

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA



Country Dialling Code (Tel/Fax): ++850

National Tourism Administration: Central District Pyongyang Tel: (2)3818901 Fax: (2)3817607

Capital: Pyongyang Time GMT + 9

Background: Following World War II, Korea was split into a northern, communist half and a southern, Western-oriented half. KIM Chong-il has ruled North Korea since his father and the country's founder, president KIM Il-sung, died in 1994. After decades of mismanagement, the North relies heavily on international food aid to feed its population, while continuing to expend resources to maintain an army of over 1 million, the fifth largest in the world. North Korea's long-range missile development and research into nuclear and chemical weapons are of major concern to the international community.

Map References: Asia

Area: total: 120,540 sq km land: 120,410 sq km water: 130 sq km

Climate: temperate with rainfall concentrated in summer

Terrain: mostly hills and mountains separated by deep, narrow valleys; coastal plains wide in west, discontinuous in east

Natural Resources: coal, lead, tungsten, zinc, graphite, magnesite, iron ore, copper, gold, pyrites, salt, fluorspar, hydropower

Population: 21,687,550 (July 2000 est.)

Nationality: noun: Korean(s) adjective: Korean

Ethnic Groups: racially homogeneous; there is a small Chinese community and a few ethnic Japanese

Religions: traditionally Buddhist and Confucianist, some Christian and syncretic Chondogyo (Religion of the Heavenly Way)

Languages: Korean

Economy: North Korea ranks among the world's most centrally planned and isolated economies. The resulting economic distortions and the government's reluctance to publicize economic data limit the amount of reliable information available. State-owned industry produces nearly all manufactured goods, and the regime continues to devote its focus on heavy and military industries at the expense of light and consumer industries. Economic conditions remain stagnant at best and the country's deepening economic slide has been fueled by acute energy shortages, poorly maintained and aging industrial facilities, and a lack of new investment. The agricultural outlook, though slightly improved over previous years, remains weak. The combined effects of serious fertilizer shortages, successive natural disasters, and structural constraints - such as marginal arable land and a short growing season - have reduced staple grain output to more than 1 million tons less than what the country needs to meet even minimum international requirements. The steady flow of international food aid has been critical in meeting the population's basic food needs. The impact of other forms of humanitarian assistance such as medical supplies and agricultural assistance largely has been limited to local areas. Even with aid, malnutrition rates are among the world's highest and estimates of mortality range in the hundreds of thousands as a direct result of starvation or famine-related diseases.

Industries: military products; machine building, electric power, chemicals; mining (coal, iron ore, magnesite, graphite, copper, zinc, lead, and precious metals), metallurgy; textiles, food processing; tourism

Currency: 1 North Korean won (Wn) = 100 chon

Railways: total: 5,000 km standard gauge: 4,095 km 1.435-m gauge (3,500 km electrified; 159 km double track) narrow gauge: 665 km 0.762-m gauge dual gauge: 240 km 1.435-m and 1.600-m gauges (four rails interlaced) (1996 est.)

Highways: total: 31,200 km paved: 1,997 km unpaved: 29,203 km (1996 est.)

Waterways: 2,253 km; mostly navigable by small craft only

Ports and Harbors: Ch'ongjin, Haeju, Hungnam (Hamhung), Kimch'aek, Kosong, Najin, Namp'o, Sinuiju, Songnim, Sonbong (formerly Unggi), Ungsang, Wonsan

Airports: 49 (1994 est.) Airports - with paved runways: total: 22 over 3,047 m: 2 2,438 to 3,047 m: 15 1,524 to 2,437 m: 2 914 to 1,523 m: 1 under 914 m: 2 (1994 est.) Airports - with unpaved runways: total: 27 2,438 to 3,047 m: 4 1,524 to 2,437 m: 5 914 to 1,523 m: 12 under 914 m: 6 (1994 est.)

Visa: are very difficult to obtain. Tourism is currently for organised groups of 10

Duty Free: goods permitted: a reasonable amount of tobacco and alcohol

Health: all water should be regarded as potentially contaminated. Cases of malaria have been reported.

HOTELS•MOTELS•INNS

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PYONGYANG

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