

The People's Korea

No. 1,887

MAY 12, 2001

http://www.korea-np.co.jp/pk/ (1961年8月22日第3種郵便物認可月2回発行)

Top EU Delegation Visits DPRK

First Summit with West Marks New Departure from Cold War Legacy

A high-level delegation of the European Union led by Goran Persson, President of the European Council and Prime Minister of Sweden, Javier Solana, high representative for common foreign and security policy of the EU, and Chris Patten, commissioner for external relations of the EC, made a two-day ground-breaking visit to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on May 2 and 3.

The EU team was greeted at Pyongyang airport by President of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly Kim Yong Nam and Foreign Minister Paek Nam Sun, hundreds of goose-stepping soldiers and about 1,000 Pyongyang citizens waving pink flowers.

EU Delegation Entertained

The Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly gave a reception on May 2 in Pyongyang in honor of the EU delegation.

"I hope that the EU delegation's visit to Pyongyang, intended for friendship and cooperation between the DPRK and the EU, will be greatly conducive to deepening understanding and trust between the two sides and opening a new chapter in the development of the bilateral relations in the new century," Kim Yong Nam said in his speech. He also expressed deep thanks to the governments and peoples of all the EU member nations for their great efforts exerted to develop the relations between North Korea and the EU and for their sincere humanitarian assistance given to the Korean people.

"We have come here for frank discussions on the challenges and prospects for the Korean Peninsula," Swedish Prime Minister Goran Persson said. "The European Union," he said, "warmly welcomed the meeting of Chairman Kim Jong Il and President Kim Dae Jung." The current visit of the delegation, he continued, "is a vivid indication of the EU attention to the peace process on the Korean peninsula and to the DPRK."

Talks between Kim Yong Nam and EU Delegation

Talks were held between Kim Yong Nam

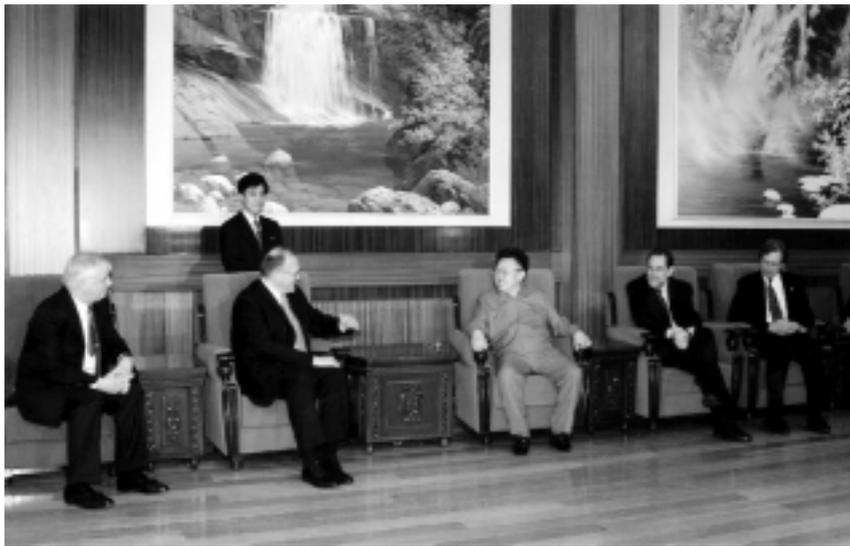


Photo shows formal talks between General Secretary Kim Jong Il and the high-level EU delegation led by Swedish Premier Goran Persson, President of the European Council. (second from left side)

and the visiting delegation led by Persson at the Mansudae Assembly Hall on May 2. At the talks both sides exchanged views on matters of mutual concern including the situation on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia and the relations between the DPRK and the EU, the Korean Central News Agency reported.

Kim Jong Il Receives EU Delegation

On May 3, leader Kim Jong Il met the visiting high-powered EU delegation. Present were Goran Persson, Javier Solana, and Chris Patten from the delegation at the Paekhwawon Guesthouse. Kang Sok Ju, first vice-minister of foreign affairs, was on hand. "Kim Jong Il had a talk with them in a warm and friendly atmosphere. There were open-hearted discussions about a series of issues of mutual concern," the KCNA reported.

Western Media's Reporting on the Summit

Discussions began on the morning of

May 3 and continued over an EU lunch for Kim Jong Il—five hours all told.

Highlighting the first-ever historic summit talks between the DPRK leader and an EU leader—according to the accompanying foreign reporters—Kim Jong Il declared that Pyongyang was ready to unilaterally extend a moratorium on its missile tests until at least 2003 and wished to meet Kim Dae Jung some time in the future, as he promised him during the land-

mark inter-Korean summit of June 2000 in Pyongyang.

"Kim Jong Il said the moratorium on testing would last until 2003 during which period they would wait and see." "We have also a clear message that Kim Jong Il is committed to a second summit," Swedish Prime Minister Persson was quoted as saying.

"Solana said Kim Jong Il 'assured that he is committed to all the declarations' made to the United States and South Korea. These include a 1994 agreement to freeze North Korea's nuclear program, the 1999 missile test moratorium, and pledges he made last June to advance reconciliation with South Korea and visit Seoul," The Washington Post quoted him as saying. The European officials described the North Korean leader's offer on an extension of missile tests until 2003 as "a big concession to prove his sincerity to Washington." Solana said, the message is, "he wants to continue" his overture to the United States, and "he is going to continue it even after the review (of the Bush administration's North Korea policy) is over."

Solana was also quoted as saying that Kim Jong Il wants to see the results of the U.S. policy review before setting a date for his promised visit to Seoul.

The EU delegates stressed that their meetings with Kim Jong Il were successful and substantive.

Persson said Kim Jong Il was "open and lively" when greeting him and his group.

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45th International Table Tennis Championships

DPRK Wins Silver in Women's Team, Bronze in Singles



Members of the north Korean team responds to the cheer group after receiving their silver medals.

The DPRK table tennis players showed its power as the world's table tennis veteran, seizing a silver medal in women's team competition during the 46th World Table Tennis Championships held in Osaka.

It is for the fifth time for north Korea to place second in the international competi-

tion.

The DPRK was defeated by China 0-3 in the final match of the women's team event held in Apr. 28.

As north Korea ended in the 9th place in the same championship held in 1999, it

(Continued on page 4)

DPRK, Russia Sign New Military Pacts to Develop Military Ties

Signing two military treaties, the DPRK and the Russian Federation strengthened their bilateral military cooperation during a visit to Russia of a high-ranking DPRK military delegation.

Kim Il Chol, vice chairman of the DPRK National Defense Commission and minister of the People's Armed Forces, signed an inter-governmental agreement in Moscow on cooperation in the field of military technology between the two countries with Russian Vice Premier Iliya Klebanov on Apr. 27.

Later in the day, Vice Marshall Kim also had talks with his counterpart Sergei Ivanov, Russian Defense Minister. Both sides signed an agreement on cooperation between the armed forces organs of the two countries.

In the talks, the Russian side said that

the relations between the two countries have entered a phase of fresh development in the wake of Russian President Putin's visit to Pyongyang and summit talks between the leaders of the two countries. Saying that the Bush administration's policy on establishing a "National Missile Defense" system throws a stumbling block in the way of ensuring global peace and security, the Russian side noted that it shared the same stand with the DPRK in opposing the U.S.'s effort to build a uni-polar world.

Meanwhile, the DPRK high-ranking military delegation laid a wreath before the Mausoleum of Lenin at the Red Square of Moscow on Apr. 28. The delegation visited unit No. 42497 of the Moscow military district and inspected the Russian Central Military Museum on the same day.

PK Report from Pyongyang

International Trade Fair Opens



Participants walk around the exhibition hall to see new products produced by about 220 companies from the world.

PYONGYANG-- By way of contributing to the construction of economically powerful nation, the 4th Pyongyang International Trade Exhibition opened in Pyongyang at the Three-Revolution Exhibition on Apr. 7.

About 220 companies from China, Russia, Cuba, Italy, Germany, Australia, Britain, France, Singapore, Japan, Thailand and Taiwan participated in the exhibition, exhibiting 5,000 kinds of products such as vehicles, mechanical equipments and consumer goods.

Ri Dok Su, President of the Korean Trade Exhibition, who organized the event, said he hoped to open the similar exhibition every year, adding it would become a new marketplace to link the countries around the Korean Peninsula.

In his speech at the opening ceremony of the event, he said the exhibition would help improve friendly relations between many countries and promote closer economic exchanges in various fields, adding that he wanted the participants to avail themselves of this opportunity to develop mutually beneficial ties with each other.

Participants in the exhibition hall were greatly interested in the goods produced by

north Korean companies, which were rushing ahead with a nationwide campaign to construct an economically powerful nation, attaching great importance to science. Among the goods which were favorably received by many participants were the "Dancing fountain," — it changes the shapes of its fountain water to a rhythm as if dancing — and "Shield No.3" — it is a machine to identify a person by his or her fingerprint.

"There are many enterprises which wanted to sell especially industrial goods to the DPRK. They seemed to want to acquire new customers in north Korea," said Koide Issei, advisor to the East Asia Trade Research Institute, who led Japanese enterprises participating in the exhibition.

"The north Korean side gave us a good reaction. I want to contribute to our neighboring country's economic improvement. I am planning to make my proposal for the solution of energy problems in north Korea in cooperation with the NGOs which are developing supporting activities in extending humanitarian aid," said Shunsuke Suzuki, a Japanese participant, who represented NKK Corporation.

North and South Korean Workers Meet on Mt. Kumgang on May Day



More than 1,000 workers of north and south Korea gather at Mt. Kumgang on May 1 to hold a joint May Day ceremony.

Shouting a slogan "Let's achieve national reunification through the united efforts of Korean workers!" workers of north and south Korea held a joint rally on Mt. Kumgang in the north in commemoration of the 111th May Day.

Participated in by more than 1,000 members of north and south Korean trade unions, the north, south workers' May Day reunification rally was held on May 1 on scenic Mt. Kumgang for the independent reunification of Korea under the banner of the June 15 North-South Joint Declaration.

The General Federation of Trade Unions of (North) Korea welcomed a 530-member delegation of south Korean workers which consisted of delegates from two major south Korean trade unions, the Federation of (South) Korean Trade Unions and the (South) Korean Confederation of Trade Unions.

The first-ever inter-Korean workers' May Day event was organized by the "Conference of North and South Korean Workers for Reunification," the first solidarity organization of north and south Korean workers formed in March, as its first event to sponsor.

Leaders of the organizations called on

the union members to take the initiative in the movement for national reunification.

Vice-chairman Ri Jin Su of the GFTUK said in his speech that all the workers of the north and the south should get united as one to support and implement the historic June 15 North-South Joint Declaration, in which the two leaders had pledged their efforts to realize reunification and to promote reconciliation and cooperation.

Representatives of south Korean workers pointed out that the outside forces were trying again to drive the Korean people back into the agony of the Cold War, stressing that workers of north and south Korea struggle to oppose the threat of foreign forces and secure peace for the Korean Peninsula. "The workers in the south and the north should reject any interference and vigorously advance for national reunification, firmly united with each other," Kwon Won Pyo, permanent vice-chairman of the FKU, said in his speech.

Meanwhile, the attendees participated in various sports and entertainment events, such as welcoming art performances, joint sports events, a mixed soccer game, joint concerts, etc.

DPRK Hard Hit by Long Spell of Drought

"An unprecedented long spell of drought persists in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea." "Crops in the country are badly affected by it." The Korean Central News Agency recently reported.

Due to the high air pressure that has persisted in Huabei, China, Korean West Sea and South Sea since last March there has been little rainfall in the DPRK since March 3 when it registered 6 mm on an average. The rainfall on March 14 stood at 3 mm on an average.

To be exact, drought has persisted for more than 60 days since early March, the KCNA said on May 4.

To go back to historical records, Pyongyang was hit by drought from March 3 to May 4 in 1928, drought lasted for 63 days from March 1 to May 2 in 1982 and for 58 days from March 1 to April 27 in 1993.

Precipitation from last March 1 up to this date registered 15mm on an average in all parts of the country, only 18 percent of the annual average of 83 mm. Precipitation in North and South Hwanghae provinces on the west coast, in particular, registered 9 mm, the lowest in rainfall observation.

Drought has persisted for 58 days as of

May 4 in all parts of North and South Hamgyong provinces on the east coast, doing huge damage to various fields of the national economy.

Results of a soil survey showed that 8-15 cm deep soil of the farm land in all parts of the country remained dry, going far beyond the germination limit. Most of the sown seeds have already dried up.

Forest fires are reported in an unbroken chain.

Forest fires broke out in scores of cities and counties including Thongchon, Phyonggang, Cholwon, Ichon and Phangyo counties, Kangwon Province, Tokchon and Sunchon cities, Hoehang, Maengsan and Unsan counties, South Phyongan Province, and North and South Hwanghae provinces, North and South Hamgyong provinces, Jagang Province and Pyongyang in April, thus causing a huge loss of forest resources, satellite information said.

As communication networks were cut off by forest fires, various forms of accidents occurred one after another, hard hitting various fields of the national economy.

On May 10 the KCNA followed up the long-continued drought that hard hit the whole country. It said:

According to information available from the Ministry of Agriculture, it can hardly expect before-crop harvest estimates from a large area of fields under two-crop farming including potato due to drought.

Almost all the potato and maize seeds have not sprouted and wheat and barley began to come into ears in a premature condition.

The area of drought-stricken vegetable fields and orchards is on a steady increase and the growth of rice seedlings is also

hard hit by drought.

Drought has done damage to over 50 percent of the fields with unharvested crops on cooperative farms in Sariwon, North Hwanghae Province.

Seventy percent of the wheat, barley and potato fields on the Jongbang Cooperative Farm in Sariwon is seriously affected by drought.

Drought is expected to persist for days to come.

FM Spokesman Assails U.S. Report on Terrorism

A spokesman for the Foreign Ministry of the DPRK on May 4 commented on the recent U.S. attack against the DPRK over the issue of terrorism. The statement came via the official Korean Central News Agency. It said:

The U.S. State Department in an "annual report on terrorism" released on May 1 termed the DPRK a "terrorism-sponsor." It pulled up the DPRK on groundless charges that the DPRK gave a shelter to members of the "Red Army" of Japan in the past and it might have sold arms to terrorist organizations in other countries. The DPRK government has consistently maintained the principled stand to combat all

forms of terrorism and any form of support to it.

In the DPRK-U.S. joint statement made public last October the U.S. declared its political will to declassify the DPRK as a "terrorism sponsor." This notwithstanding, the anti-DPRK diatribe renewed by the new U.S. administration despite Washington's earlier promise is little short of an open expression of its design to persistently pursue hostile policy towards the DPRK in violation of the statement.

It is foolish enough for the U.S. to slander the DPRK over the issue of terrorism.

The DPRK is fully prepared to react to any U.S. attitude.

EU Delegation

(Continued from page 1)

Commissioner Chris Patten said: "He was very articulate, spoke without notes. The talks were surprisingly open and free-flowing." And the delegates said the North Korean leader reasonably and knowledgeably discussed a wide range of issues and willing to debate points of view.

Back home in Sweden, a member of the EU delegation told a press conference on May 5 that the delegation achieved all the desired results.

American media pointed to the personality and work-style of Kim Jong Il by saying that he "appeared just as bold, self-confident and lighthearted as he did then" (when former U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright met Kim Jong Il in October 2000); and that "successive visitors have described Kim Jong Il as a polite host, articulate and in command of the issues." "Pyongyang sent a message of its own," Reuters said, "Kim Jong Il also offered an olive branch to President Bush."

The Los Angeles Times in its signed article on May 5 commented: "With frustration mounting in the two Koreas over the Bush administration's slow pace in crafting a North Korea policy and apparent reluctance to negotiate" with North Korea, "Seoul and Pyongyang sent a not-so-subtle message to Washington this week: If you're not willing to provide diplomatic leadership, we'll ask Europe to pick up some of the slack."

In the meantime, during his stay in Pyongyang the Swedish Prime Minister stressed that the EU-North Korean dialogue "must not be seen as something that can replace the American dialogue. Both

are needed," and that he was in the North to represent the interest of the 15-nation EU.

Pyongyang's Assessment

The DPRK side put much weight on the visit to Pyongyang by the first high-powered EU delegation.

Kim Yong Nam in his speech in honor of the delegation said: "We believe that it was a good judgement, a good decision for the European Union to have normalized with our country and to improve relations."

"There are things in common between the DPRK and the EU member states in view of historical development," said Rodong Sinmun, organ of the Workers' Party of Korea, in its May 2 editorial. "The DPRK has pursued an independent foreign policy," it continued, "regarding independence as its life and soul, and the European Union has strongly asserted its independence in view of the historical background and life experience." "Now the EU is increasing the validity of its existence and role as a dynamic and viable regional organization," it added.

Reviewing the EU delegation's two-day visit to Pyongyang, the paper in its May 7 editorial pointed out that during its stay, "both sides had in-depth dialogues on matters of mutual concern on several occasions, and in this course, came to be aware of each other's stand." "We estimate," it added, "this visit of the EU delegation as an affirmative and significant one because it has laid a new groundwork for developing the relations between the DPRK and the EU and its member nations in different fields and for ensuring peace and security on the Korean Peninsula." "We will continue our efforts to develop the bilat-



The EU delegation on arriving at the Pyongyang Airport. Goran Persson (second from the left side), Javier Solana (second from the right side) and Chris Patten (the left most)

eral relationship on the basis of this successful visit," it concluded.

Reaction from Washington and Seoul

"If North Korea does maintain this moratorium, that would be constructive," U.S. department of state spokesman Richard Boucher said on May 4.

Applauding Kim Jong Il's initiative, South Korean President Kim Dae Jung stated on May 3 in Seoul: "We very much hope the U.S. policy review is concluded and the U.S.-North Korea dialogue is resumed very soon."

"The Blue House" in its official press release dated May 4 said: "The EU chair conveyed Chairman Kim Jong Il's verbal message that he is looking forward to meeting with President Kim Dae Jung again. Prime Minister Persson expressed the hope that Chairman Kim's return visit to Seoul will take place in the near future and reinvigorate the inter-Korea dialogue. He promised continued EU support for and cooperation in promoting South-North rapprochement."

"Now, the ball is in the court of the United States," The Korea Times commented in its editorial dated May 4.

UN Human Rights Body Adopts Resolution Urging Punishment of Perpetrators of Violence against Women

Japan Comes Under Fire for Refusing to Accept Legal Liability for Comfort Women

The 57th session of UN Commission on Human Rights unanimously adopted the resolution "Elimination of Violence against Women," which approved a report made by a UNCHR Special Rapporteur, which recommended that all cases concerning "violence against women" such as "comfort women" should be prosecuted and be put on trial.

The resolution, proposed by 39 nations, was unanimously adopted by a consensus of all 53 committee member nations of the UNCHR during its 57th session, which wrapped up its six-week run on Apr. 27.

Condemning all acts of gender-based violence against women, the resolution (E/CN.4/RES/2001/49) called for the elimination of all forms of gender-based violence in a family, within a general community and which are perpetrated or condoned by the State. The resolution also emphasized the duty of governments not to engage in violence against women, the duty of government to investigate and punish acts of violence against women and to take appropriate and effective action concerning acts of violence against women in accordance with national legislation, whether those acts are perpetrated by the State, by private persons or by armed groups or warring factions, and to provide access to just and effective remedies and specialized, including medical, assistance to victims.

The resolution said in Article 1 that it "welcomes" the work of the Special Rapporteur Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy on violence against women, its cause and consequences and "takes note 'with appreciation' of her report." (E/CN.4/2001/73 and Add.1-2)

In its preamble, the latest resolution also reaffirmed "the responsibility of all States

to put an end to impunity and prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes."

UN Special Rapporteur, in her latest report, urged the Japanese government to admit its legal responsibility, to make reparation to victims and strongly proposed punishment of those responsible for organizing and operating the system of comfort women.

In her report, Special Rapporteur criticized Japan's attitude of "refusing to accept legal liability or to pay compensation to the victims" although the government of Japan has acknowledged moral responsibility for the system of organizing sexual slaves euphemistically called "comfort women" during the Second World War.

"There has been no attempt to implement the set of recommendations the Special Rapporteur made in her 1996 report, or those outlined by the Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the appendix to her final report on systematic rape, sexual slavery and slavery-like practices during armed conflict."

The Japanese side demanded to delete the expression, "with appreciation" from the draft of the resolution, saying that the expression had a subjective judgment of the Special Rapporteur's report, but the claim was turned down by the session, faced with the strong opposition of north and south Korea and Canada.

The adoption of the resolution served as an objection of the international community to Tokyo's traditional standpoint on the "comfort women" issue that the issue was already settled in accordance with international and bilateral agreements, such as the San Francisco Peace Treaty and the Japan-south Korea bilateral treaty (Treaty

S. Korean Leaders Call for Resumed N. Korea-U.S. Talks: An Open Letter to Bush

A total of 113 leaders from different quarters of South Korea called on U.S. President George W. Bush to resume dialogue with North Korea on May 7. They also expressed concern over Washington's controversial missile shield plan, South Korean media reported on May 8.

They sent, the sources said, an open letter to President Bush, Vice-President Dick Cheney, Secretary of State Colin Powell, and 64 other American figures who are "influential" in the review of U.S. North Korean policy.

The message was delivered to Evans J. Revere, the acting U.S. ambassador to South Korea. The letter, which was authored by members of the Korea Peace Forum, a civic organization promoting inter-Korean reconciliation, was released at a press conference in Seoul.

The action was timed with the visit to Seoul of U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage which took place between May 9 and 10.

The letter was co-signed by leaders from religious groups, academic fields, political circles, media organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Among them were former Roman Catholic archbishop of Seoul Stephen Cardinal Kim Sou Hwan; president of the Korea Peace Forum and concurrently honorary

president of the World Conference on Religion and Peace Kang Won Yong; and president emeritus of the Korean Buddhist Chogye Order Song Wol Joo, former director of the Agency for National Security Planning Park Seh Jik, and Korea National Red Cross president Suh Young Hoon.

"We are sending this," said the letter, "as we believe that U.S. support is more crucial than anything else in realizing Koreans' hope for peace." "We are concerned that recent remarks by leaders in Washington regarding labels used for the North and the stability of its regime may not be helpful in improving inter-Korean relations," which "may lead North Korea to hesitate in approaching a negotiating table with South Korea or the United States."

The letter urged George Bush to strictly adhere to the Pyongyang-Washington Agreed Framework of 1994 and to come back to the suspended missile talks with Pyongyang as soon as possible. It pointed to the possibility that if the U.S. anti-missile shield plan is put into effect, it "may adversely affect the process of peace and reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula."

The South Korean leaders also demanded the Bush administration support Seoul's reconciliation policy toward Pyongyang and a second inter-Korean summit meeting.

on Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea) in 1965.

Tokyo Criticized for Authorizing Distorted History Textbooks

Meanwhile, the 57th session of the UNCHR heard representatives from north and south Korea and China censure the Japanese government's official approval of distorted history textbooks in the discussion of article 13 "Children's Rights."

Calling attention to the fact that recently the Japanese government approved distorted history textbooks, which concealed wrongdoings committed by imperial Japan

in the past, north Korean representative said, "The intentional and cunning distortion of history by the Japanese government is an unbearable humiliation and contempt to Korean and other victimized peoples."

"The controversial history textbooks are the same as a fraud on international community," he said, adding that it will give negative effects on Japan's younger generation and the international community.

The south Korean representative also stated that all States should provide children with access to truth in education. "No State should allow a distortion of history," he said.



Kim Yun Mi returns a shot against her Chinese opponent during the 45th World Table Tennis Championships. She seizes a bronze medal at the contest.

Table Tennis (Continued from page 1)

was of great meaning that is showed its strength to the world this time.

Although the north Korean and Chinese teams have competed with each other in the final match four times in the past, the former has never won victory against China.

Having defeated the south Korean opponent 3-1 in the semi-final, north Korea went to the final of women's team event.

In the first game, Kim Hyang Mi was defeated 15-21, 10-21 by Chinese player Wang Nan, who ranked first in the world. While north Korean ace Kim Hyon Hui got the first set against Zhang Yining in the second match, she lost 21-18, 18-21, 13-21 to the Chinese opponent. In the third event, To Jong Sil put up a good fight with Li Ju, but she was also defeated by a narrow margin 21-17, 21-23, 14-21.

"Our team still lacks ability. With a little more effort, I believe that we are sure to be on a level high enough to win the championships. We will overcome our problems through excises," said Ri Hyong Il, trainer of the DPRK women's team.

Kim Yun Mi gets bronze

In the women's single matches, the world's No. 59 ranked Kim Yun Mi won a bronze medal, sweeping out the world's top ranking players one by one.

Her powerful advance to the medal started in the third round of the competition, defeating world's No. 2 player, Li Ju, 18-21, 21-18, 23-21, 21-17.

Li, from China, took the first set, but

Kim capitalized on her opponent's shaky serves and returns to sweep the next three.

Kim, 19, also beat off the world's No. 9 ranked Steff Mihaela and went to a semi-final.

However, in the next round, she was defeated by the world's No. 3 Lin Ling from China.

"I was so hasty to win the game that I lost because of my own bad shots," said Kim. The DPRK manager Ri Hyong Il said, "she fought well, but she needs a little more experience in international competition."

Koreans in Japan cheered up both north and south Korean players

During the championships, north and south Korean players were given warm cheers by affiliated with Koreans of Chongryun and Mindan and cheering groups from south Korea.

About 600 Koreans enthusiastically cheered them, waving flags depicting "the Korean Peninsula" in blue on a white background.

However, north and south Korean players competed with each other in a semi-final of women's team event, "Go Korea!" and "Keep at it, our Korea!" so saying, they cheered them regardless of what team gained a score.

"I come here to see the match between the north and south. I feel very good to see the Korean cheering groups here giving a hearty cheer to both Korean teams regardless of what group they belong to," said Kim Sang Bok who went to the stadium together with his family.

After the competition, they gave a big applause and started singing "Our Wish Is

Interview with Choe Ra U Head of DPRK Table Tennis Team

Here is an interview with Choe Ra U, Chief Secretary of the DPRK Table Tennis Association.

Q. How was the world championship this time?

Since we were aiming to capture a gold in the championships, I am not satisfied with the results that the contest ended in our placing second.

In the final match against China, I realized that we were not inferior to China in spiritual point but we had many problems in skill and technique.

We have many problems to overcome but we are sure that it is not so long that we will catch up with China.

While our men's team has participated in the world championships for the first time in three years, it can be said that the men's team is now in a transition period due to its failure in training well in recent years.

I think it will take a long time for it to come up to the world's top level.

We captured a medal in a single match for the first time in five years.

During the championships, Kim Yun Mi put up a good fight. I think our women's team is almost on a world-class level and the levels of our female players who participated in the championships were almost the same.

Not only Kim Yun Mi but also other female players already had enough power to reach a medal thanks to the condition on the day.

Q. How do you feel about a unified team?

Before the world championship was held, the north and the south had a talk in March to form a unified team of north and south Korea to participate in the world championships. However we were unable to form a unified team because no agreement was reached on a few practical issues.

We did not have enough time to provide training conditions to form a powerful team sufficient to win in the championships this time.

Though a unified team was not realized,

14 — A national meeting was held at the April 25 House of Culture on Apr. 14 to commemorate Sun's Day, April 15, the 89th birth anniversary of the late President Kim Il Sung.

15 — The 14th "Mangyongdae Cup" International Marathon Race took place in Pyongyang, participated in by over 500 runners from over 20 countries. Kim Jung Won and Jong Yong Ok of the DPRK won gold medals respectively in men's and women's competitions.

15 — Kim Jong Il visited unit No. 2629 of the KPA honored with the title of "Commander O Jung Hup's Seventh Regiment."

16 — Kim Jong Il inspected an artillery battalion unit No. 3427 of the KPA.

17 — Kim Jong Il inspected unit Nos. 841 and 998 of the KPA.

19 — Kim Jong Il inspected a fish farm at the Fish Breeding Center.

22 — Kim Jong Il received leading members and artistes of the State Academy Ensemble of the Ministry of Interior of Russia headed by V. P. Yelseev, which participated in the 19th April Spring Friendship Art Festival. He also saw a performance given by the Russian artistes group.

23 - May 6 — DPRK table tennis players participated in the 46th World Table



Mr. Choe Ra U

we spent time with members of the south Korean team as we were on the same floor of the lodging while the world championships were open. We were able to deepen exchanges freely in our lodging, dining room and competition hall.

Q. How about the Koreans in Japan who gave warm cheers during the competition?

I have so far visited Japan many times, but each time I felt a hearty welcome by Koreans in Japan. We were very much encouraged seeing Koreans supporting us in various ways.

Although there are many people who left their fatherlands to live in other countries, I have never seen people like Koreans in Japan who love their country so much.

Q. How is your future prospect for the DPRK's table tennis team?

The rule of contest will be changed by September this year, such as a rule that a game should be won by scoring 11 points. For the next championships, I will study measures to cope with the new rules and trends in the world.

Tennis Championships held in Osaka, Japan.

24 — Somsavath Lengsavath, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, visited the DPRK.

24 — A Namibian government delegation, led by Nahas Angula, Minister of Higher Education, Training and Employment Creation, visited the DPRK.

24 - 25 — Jong Mong Hon, Chairman of the Hyundai Asan Co., Ltd. of south Korea, visited the DPRK.

25 — Kim Jong Il visited unit No. 671 of the KPA.

27 - 28 — The DPRK high-ranking military delegation, led by Vice Marshall Kim Il Chol, Vice-chairman of the National Defense Commission, visited the Russian Federation. Kim Il Chol, Minister of the People's Armed Forces, had formal talks with Iliya Klebanov, Deputy Prime Minister of Russia, and Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov in Moscow. Both sides signed an agreement on cooperation in the field of military technology between the two countries and another on cooperation between the armed forces organs of the two countries.

30 — General Secretary Kim Jong Il visited South Hwanghae Province to guide in land realignment projects in the province.

Roundup of Major Events in DPRK

April

5 — The 4th Session of the 10th Supreme People's Assembly was held in the Mansudae Assembly Hall in Pyongyang.

6 - 11 — An 80-member delegation of CHONGRYUN (the General Association of the Korean Residents in Japan) made its third visit to south Korea.

6 — The DPRK established diplomatic relations with Kuwait.

7 — A delegation of Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, led by its honorable President Joseph Rotblat, visited the DPRK.

7 — Franz Von Daeniken, Secretary of State of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, visited the DPRK.

10 - 18 — The 19th April Spring Friendship Art Festival was held at the 6,000-seat theater of the April 25 House of Culture in Pyongyang, participated in by government

cultural delegations and delegates, artistes from 46 countries and overseas Korean artistes.

10 — Supreme Commander Kim Jong Il of the Korean People's Army (KPA) inspected unit No. 884 of the Airforce of the KPA.

11 — General Secretary Kim Jong Il met in Hamhung, South Hamgyong Province, with south Korean singer Kim Ryon Ja and her husband who visited the DPRK to participate in the 19th April Spring Friendship Art Festival.

11 — Kim Jong Il inspected industrial establishments in Hamhung.

13 — KPA Supreme Commander Kim Jong Il issued an order on promoting leading officers of the KPA to higher military ranks. One leading officer was promoted to colonel general, three to lieutenant generals and 15 to major generals.