

SATELLITES AND SALADS AS THE DPRK MOVES TOWARD CONSTRUCTION OF A STRONG AND POWERFUL NATION

North Korea has given notice that it will launch a rocket to place its 'Kwangmyongsong 2' satellite into orbit some time between the 4th and 8th of next month. The Choson Sinbo, the newspaper run by the pro-Pyongyang 'General Association of Korean Residents in Japan', carried an article emphasizing that the launch of the satellite will be an important step in the construction of a 'Strong and Prosperous Nation' by the year 2012.

The article, carrying the title, "Dream," stated that "those who are clamoring that a missile and a satellite are the same" were trying to "steal away even the right to space development." The paper went on to state that the children of North Korea would not have their dream of freely traveling to space "snatched away," that the young would take delight in picking out the Kwangmyongsong 2 amongst the stars in the night sky, and that the next generation would further advance the North's space exploration, "not as a dream, but as a reality," insisting that Pyongyang is planning the launch of a satellite, not a missile.

On a less controversial note, North Korea's online magazine "Uriminjokkiri (Our Nation by Itself)" announced on March 21 that renovations have been completed on eighteen restaurants in Pyongyang's most famous dining district. Many areas of Pyongyang have been getting facelifts as the country prepares for 2012 celebrations of the creation of a Strong and Prosperous Nation in the year marking the 100th anniversary of the birth of Kim Il Sung. The website stated, "The interiors and exteriors of eighteen restaurants have been renovated and vanguard operating equipment has been installed." It reported that the work was expected to take 2-3 years, but all renovations and upgrades have been made in the dining areas, kitchens, and storefronts in only 12 months. The restaurant district, near the Koryo Hotel and the (North) Korean Workers' Party offices, is home to Pyongyang's most exclusive restaurants, and offers a wide variety of dining experiences.