

Korea, North

Geography

Location: Eastern Asia, northern half of the Korean peninsula bordering the Korea Bay and the Sea of Japan, between China and Russia

Area:

total area: 120,540 sq km

land area: 120,410 sq km

Land boundaries: total 1,673 km, China 1,416 km, South Korea 238 km, Russia 19 km

Coastline: 2,495 km

Maritime claims:

territorial sea: 12 nm

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

military boundary line: 50 nm in the Sea of Japan and the exclusive economic zone limit in the Yellow Sea where all foreign vessels and aircraft without permission are banned

International disputes: short section of boundary with China is indefinite; Demarcation Line with South Korea

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

Land use:

arable land: 18%

permanent crops: 1%

meadows and pastures: 0%

forest and woodland: 74%

other: 7%

Irrigated land: 14,000 sq km (1989)

Environment:

current issues: localized air pollution attributable to inadequate industrial controls; water pollution; inadequate supplies of potable water

natural hazards: late spring droughts often followed by severe flooding; occasional typhoons during the early fall

Note: strategic location bordering China, South Korea, and Russia; mountainous interior is isolated, nearly inaccessible, and sparsely populated

People

Population: 23,486,550 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 30% (female 3,402,672; male 3,540,313)

15-64 years: 66% (female 7,840,465; male 7,741,155)

65 years and over: 4% (female 622,250; male 339,695) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 1.78% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 23.31 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 5.47 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Net migration rate: 0 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 26.8 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:
total population: 70.05 years
male: 66.96 years
female: 73.29 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 2.34 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:
noun: Korean(s)
adjective: Korean

Ethnic divisions: racially homogeneous

Religions: Buddhism and Confucianism, some Christianity and syncretic Chondogyo

note: autonomous religious activities now almost nonexistent;
government-sponsored religious groups exist to provide illusion of
religious freedom

Languages: Korean

Literacy: age 15 and over can read and write Korean (1990 est.)

total population: 99%

male: 99%

female: 99%

Government

Names:

conventional long form: Democratic People's Republic of Korea

conventional short form: North Korea

local long form: Choson-minjujuui-inmin-konghwaguk

note: the North Koreans generally use the term "Choson" to refer to
their country

Type: Communist state; Stalinist dictatorship

Capital: P'yongyang

Independence: 9 September 1948

note: 15 August 1945, date of independence from the Japanese and celebrated in North Korea as National Liberation Day

National holiday: DPRK Foundation Day, 9 September (1948)

Constitution: adopted 1948, completely revised 27 December 1972, revised again in April 1992

Suffrage: 17 years of age; universal

Flag: three horizontal bands of blue (top), red (triple width), and blue; the red band is edged in white; on the hoist side of the red band is a white disk with a red five-pointed star

Economy

Overview: More than 90% of this command economy is socialized; agricultural land is collectivized; and state-owned industry produces 95% of manufactured goods. North Korea remains far behind South Korea in economic development and living standards.

Industries: machine building, military products, electric power, chemicals, mining, metallurgy, textiles, food processing

Agriculture: accounts for about 25% of GDP and 36% of work force; principal crops - rice, corn, potatoes, soybeans, pulses; livestock and livestock products - cattle, hogs, pork, eggs; not self-sufficient in grain

Transportation

Railroads:

total: 4,915 km

Highways:

total: 30,000 km

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

Pipelines: crude oil 37 km

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

Airports:
total: 49

Defence Forces

Branches: Korean People's Army (includes Army, Navy, Air Force),
Civil Security Forces