

# Facts and Figures about the DPRK



Foreign Languages Publishing House  
DPR Korea  
2025

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# 1. OUTLINE

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## Location

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is located east of the Asian continent, lying between 124° 10' 51" E. and 130° 41' 52" E. and between 37° 37' 55" N. and 43° 00' 32" N.

It is bounded in the north by China and Russia and in the south by the ROK, flanked by the East Sea of Korea and the West Sea of Korea.

## Area and Topography

The DPRK covers an area of 123 427km<sup>2</sup>, with islands occupying 229km<sup>2</sup>.

Its topography is featured by mountains which occupy nearly 80% of the territory.

It lies 581m above sea level on average.

## Mountains

Each of the mountains of the DPRK originates from the Great Paektu Mountains, which consist of Paektu, Pujonryong, Puktaebong, Masikryong, and Chollyong mountains among others.

The Great Paektu Mountains stand 1 380m on average and run as long as 953km, with Janggun Peak (2 750m) of Mt Paektu as the highest peak.

## Rivers

The DPRK abounds in rivers and streams, typical of them being the Amnok, Tuman and Taedong rivers.

Their water sources are abundant and of good quality.

## **Climate**

As part of the eastern boundary of the Asian continent adjacent to the Pacific Ocean, the DPRK is influenced both by the continental and oceanic climate.

The climate is temperate with four distinctive seasons—spring, summer, autumn and winter.

## **Administrative Districts**

The DPRK consists of the capital city of Pyongyang and nine provinces such as South Phyongan, North Phyongan, South Hwanghae, North Hwanghae, Jagang, Kangwon, North Hamgyong, South Hamgyong and Ryanggang, as well as three municipal cities of Nampho, Rason and Kaesong.

Provinces and municipal cities are divided

into city (district), county and ri (township, ward and dong).

## **Modern Korea**

### **Anti-Japanese Revolutionary Struggle**

The anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle which was fought against Japanese invaders under the wise leadership of the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung goes down in Korean history.

The 20-year anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle was a revolutionary war of the highest form in which the Korean people drove back the foreign imperialist invaders and won back national independence by their own efforts under the banner of the Juche idea, an original revolutionary ideology created by Kim Il Sung. It was also an unprecedentedly arduous and protracted revolutionary war that was fought against the formidable enemy, without any backing of the

state or support of a regular army.

It set an example of armed struggle against imperialists for the people in colonies and subordinated countries, and opened up a new historic era.

The anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle was the world's first war for liberating the people from colonialism that was fought victoriously under the banner of the Juche idea, and it went a long way towards the development of the revolution around the world.

### Korea's Liberation

On August 15, 1945, the Korean people achieved the historic cause of national liberation.

The anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle waged under the seasoned leadership of Kim Il Sung put an end to Japan's colonial rule that had lasted for 40-odd years and brought independence and liberation of the country to the

Korean people.

Korea's liberation marked a turning point in shaping the destiny of the Korean people and opened up a broad avenue for them to build an independent, sovereign state.

### Founding of the Workers' Party of Korea

The Workers' Party of Korea was founded on October 10, 1945.

Kim Il Sung founded the Party with the communists, who had been hardened and trained during the protracted anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle, as the core and with those communists who had been active in different areas at home and abroad.

The WPK was not formed by proclaiming its central committee but by setting up its basic organizations before expanding and strengthening them. This was an unheard-of approach.

The WPK is a mass-based party that was built

guided by the Juche idea and, on the basis of it, has achieved the unity in ideology and purpose—a revolutionary party of the Juche type that fights for the masses of the people.

### Founding of the Korean People's Army

The Korean People's Army, regular revolutionary armed forces, was founded on February 8, 1948.

It is a glorious army that inherits the revolutionary traditions of the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle, a genuine people's army consisting of fine sons and daughters of workers, farmers and other working people, and an army that fights for the safety and wellbeing of the people and against foreign imperialist aggressors.

The founding of the KPA completed the cause of building revolutionary armed forces of an independent, sovereign state capable of defending national sovereignty, gains of the revolution and wellbeing of the people.

### Birth of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea was founded on September 9, 1948 in accordance with the general will of all the Korean people.

The DPRK is a genuine people's state which inherits the glorious revolutionary traditions established by Kim Il Sung during the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle and represents the interests of the workers, farmers and other working people and champions their independence.

With the birth of the DPRK, the Korean people could become a dignified people who carve out their destiny independently as true masters of the state and society for the first time in history, and the country came to appear on the international arena on its own terms as an independent, sovereign state.

The DPRK is the most democratic state that allows the broad sections of the masses of the people to participate in state affairs, and a genuine

people's state which provides the workers, farmers and all the other people with political freedom and rights and a happy material and cultural life.

### **Capital**

The capital of the DPRK is Pyongyang.

The new history of Pyongyang as the capital began on September 9, 1948, when President Kim Il Sung (1912-1994) founded the DPRK.

Pyongyang is the political centre of the country and the hub of its economy and culture. The modern city embraces major educational, public health, sports, artistic and other cultural institutions, as well as scientific research institutes.

### **National Symbols**

#### **National Emblem**

The DPRK's national emblem bears the design

of a grand hydroelectric power station under Mt Paektu, the sacred mountain of the revolution, and the beaming light of a five-pointed red star, with ears of rice forming an oval frame, bound with a red ribbon bearing the inscription "Democratic People's Republic of Korea."

Mt Paektu and the beaming light of the red star on the upper part of the emblem symbolize the revolutionary traditions inherited by the DPRK and the bright future of the Korean people who are working towards the completion of the revolutionary cause of Juche.

The red ribbon of the emblem and the country's name on it stand for the invincibility of the Republic.

The name *Democratic People's Republic of Korea* clearly indicates the character and mission of the Republic that the masses of the people take part in state affairs as the true masters of state power by establishing democracy to the

full in the construction and activities of the state and that the people's democratic dictatorship is strengthened to exercise thorough dictatorship over class enemies and provide the working masses including workers and farmers with genuine political freedom and rights and happy material and cultural life.

### National Flag

The national flag of the DPRK has a broad red panel at the centre, bordered both above and below by a thin white stripe and a relatively broader blue stripe, with a five-pointed red star in a white circle nearer to the hoist.

The red colour of the flag symbolizes the blood shed by the anti-Japanese revolutionary forerunners and the single-hearted unity of the Korean people.

The white circle and two white stripes show that the DPRK is a genuine country of the people

in which they are masters and which enjoys their absolute support and trust. They also imply the pure loyalty of the Korean people following the Workers' Party of Korea and their leader and their emotional need for white, the colour traditionally symbolic of honesty, uprightness, purity and smartness for Koreans.

The two blue stripes stand for the vigour of the Korean people in their struggle to build an independent, prosperous nation and their aspiration to world peace and progress.

The five-pointed red star is symbolic of the mettle of the people in their fight for the revolutionary cause of Juche, the glorious traditions of the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle fully inherited by the Republic's government, and of the bright future of the Republic that will thrive, shining like a star forever.

The flag is rectangular with its ratio of the width to the length being 1 to 2.

### National Anthem

The national anthem of the DPRK (written by Pak Se Yong and composed by Kim Won Gyun) was created in 1947 when the Korean people were out to build a new Korea as they became the masters of their country following its liberation from Japan's military occupation (1905-1945).

The song gives a vivid description of the beautiful nature, long history and traditions of their country, their ennobling patriotism and their firm will to add glory to their country through generations by carrying forward the glorious traditions of struggle of the forerunners and to build theirs into an eternal country of the people.

The lyrics start with *Shine bright, you dawn, on this land so fair*, a verse which reflects the sentiment of the people with an unusual pride in being born in Korea known as the Land of Morning Calm. What they think of their country, one of the birthplaces of mankind, where the

brilliant Taedonggang Culture started as far as 5 000 years ago, is portrayed by such weighty and graceful poetic words as *Five thousand years your history* and *And rich in cultural heritage*. The words *And as with heart and soul we strive, Korea shall forever thrive!* strongly appeal to the people to cherish a sense of patriotism so as to add brilliance to the country through generations.

The anthem is very popular for its solemn melody, well-knit musical harmony and delicate musical emotions.

## 2. PEOPLE'S COUNTRY

Employment  
Income and Consumption  
Housing  
Education  
Public Health  
Sports  
Art and Literature  
Leisure Facilities  
Folklore

### Employment

All citizens who have reached the working age (17) are entitled to choose jobs in accordance with their wishes and talents, regardless of gender, nationality and social affiliation. The state provides them with stable jobs and working conditions.

That is why there is no one unemployed in the country.

Daily working hours are differently set as eight, seven and six hours in consideration of the features of the relevant jobs.

Child labour is banned, and female workers are under special protection.

### Income and Consumption

Working people are paid according to the quality and quantity of work done. Remuneration

does not vary between male and female workers unless there is any difference in the quality and quantity of the work they have done in the same jobs and for the same task.

Additional payment such as bonus, bounty and extra allowance is applied.

Pay increment is awarded on the basis of term of service especially in such sectors as mining and forestry. Additional remuneration is also paid to technicians according to their terms of service, qualifications and academic degrees.

Bonuses are applied according to contributions to the implementation of plans, reduction of costs, improvement of quality, saving of major raw and other materials and technical innovation.

Such remuneration paid by the state is spent by the citizens to satisfy their own and their families' material and cultural needs. Free education, free housing and other socialist policies and social benefits do much to save their spending.

## **Housing**

Houses are built at state expense and supplied free to citizens.

With an eye to markedly improving the living environment of the entire population, the state ensures that housing construction is pushed forward nationwide.

## **Education**

### **General Education**

The universal 12-year compulsory education is in place in the country.

The education system consists of a one-year preschool course, five-year primary school course, three-year junior middle school course, and three-year senior middle school course.

Regional power organs and educational

institutions are obliged to grasp how many school-age children there are in their localities and to enrol all of them at school. And parents with or guardians of those children are duty-bound to ensure their enrolment.

The state covers the cost of supplying the schoolchildren with uniforms, school things, bags, shoes and other things necessary for schooling.

The state makes sure that schools are established even at out-of-the-way mountainous villages and far-flung islands where there are a small number of residents and that all the children including those with disabilities gain access to compulsory education.

### Tertiary Education

The state provides all the students with sufficient conditions for receiving tertiary education according to their talents and hopes.

There are many universities in the country, namely Kim Il Sung University, Kim Chaek University of Technology, Pyongyang University of Medical Sciences and University of Sciences. Online education gives an opportunity for learning to the working people. Most of the tertiary courses last four years, but they can vary according to specialist subjects.

Both compulsory middle school education and tertiary education are free. The state awards scholarship to all the university and college students, special grant to the brilliant students, and salary to those who study while working.

The state also supplies the students with uniforms, bags, shoes and other school things.

### Vocational Education

Technical education or vocational education is given at the stages of middle school and

tertiary education.

Pre-employment technical education is given at middle schools of technology and technical colleges which are located in different parts of the country to meet the regional needs. Post-employment technical education is delivered by factories and enterprises.

Post-employment technical education is centred on sci-tech learning spaces at factories, enterprises and farms, which are connected online to the Sci-Tech Complex in Pyongyang and enable the working people to browse for latest technical information for their jobs and attend online lectures on relevant fields in real time.

Under the slogan of making all the people well-versed in science and technology, the state is making great efforts to improve technical education so that all the working people can acquire professional expertise.

### Temples for All-people Learning

The Grand People's Study House, inaugurated on April 1, 1982, covers a total floor space of 100 000m<sup>2</sup> and consists of ten blocks, the highest of which has 10 storeys. The Korean-style architectural structure can house as many as tens of millions of books and has more than 600 rooms including 20 or so reading rooms with 6 000 seats, over 10 lecture rooms, several information rooms and question-and-answer rooms.

The house offers a variety of services for loaning out books, lectures including video and audio ones, lectures given on request, sci-tech workshops and foreign languages courses.

The Sci-Tech Complex, with a total floor space of over 106 600m<sup>2</sup>, was inaugurated on January 1, 2016. It is built in the shape of an atomic structure symbolic of the world of science.

As a multifunctional modern sci-tech dissemination centre and hub for information

exchange, it has several indoor exhibition halls, sci-tech learning spaces, and e-reading rooms, which boast a large database of a comprehensive, systematic wealth of sci-tech books, latest domestic sci-tech hits and advanced sci-tech information of foreign countries, as well as science and other films and photos.

It offers real-time services to all scientific research institutes, educational institutions, industrial establishments and even dwelling houses across the country and ensures sharing of necessary sci-tech materials among them.

### Extracurricular Educational Bases

The DPRK has many extracurricular educational bases.

Across the country there are more than 210 palaces, halls and camps for students including schoolchildren, like the Mangyongdae Schoolchildren's Palace and the Pyongyang

Students and Children's Palace in the capital city.

These facilities provide a space for schoolchildren to conduct group activities according to their wishes and aptitudes.

Both compulsory school education and extracurricular education are free.

### Children's Camps

In the DPRK, where the children are put forward as the king, there is a children's camp in almost every scenic attraction.

To name a few, there are Mangyongdae Children's Camp, Pyongyang Municipal Myohyangsan Children's Mountaineering Camp and Songdowon International Children's Camp.

The Songdowon International Children's Camp accommodates schoolchildren not only from home but also from abroad.

## Public Health

### Public Health System

There are medical facilities in every administrative district of the country ranging from the capital to province, city, county and the lowest-level ri (dong). Hospitals or clinics are also in operation at factories, enterprises and universities.

Provincial, city and county hospitals are connected online to the Pyongyang General Hospital and other modern, specialist hospitals in Pyongyang that provide telemedicine services.

At present, a project is being undertaken in a planned manner to build a modern hospital capable of providing advanced medical services in every city and county in a matter of a decade.

### Preventive Medicine

Public health in the DPRK is designed to prevent diseases and protect and promote human lives and health—the main mission of the socialist healthcare system. Accordingly, the preventive medical care system is in place to protect the working people from all sorts of diseases by means of vaccination and regular medical check-up.

There are disease control and prevention centres in the capital, provinces, cities and counties, and hospitals and clinics in different parts of the country pay particular attention to the prevention of diseases as well as medical treatment.

Under the section doctor system medical workers are responsible for the health of residents under their charge.

### Section Doctor System

The section doctor system is a medical service system in which a doctor takes charge of a section

of a certain number of households and regularly looks round his or her section to inquire into the health of the residents and administer preventive treatment.

### Medical Facilities

The DPRK has many modern hospitals such as the Pyongyang General Hospital—the parent body of modernized public health built in October 2025—the Korea General Red Cross Hospital, the Koryo Medicine General Hospital, the Kim Man Yu Hospital and the Pyongyang University of Medical Sciences Hospital.

The Kangdong County Hospital sprang up in November 2025 as the first outcome of the ongoing drive to build modern regional health facilities in all cities and counties around the country.

### Specialist Hospitals

In Pyongyang there are such specialist

medical facilities as the Pyongyang Maternity Hospital, Breast Tumour Institute of the Pyongyang Maternity Hospital, Okryu Children's Hospital, Ryugyong General Ophthalmic Hospital and Ryugyong Dental Hospital. There are a maternity hospital and children's hospital in every province.

## Sports

### Sports Facilities

Pyongyang has several sports facilities such as 100 000-seat Kim Il Sung Stadium, 150 000-seat May Day Stadium, Yanggakdo Football Stadium, Sosan Football Stadium, Pyongyang Indoor Stadium, Ice Rink, sports village on Chongchun Street, Taekwon-Do Palace and Pyongyang Gold Lane.

There are similar facilities in provinces, cities and county towns, and sporting spaces at factories,

enterprises, farms and schools.

In recent years Pyongyang's Ice Rink and other sporting facilities have been renovated or built.

### Mass-based Physical Culture

Mass-based physical culture means that it is popularized and made part and parcel of everyone's life.

In a bid to promote mass-based physical culture, the DPRK puts emphasis on physical culture at schools while encouraging sporting activities at institutions, industrial establishments and farms and physical exercises at families.

The movement of creating a model sports county (district) and a model sports school is under way nationwide, and the national people's games, sports competitions of workers by sectors and other events are held every year. Mass-based sporting activities are especially conspicuous on the sports days and in the months

dedicated to aquatic sports.

### Mass Gymnastics

Mass gymnastics is a comprehensive, popular form of physical culture that combines sporting skills with ideological and artistic qualities.

It showcases refined physical techniques by various descriptive means such as movements with or without apparatuses, formations and representations. Its high artistic value is guaranteed by a combination of artistic means including backdrop, brass band music and accompaniment, and dance movements.

As a general form of physical culture that mixes high artistic and ideological qualities with physical skills, mass gymnastics help schoolchildren, youth and working people to train themselves physically and enrich their emotions.

Mass gymnastics in the DPRK has developed into mass gymnastics and artistic performance in

the new century, with fresher updates added in terms of scale, form and content.

Representative masterpieces are *Arirang*, a winner of Kim Il Sung Prize, and *Long Live the Workers' Party of Korea* given in October 2025.

### Legendary Athletes

There are many athletes in the country who have won gold medals at Olympic Games, world championships and other international events.

Sin Kum Dan renewed world records as many as 11 times and was shot to fame as queen of world athletics. Han Phil Hwa was the first Asian to win a winter Olympic medal. Pak Yong Sun claimed the world table tennis championship title twice in a row to be called “table tennis queen.” Since her debut Olympic victory in her teens at the women’s 48kg category, Kye Sun Hui scored

four triumphs in succession at different world judo championship categories. Jong Song Ok, a world marathon queen, brilliantly adorned the athletics circles in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Pae Kil Su, a pommel horse legend, won an Olympic gold medal and claimed his third world championship title. Kim Chol Hwan claimed the world wrestling championship title twice.

There are many other athletes who proved themselves at recent international competitions.

## Art and Literature

### Art Troupes

There are several much-loved art troupes such as the State Merited Chorus, Band of the State Affairs Commission, Wangjaesan Art Troupe, Mansudae Art Troupe, Phibada Opera Troupe and National Symphony Orchestra.

### Mass-based Art and Literature

The DPRK ensures that artistic and literary activities are made mass-based in order to step up the development of art and literature by dint of the creative wisdom of the broad masses of the people.

To this end, it is greatly encouraged to organize all sorts of artistic and literary groups and run them on a regular basis. Nationwide literary work prize contests, art festivals and singing contests of the working people are often held.

### People's Art Festival

The People's Art Festival is held to celebrate the birthday (April 15) of the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung and that (February 16) of the great leader Comrade Kim Jong Il.

The festival is the largest art event in the DPRK that brings together performing artists and members of art groups from different institutions,

industrial establishments and farms across the country.

### April Spring Friendship Art Festival

The April Spring Friendship Art Festival, an international event, was held in Pyongyang for the first time in April 1982 to celebrate the birth anniversary of the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung.

It is intended to promote friendship, unity and cultural exchanges among artistes the world over under the ideals of independence, peace and friendship and thus work together to develop music and the arts of humankind.

It encompasses all sorts of performing arts such as vocal music, instrumental music, dance and acrobatics, and it is honoured by the participation of renowned art troupes, international contest winners and other established foreign artistes.

### Pyongyang International Film Festival

The Pyongyang International Film Festival that started in Pyongyang in 1987 aims at promoting friendship, exchange and cooperation among people and film artistes in the world under the slogan "For independence, peace and friendship."

The participants are to compete for awards for best film, screenplay, director, shooting, actor, actress, fine art and music, as well as special award.

### Leisure Facilities

Pyongyang boasts such theatres as Pyongyang Grand Theatre, Mansudae Art Theatre, People's Theatre, East Pyongyang Grand Theatre and Pyongyang Acrobatic Theatre. It also has many leisure facilities including the Rungna People's Recreation Ground, Munsu Water Park, Mangyongdae Amusement Park, Taesongsan

Recreation Ground, Central Zoo, Taedongmun Cinema, Pyongyang International Cinema House, and Mirim Riding Club.

There are theatres and recreation grounds in provinces.

Scenic attractions along the east and west coasts are dotted with resorts. The most famous one is the Wonsan Kalma Coastal Tourist Area on the east coast.

Holiday camps are in Mt Myohyang, Mt Kumgang and other scenic spots. In addition, there are popular ski resorts like Masikryong Ski Resort.

### Folklore

#### Costume

Koreans have worn their own traditional clothes from ancient times.

The Korean clothes mainly consist of the upper

and lower parts, plus overcoat and underwear.

Men's clothes are made up of trousers, *jogori* (jacket) and *turumagi* (overcoat). Their kinds and forms varied according to the times and class standings.

Women's clothes consist of *jogori* (jacket), trousers, *chima* (skirt) and overcoat. Women's *jogori* is mostly the same as men's in the form, but generally shorter than the latter in length and beautiful for the congruous mix of its colours and patterns.

What is distinctive in women's *jogori* is *hoejang* (colourful strips of cloth for trimmings).

Originally, *hoejang* was intended for keeping the jacket clean by frequently replacing the parts, which get dirty earlier than other parts, with a fresh strip of cloth; it became an important means of decoration in the days of the feudal Josen dynasty.

Strips of purple or other colours different from

the ground colour of *jogori* were sewn on the cuffs, collar, strings and armpits. This was called *samhoejang*; green was regarded as the best ground colour.

### Diet

The Korean people have created and developed a peculiar dietary custom in the time-honoured course of 5 000-year history.

Korean foods vary in kinds, and the methods of preparing them are also diverse.

The dietary custom includes practices about everyday dishes, special dishes, sweets and drinks and table manners.

The staple foods are boiled cereals, and subsidiary foods are soup, bean paste and kimchi among others.

Special dishes for family parties and holidays include such staple foods as cereal cakes and noodles and such non-staple foods as grill and soup.

Among the sweets are *yot*, *yumilgwa*, *yotgangjong*, *tasik* and *suksilgwa* and *jonggwa*. Drinks include liquor, tea, *hwachae* and *sujonggwa*.

At table elders take up their spoons and chopsticks first, followed by juniors. The host takes up spoon and chopsticks before his guest and places delicious and rare dishes near the latter. He also tries his best to create an amicable atmosphere so that the guest can feel at home at the table; he refrains from finishing his meal before the guest so as to let him have his fill.

### Wedding

Customarily, marriage in Korea went through the process of meeting, engagement, designating the date of wedding ceremony, exchanging gifts and wedding ceremony.

The ceremony for the bridegroom was held first. It was the ceremony of welcoming the bridegroom into the house of the bride. The ceremony for the

bride started with the trip to her house-in-law. She accepted her table, and paid homage to the ancestors of her husband's family. Then she made bows to her parents-in-law and to her husband's relatives. During the event the bridegroom wore the hat and clothes of the nobles and the bride wore clothes decorated with seven kinds of ornaments.

In the present era the wedding custom has leaned towards catering to the tastes of the times while sustaining the folk traditions.

### Celebration of First Birthday

Families celebrate the first birthday of their children in a big way, which is a long-established custom. They dressed their children in pretty clothes like a rainbow-striped garment, and arranged a birthday spread for them with special dishes.

Steamed rice cake and sorghum cake were a must on the table. The former is associated with the parents' wish that their child will grow with

honest mind and kind heart, and the latter with their desire to raise the child to acquire ennobling personality. In addition to foods, rice, money, book, writing brush, Indian ink, inkstone, scissors, thread spool and toys were laid on the table; the child's talent and future were predicted by the symbolic meaning of the thing the child holds up first among them.

In modern times relatives and neighbours bless the future of the child by presenting cloth, toys, foods and money to the latter and enjoy the event together.

### Folk Games

Korean folk games include martial arts training games such as archery, swordsmanship, spearing and *subak* (fist fighting); physical training games such as swinging, seesawing and *ssirum* (Korean wrestling); singing and dancing like peasant music and dance and mask play; intellectual games such

as *yut* (four stick) game, *janggi* (Korean chess) and *paduk* (go); and children's games such as kite-flying, top spinning, rope skipping, sleighing, hide-and-seek and shuttle-cocking.

### Folk Holidays

Koreans have enjoyed folk holidays by season. Typical ones are lunar New Year's Day, First Full Moon Day and *Chusok* or Harvest Moon Day.

Lunar New Year's Day was the greatest celebration of the year. Early in the morning people made bows to their seniors and shared dishes with their neighbours, and had a good time playing folk games.

The First Full Moon Day falls on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the first lunar month. The moon of the day is the largest and brightest of all around the year. So people began to celebrate this day from such a folk viewpoint that fortune smiles on those who saw the full moon first. They played folk

games such as tug of war, climbed nearby hills at sunset to see the full moon, and prepared and ate *ogokpap* (boiled rice mixed with four other cereals) and *yakpap* (medicinal rice) with nine kinds of cooked dried herbs.

*Chusok*, the 15th day of the eighth lunar month, was the day of celebrating a bumper harvest and paying homage to ancestors. On this day they made dishes with crops harvested that year and visited their ancestral graves to hold memorial services for the dead.

### 3. BUILDING OF IDEAL STATE

Comprehensive Development  
of Socialism  
Building of Ideal Society  
People-first Politics  
Self-sufficient Country  
Flourishing Capital  
Rural Housing Construction  
Regional Development

## **Comprehensive Development of Socialism**

The DPRK has set it as the main goal of state development to build itself as a powerful state that prospers on the strength of self-sufficiency and self-dependence in the near future by accelerating the comprehensive development of socialism.

According to the goal, the DPRK is to seek a comprehensive development across the state and social life by giving priority to politics and defence buildup and putting great efforts into the economic and cultural development as well; to develop the overall national economy and all units in a balanced way; and to push regional construction and rural construction in earnest in a way that all the regions of the country are developed evenly and characteristically.

## **Building of Ideal Society**

The ideal society desired by the DPRK is a society in which all the people live in comfort, harmony and good health without any worries about food, clothing and housing, a people-oriented society in which communist traits and virtues prevail, where all the people share good times and bad while helping and leading one another forward.

## **People-first Politics**

People-first politics, the basic political mode of the WPK, is geared to absolutely championing the dignity, rights and interests of the masses of the people, to settling all problems by relying on their inexhaustible strength and to making selfless, devoted efforts for their wellbeing.

### Believing in People As in Heaven

In the DPRK the people are masters of the revolution and construction, a source of inexhaustible strength and the most omnipotent entity. Everything exists because there are people, and there cannot be anything above them—this is the WPK’s view of the people.

Accordingly, the essence of Kimilsungism-Kimjongilism, the guiding ideology of the WPK, has been defined as the people-first principle, and the slogan “Everything for the people and everything by relying on them!” has been held up higher as the fundamental principle and mode of activities of the Party and state, with absolute priority given to the dignity, rights and interests of the people.

### Relying on the People

In the DPRK all that arise in state building are settled by relying entirely on the masses of

the people.

It is the political creed of the WPK that the source of all miracles is not any mysterious divine power but the unfathomable strength of the people and nothing is impossible when it relies on them.

The increasingly consolidated single-hearted unity between the leader and the people and a constant stream of remarkable achievements made in the country are the fruition of the politics administered by the WPK which believes in the inexhaustible strength of the people and addresses everything by making the most of it.

### Selfless and Devoted Service

Selfless and devoted service constitutes the core of the people-first politics.

This is an expression of boundless love for and devotion to the people; in other words it means giving top priority to the realization of their demands and interests, sparing nothing for

their good and even dedicating one's life for them without hesitation.

It has become synonymous with the people-first politics of the DPRK.

### **Self-sufficient Country**

#### **Independent Economy**

The DPRK has worked towards building an independent economy since the initial years of its founding.

An independent economy means an economy that stands on its own feet without depending on others' economy, an economy that serves the interests of one's own people and develops in reliance on the resources of one's own country and the strength of one's own people.

An independent economy the DPRK is building focuses on making the structure of its sectors multifaceted and comprehensive, equipping itself

with modern technology, and managing itself by relying on locally available raw materials, fuels and power, and national sci-tech personnel.

#### **Ownership of Means of Production**

Means and objects of labour, material conditions for production, are jointly owned by the social collective in the DPRK.

In 1958 the country carried out the socialist transformation of the relations of production to remove the capitalistic and private ownership of means of production, and established an undivided sway of socialist ownership.

#### **Structure of Industry**

Structurally, the DPRK's industry is mainly based on heavy industry and designed to promote the development of other different sectors simultaneously.

Its heavy industry includes coal- and ore-mining

and other extractive industries that are responsible for the first process of production and such processing industries as machine-building, metal and chemical industries. Among light industry are textile, shoemaking, foodstuff processing and consumer goods industries.

### Heavy Industry

The DPRK channels great efforts into the building of heavy industry, given the position and role it takes in the economic development, and the concrete situation of the country.

It maintains a line on building modern, independent heavy industry and a policy of building heavy industry not for its own sake but for effectively contributing to the development of light industry and the rural economy.

The DPRK has laid firm material and technical foundations for an independent heavy industry with modern machine-building industry as the core.

### Light Industry

With the steady improvement of the people's living standards taken as the supreme principle of their activities, the Workers' Party of Korea and the DPRK government have persistently striven to develop light industry to provide the people with a rich, cultured life.

In the construction of light industry, too, the DPRK carries on the policy of building a modern, Juche-oriented light industry.

Today, its light industry has developed into an independent, modern industry equipped with advanced technology, diversified sectors in structure and reliable raw material bases. Light industry factories across the country are turning out quality consumer goods favoured by the people.

### Agriculture

In recent years the DPRK has set forth a new outlook on agricultural development and made

efforts to step up its implementation.

In a word, the new outlook on agricultural development is geared to developing all the regions and all the farms across the country in a simultaneous and balanced way. More specifically, it is designed to raise the unit-area yield in all farms and all farmland alike and bridge the gap between regions and between farms in terms of material and technological foundations and living standards rather than to reap high yields in some specific regions or farms.

To this end, it is greatly encouraged to drastically increase grain yields, cultivate high-yielding species of seeds, research and introduce advanced technology and methods into cultivating crops, carry out comprehensive mechanization of the rural economy and improve the water management system in a scientific way. Steady efforts are put into agricultural development with state investment in rural

communities on the increase.

### Commerce

In the DPRK commerce is socialist commerce that is in nature aimed at supplying goods to the people.

At present, the WPK and the DPRK government work to satisfy the public needs in life and promote material wellbeing of the people by further developing state-run commerce and preserving the socialist character of public catering and welfare service. Commercial outlets are applying proper methods to put their business activities on a people-oriented, cultured, modern and diverse basis.

### Transport

Railway constitutes the vanguard of the national economy and the artery of the country. With an emphasis put on rail transport, efforts are directed

to developing land and water transport.

In addition, efforts are being made to improve the transport system and methods and meet the increasing needs for transport by organizing concentrated, joint and container transports.

Air transport helps ease the strain on freight transport at home.

### Foreign Trade

With a well-arranged management system, the DPRK conducts foreign trade with different countries around the world on the principles of independence, equality and mutual benefits.

It works to put foreign trade on a diversified and multilateral basis and encourages investment. Many units in Pyongyang and other parts of the country have trade companies and equity and contractual joint ventures engaged in various categories of business, which are expanding their production bases and boosting bilateral and

multilateral activities through a variety of shows and exhibitions.

### Underground Resources

The country boasts rich deposits of ferrous and non-ferrous metallic mineral ores such as iron, lead and zinc, as well as raw material and fuel resources like limestone and coal. In particular, deposits of graphite and magnesite are among the largest in the world.

Mineral deposits are so diverse in kinds and abundant.

## Flourishing Capital

In recent years the capital city of Pyongyang has been transformed into an ideal city in which the wellbeing of the people and socialist civilization are in full bloom, and into a world-class city that symbolizes the country's prestige and its rapid development.

Over the past five years alone, more than 10 000 flats have been built every year with the result that Songhwa Street, Hwasong Street, Rimhung Street, Jonwi Street, Pothong Riverside Terraced Houses District and dwelling houses in the Taephyong area have sprung up, giving a facelift to the city.

A modern urban district has come into being in the Hwasong area, revealing fresh architectural styles peculiar to Pyongyang and increasingly drawing attention. High-rise and super-high-rise apartment blocks with tens of thousands of flats,

embodying an ideal harmony of architectural formative and artistic beauty and advanced civilization, distinctively iconic neighbourhood-serving amenities, and leisure centres constitute a large architectural group.

Pyongyang will keep transforming itself into a more magnificent city, demonstrating the rapid progress of the Korean architecture and the remarkable results of its efflorescence.

## Rural Housing Construction

In late 2021, the Workers' Party of Korea set forth a goal for turning all the rural villages across the country into ideal ones in one or two decades.

Accordingly, rural houses of different styles that preserve the regional or local features began to mushroom in villages up and down the country. They numbered over 80 700 in three years between 2022 and 2024.

## Regional Development

Since 2024 the DPRK has pushed ahead with gigantic projects to promote a simultaneous, balanced and rapid development of regions in line with the WPK's Regional Development 20×10 Policy.

The policy is aimed at putting onto a higher level the material and cultural living standards of the entire population in a decade by building modern regional-industry factories in 20 cities and counties every year.

Modern industrial establishments were inaugurated in 20 cities and counties between late December 2024 and mid-February 2025, laying new foundations for drastically improving the livelihood of the regional people.

In parallel, another project for building an advanced health facility, leisure complex and

grain storage station in each city and county is proceeding apace in 2025, as part of the regional development policy.

A dramatic change is expected to be made in the future in the material and cultural living standards of the Korean people.

## 4. TOURISM

Tourist Resources

Tourist Attractions

Theme Tourism

Travel Companies

Prospects

### **Tourist Resources**

The DPRK boasts a 5 000-year history, brilliant culture and picturesque landscape, and it abounds with tourist resources.

Natural tourist resources include beautiful mountains, rivers, valleys, waterfalls, caves, hot springs, mineral water, and fauna and flora. Among social tourist resources are revolutionary battle sites and other historic sites, historical relics and remains, grand monuments, unique living customs and lifestyle, cultural heritage, literature and the arts, as well as famous theatres, museums, zoos, botanical gardens, industrial establishments, livestock farms, and orchards.

### **Tourist Attractions**

The key tourist attractions include the capital

city of Pyongyang, the popular tourist city of Kaesong, and major cities such as Wonsan, Hamhung, Nampho, Sariwon, Sinuiju and Rason; and scenic spots and resorts such as Mts Paektu, Kumgang, Myohyang, Chilbo and Kuwol, and the Wonsan Kalma Coastal Tourist Area, Masikryong Ski Resort and Songdowon.

### Pyongyang, Centrepiece of Tourism

The centre of the country's politics, economy and culture, Pyongyang is the hub of Korean tourism.

The city is located in the plains in the western part of the country, and its name means a flat land.

In Pyongyang, called a city in a park, there are a lot of green, flower-blooming parks, recreation grounds and historical remains.

In particular, the city has many modern monumental structures, namely the Tower of the Juche Idea, Arch of Triumph, Grand People's Study House and May Day Stadium.

### Mt Paektu, Sacred Mountain of Korea

Mt Paektu, 2 750m above sea level, is the highest mountain in Korea that rises at its northern border.

The Korean ancestors believed that the mountain represents the dignity and spirit of Korea and that the Koreans' soul-resourcefulness, bravery and cleanness—was born from it.

The mountain area serves as an open-air museum which showcases the history of the revolutionary activities of the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung who led the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle to victory and achieved national liberation.

Here you can see the Paektusan Secret Camp, the great leader Comrade Kim Jong Il's birthplace, and Jong Il Peak rising behind it.

The mountain is beautiful, majestic and imposing with diverse and delicate landscape. It is also noted for its peculiar topography, geology, weather patterns, and fauna and flora. In particular,

Lake Chon at the top of it wows visitors and tourists for its unusually kaleidoscopic natural phenomena.

It was registered in 1989 as a world biosphere reserve, and in April 2025 as a global geopark, further highlighting its tourist value.

### Kaesong, Tourist Attraction

Kaesong, located some distance away south of Pyongyang, was the capital of Koryo (918-1392).

The old city has a wealth of historical remains and sites including Kaesong Namdae Gate, Mausoleum of King Wang Kon, Koryo Songgyungwan and Kaesong Chomsongdae Observatory, which were inscribed on the world heritage list in 2013.

Koryo insam, a world-renowned medicinal herb, originates in this area.

### Mt Kumgang, World-famous Mountain

Mt Kumgang is renowned at home and

abroad. It sprawls over 530km<sup>2</sup> on the east coast in a southern part of the country. It embodies all descriptions of beauties—mountain peaks, ravines, forests, waterfalls, sea and climate.

The mountain area, which was inscribed on the world biosphere reserve list and the world cultural and natural heritage list in 2018 and in July 2025 respectively, has 12 000 peaks, deep ravines with fantastic rocks and precipitous cliffs, numerous waterfalls, crystal-clear water, lakes and ponds, superb seaside scenery, rare fauna and flora—all these go well with one another to form a wonderland.

The area is home to historical remains and sites belonging to the primitive, ancient and middle ages, drawing particular interest of tourists.

### Mt Myohyang with Superb Scenery

Mt Myohyang, located in the central part of the country, is numbered among the most celebrated

mountains in the country.

The mountain is a microcosm of all beauty and magnificence of nature. There are a legion of peaks, huge rocks, deep ravines, high cliffs, clear water, waterfalls and thick forests, which are all unusually spectacular. It is rich in fauna and flora.

Another standout feature of the mountain is that it houses lots of cultural relics and sites such as the Pohyon Temple.

Here you can also see the International Friendship Exhibition House that exhibits valuable gifts presented by the people around the world to President Kim Il Sung, Chairman Kim Jong Il and the respected Comrade Kim Jong Un.

The area was put on the world biosphere reserve list in 2009.

### Wonsan Kalma Coastal Tourist Area

The Wonsan Kalma Coastal Tourist Area located southeast of the Kalma Peninsula in the

East Sea of Korea is a tourist attraction famous for its exquisite scenery.

The area also known as “Myongsasimni” meaning a beautiful 4km-long stretch of beach was transformed in June 2025 into a modern coastal resort representative of the country’s tourist industry.

Tourists can choose according to their tastes among the hotels that can accommodate nearly 20 000 persons. In addition, there are sea-bathing facilities and various sports, amusement, commercial and catering facilities fully equipped with all the necessary conditions, bringing great delight to the tourists.

### Theme Tourism

Available are a wide range of themed tours such as vehicle enthusiasts’ tour, cycling tour, aerial sightseeing tour over Pyongyang, mountain-

hiking tour, architectural tour, surfing tour, public transport tour, work-experiencing tour, Taekwon-Do tour, train tour, sporting tour, climbing tour and aviation enthusiasts' tour, which will enrich your tour experiences.

### **Travel Companies**

The National Tourism Administration is a government institution that guides and controls tourism around the country in a unified way. Travel services include Korea International Travel Company, Pyongyang Koryo International Travel Company, Mangyong International Travel Company, Korea International Sports Travel Company and Korea International Taekwon-Do Travel Company.

Those companies receive tourists from around the world and offer them services according to various itineraries.

They are staffed with guides who can speak English, Russian, Chinese, German, Spanish, French and other languages. They have modern vehicles, restaurants and gift shops. Their agents are in Russia, China and other parts of the world.

The DPRK joined the UNWTO in September 1987 and the PATA in April 1996 to become a full-fledged member of both of them.

### **Prospects**

The DPRK is directing close concern to developing the tourist industry, viewing it as a key propellant for the promotion of cultural efflorescence, regional development and national economic growth.

It has set up a significant milestone in building up its tourist industry by turning the Wonsan Kalma Coastal Tourist Area into a world-level coastal resort. Building on this, it plans to build

large-scale promising tourist and cultural areas of various sorts in different places in the shortest period of time.

Among the infrastructure improvement projects are those for the construction of modern hotels, tourist roads and service centres. Efforts are being made to establish peculiar service methods and capacity and launch new air and sea routes.

## **Facts and Figures about the DPRK**

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