food prices have been skyrocketing since early 2008 and people started starving to death again. Meanwhile, a remarkably increasing number of women are seen at major trains throughout the nation; just like ten years ago, these women are there for prostitution. In the street near the Hamheung Station, too, many women are soliciting. In an effort to crack down on a rapid rise in the number of women involved in prostitution, South Hamgyong Provincial Police Station announced that it will execute a woman who is arrested for any involvement of illegal prostitution in order to set an example for the case. Moreover, it also issued a guide on illegal prostitution to district offices. A strict application of criminal code to a case of "*Mompalgae*"—literally meaning a woman who sells her body, in other words, prostitutes—is expected.

'Ice', Spreading among Young People Who Have No Hope for the Future

Young people's 'Ice'(amphetamine) use is gradually increasing every day in major cities of the country, such as Hamheung of South Hamgyong Province, Chungjin of North Hamgyong Province, and Pyongsung and Nampo of South Pyongan Province. Authorities announce 'War on Ice' every year and they are indeed tightening the control over 'ice' use.

Despite such efforts, the total number of 'ice' users rather continues to grow. Han Jin-ho,

a 37-year old resident, mentioned that many young people in big cities are coming to use 'ice' to alleviate distress caused by the disappointment of the hopeless reality. These young people often do not have any strong beliefs or religions to rely on and thus, they easily abandon themselves to despair." Youth unions of each province and city have been making efforts to raise the young people's awareness of the down-side of 'ice.' Youth unions have been providing explanations of the harm of 'ice' and propagating messages stressing on the prohibition of 'ice' use. In addition, they have been also hosting meetings for such purposes. Nevertheless, none of these efforts seem to have an effect on young people.

La Mun-hyuk, a 21-year old resident of Nampo, said that "Most of my friends, including myself, don't have any hope for tomorrow. We can't even dream of making plans for future. If you look at mid-age adults, they are all busy finding a way to survive. Yet, many of them still find it hard to make a living and look exhausted. Moreover, there is no indication that the overall situation of the country will get better. When I think of all these things, I just feel headache. Thus, we [a few friends and I] are just trying to save some money and get together. We're playing some music in a cassette player and dancing all night. While having fun, we spontaneously come to use 'ice.' It's just like a natural consequence. Since we have neither dream nor hope, it is natural for us to come to depend on 'ice.'" He rather asked what they could do except having a little fun with friends.

Political Lectures in South Hamgyong Province, including Gowon County in Early June

The Democratic Women's Union (DWU) of Gowon Country(고원군), South Hamgyong Province had a political lecture under the title, "Let's become an anonymous patriot to support the Party by increasing rice production!" Private meetings to take oath among the members were followed by the lecture. Meanwhile, the lecture entitled "Don't let disloyal people stay in this country by awakening people's revolutionary mind" was delivered in Musan County(무산군), North Hamgyung Province, and a lecture conveying a message that "Mobile phones are the most fearful weapon that would help imperialists liquidate Chosun, a stronghold of Communism" has been taking place in Onsung County. During the lecture on mobile phones, various types of seized phones were shown to the participants and diverse functions of those phones were explained as well. Even lecturers let people hear various sounds of the phones and ask them to report the police whenever they hear such sounds or see others using those mobile phones.

The Guides to Remove the Reviving Superstitions

Authorities had issued a guide to remove superstitious beliefs and acts in last June. And they reissued it again this year. Starting June 1st, authorities have begun to enforce regulations on superstitious activities. When any of such activities is disclosed, legal punishment will be imposed. For an example, 9th, 19th, and 29th of every month are considered auspicious because an evil spirit that causes disturbances, people believe, are not around on these dates. Therefore, many people want to get married on those auspicious dates. If any car with a bride and a groom is found on those three dates, authorities announced, it will be deemed a superstitious act to be controlled.



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