

South Korea ships fuel oil to North Korea

by UPI

SEOUL -- The first shipload of heavy fuel oil, part of an aid deal for North Korea's denuclearization, left South Korea's Ulsan port Thursday. The Yonhap news agency reported the 6,200-ton tanker-load was bound for North Korea's Sonbong port. It is part of 52,000 tons, valued at \$22 million, which South Korea has promised to provide in the next 20 days as its share of the deal. Earlier this month, North Korea said it will begin shutting down its main nuclear reactor in Yongbyon, near the capital Pyongyang, once the first shipment of the fuel oil is dispatched. The fuel oil, needed to operate its electric power plants, is part of a package of economic aid to be given to North Korea under a February agreement. In exchange for the economic aid North Korea has agreed to close its nuclear facilities. The total cost of the aid package is to be borne by the five nations involved in the talks to persuade North Korea to abandon its nuclear ambitions -- South Korea, the United States, Russia, China and Japan. Japan, however, wants the North to resolve the issue of kidnapped Japanese citizens before giving its share, the report said.

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