



## **KIM JONG IL ON AN ECONOMIC ON-SITE INSTRUCTION BLITZ**

This year, North Korean leader Kim Jong Il has been very active in giving on-site guidance at economically-important venues. As recently as July 31, Kim visited the Ganggye and Huicheon areas of Jagang Province, inspecting and providing instruction at a number of facilities, including the Ganggye Tractor Complex, the Jangja River Construction Instrument Factory, the September Textile Factory, the Jangja Mountain Food Complex, and the Ganggye Basic Foods Factory. Between August 2-5, Kim Jong Il spent several days visiting venues in South Hamgyeong Province, including the February 8 Vinalon Complex, the Ryongseong Instrument Complex Military First Foundry, the People's Consumables Exhibit Hall, and the Geumya River Power Station Construction Office.

Just by looking at Kim Jong Il's public outings, one can see that he is focusing his efforts on economic recovery. From the beginning of the year until August 5, Kim has made a total of 90 public appearances, with 42 (46.7%) being to economic venues, 23 (25.6%) to military venues, 19 (21.1%) to theaters or other performance halls, and 6 (6.6%) to reception halls or other venues for foreign guests and dignitaries. Compared to the same period last year, Kim has made 4.7 percent more public appearances, and visits to economic venues increased by 7.2 percent. In 2009, he made 34 (39.5%) visits to economic venues, 23 (26.7%) to military installations, and 4 (4.7%) visits related to foreign diplomacy. The other 25 (29.1%) visits were to various other facilities. Reviews of artistic performances were down 8 percent (29.1% → 21.1%) and inspections of military facilities fell 1.1 percent (26.7% → 25.6%), while appearances at foreign diplomatic venues were up 1.9 percent (4.7 → 6.6%).

Kim Jong Il's focus on the economy comes in a year in which the Workers' Party of Korea celebrates its 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary (October 10), and the WPK party representatives are expected to meet in September for the first time in forty-four years, increasing pressure on Kim for visible economic improvements. Furthermore, reviving the stagnant economy is essential to providing a stable succession system for his third son, Kim Jong Eun. In the spirit of the movement, North Korea's mass media outlets have also joined the campaign, encouraging the residents of North Korea to put forth more effort daily. An editorial in the WPK newspaper, Rodong Sinmun, on



August 2 urged all the people of North Korea to strive harder to achieve the goals set forth in this year's New Year's Joint Editorial, and tied this to the upcoming "historic" WPK representatives meeting and the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary, encouraging "glorious efforts" worthy of such political milestones.

On a different note, Kim Jong Il also launched a 'good health' campaign in the second half of July, inspecting health and wellness-related sights and promoting better health for all North Koreans. Kim has been making frequent site visits, but the fact that they have been only in a relatively limited area has raised questions as to just how healthy the leader is. Last month, after travelling frequently during the first two weeks, Kim's travels toward the end of the month slowed down, with him making only three visits, all to artistic performances. Some wonder if it is not poor health that has slowed him down.