

Kim-Medvedev Summit Likely To Be Delayed
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KHABAROVSK, Russia, Aug 22 (Bernama) -- North Korean leader Kim Jong-il's summit talks with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev will likely take place on Wednesday, instead of the widely expected Tuesday, due to possible schedule changes by Kim, an intelligence official in Russia said Monday.

On the third day of his first Russian trip in nine years, Kim is believed to be heading for Ulan-Ude, the expected venue of the North Korea-Russia summit, aboard his special train after visiting the Bureiskaya hydroelectric plant in the Amur region on Sunday, reports South Korea's Yonhap news agency.

Ulan-Ude, near Lake Baikal, is about 3,000 kilometres away from Bureiskaya.

"On his way to Ulan-Ude, Kim is likely to stop off at the city of Skovorodino," the intelligence official said on the condition of anonymity. "If so, the North Korea-Russia summit, originally scheduled for Aug 23, will be delayed by one day."

Skovorodino is the starting point for an oil pipeline between eastern Siberia and China. Russia and China completed a 1,000-km oil pipeline linking Skovorodino to Daqing in the northeastern Chinese province of Heilongjiang last year.

For years, Russia has proposed building a pipeline through the divided Korean Peninsula to sell Siberian natural gas to South Korea, one of the world's largest buyers of natural gas.

If realised, the project could help ease tensions on the peninsula and bring much-needed hard currency to North Korea. North Korea can expect to earn more than US\$500 million a year in handling charges over the gas pipeline, according to South Korean analysts.

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