

ENERGY SHORTAGES LEAD TO FALL IN APPLIANCE SALES IN DPRK STATE-RUN STORES

The South Korean NGO 'Good Friends' has reported that government stores in North Korea are mourning the drop in sales of electrical appliance, which appear to be out of favor due to electrical shortages around the country. Good Friends, an organization focused on supplying aid to North Korea, printed in its latest newsletter, "From November of last year to this February electricity has not been available on a regular basis in Chungjin City. At one foreign goods store in the Pohang District, electrical appliances have been barely selling...not only have the store's sellers have been unable to meet monthly sales targets for several months, sales in February are no different."

In addition, the newsletter describes the seriousness of the North's energy shortage, pointing out that "as it becomes more and more difficult for residents to see electricity, they are seeking out Chinese-made 12V batteries, car batteries, candles, and other alternatives." According to the article, most well-off residents are using car batteries, while average laborers carry flashlights or small battery chargers to work, using electricity slated for industrial use to charge personal items. "Authorities or people with relatively good jobs usually have around five rechargers in their offices, while some may have more than ten...people with no money or access to industrial-use electricity are buying candles for light."

The article concluded with, "Electricity has not flown into Soonchun City since October of last year, and five hours of current provided for the people last January 1st, New Year's Day, was practically the only [electricity]...when returning home after work in the evenings, there is no electricity and nothing to eat, making life difficult." Along with this, the newsletter reported,

“North Korean authorities will no longer permit private dummy corporations...in serious cases, public executions are carried out.”