

Christmas in North Korea

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By

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contributors.....	x
Preface	xi
1. The Journey to North Korea	1
1.1. Introduction to the Korean Peninsula	
1.2. Tour to North Korea	
1.3. Introduction to The Pyongyang Times	
1.4. Arrival at Pyongyang International Airport	
2. Brief History.....	32
2.1. The ‘Three Kingdom’ and ‘Later Three Kingdom’ periods	
2.2. Goryeo kingdom	
2.3. Joseon kingdom	
2.4. Japanese occupation	
2.5. Complete Japanese control	
2.6. Post-Japanese occupation	
2.7. The Korean War	
3. Contemporary North Korea	58
3.1. The first communist dynasty and its challenges	
3.2. The changing face of the communist economic structure	
3.3. Nuclear power	
3.4. Rocket technology	
3.5. Life amidst sanctions	
3.6. Mineral resources	
3.7. Mutual defense treaties	
3.8. Governmental structure of North Korea	
3.9. Social structure of North Korea	
3.10. Relationship with the United States	
3.11. Relationship with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)	

4. Welcome to Pyongyang City	112
4.1. Drive to Pyongyang city	
4.2. Friendship Monument to the Chinese People's Volunteer Army (PVA)	
4.3. Tense relationship between China and North Korea	
4.4. The capital: Pyongyang	
4.5. Jerusalem of the East	
4.6. Recent invitation to the Pope	
4.7. North Korea and automobiles	
4.8. Mansu Hill complex and statues	
4.9. Kim Il-sung	
4.10. Kim Jong-il	
4.11. Mount Paektu	
4.12. Korean Revolutionary Museum	
4.13. The struggle against the Japanese occupation	
4.14. Chollima Statue	
4.15. Pyongyang city skyline	
4.16. Mansudae Fountain Park	
 5. Hotel Stay	 151
5.1. Yanggakdo International Hotel	
5.2. Television for visitors	
5.3. Taedong River	
 6. Journey to the Border	 156
6.1. The Reunification Highway	
6.2. Arch of Reunification (since 2001)	
6.3. Kaesong	
6.4. Kaesong Industrial Complex	
6.5. Railway connecting the two Koreas	
6.6. The Demilitarized Zone (DMZ)	
6.7. Defections from Korea	
6.8. Paradise on Earth initiative	
6.9. The legend of the Demilitarized Zone	
6.10. Breaching the Demilitarized Zone	
6.11. Demilitarized Zone underground	
6.12. The monument at the Armistice signing place close to the DMZ	
6.13. The Armistice Signing Room	
6.14. The North Korea Peace Museum	
6.15. Post-armistice hostilities	
6.16. Monument for Kim Il-sung	

6.17. Joint Security Area (JSA)	
6.18. Dogs and animal exchange in the JSA	
6.19. Diamond Mountain	
7. Gukjagam and Koryo Museum	218
7.1. Gukjagam	
7.2. The University of Light Industry	
7.3. Koryo Museum	
7.4. Ancient trees	
7.5. The coffin of King Kongmin	
8. Pyongyang City at Night	237
8.1. Drive back into Pyongyang city	
8.2. Metro network in Pyongyang city	
8.3. Arch of Triumph	
8.4. Monument to Party Founding	
8.5. The Kim Il-sung sports stadium	
8.6. Rungrado 1st of May Stadium	
8.7. The famous 2008 Olympic relay and Pyongyang city	
8.8. Sports in North Korea	
8.9. Kumsusan Palace of the Sun (Kim Il-sung Mausoleum)	
9. Kim Il-Sung Square.....	266
9.1. The Kim Il-sung Square—Heart of Pyongyang city	
9.2. The Kim Il-sung Square—The world beneath	
9.3. National day military parades	
9.4. The Grand People’s study house	
9.5. The Ministry of Agriculture and Statistics	
9.6. The Korean Central History Museum	
10. Juche Tower and Mirae Unha Tower	283
10.1. Juche Tower	
10.2. Mirae Scientists Street	
11. Evening at the Hotel	286
11.1. Return to hotel	
11.2. Al Jazeera’s undercover investigation	
11.3. Breakfast	

12. Journey to Mount Myohyang	288
12.1. The Pyongyang–Hyangson Highway	
12.2. Cooperative farms	
12.3. Greenification initiative	
12.4. Famine in North Korea	
12.5. North Korea and the Global Hunger Index	
12.6. Mount Myohyang	
12.7. The Chongchon River	
13. North Pyongan Province	304
13.1. The International Friendship Exhibition	
13.2. Wax statues	
13.3. Souvenirs from Pakistan	
13.4. Souvenirs from India	
13.5. Souvenirs from Turkey	
13.6. Tea break	
13.7. The Pohyon temple (Pohyon-sa)	
13.8. Buddhism in North Korea	
14. Education System in North Korea	327
14.1. Education systems	
14.2. Higher education	
15. Health Care	339
15.1. Health status of the average North Korean	
15.2. Medical centers and hospitals	
15.3. International collaborations	
15.4. People's Hospital	
15.5. Global Burden of Disease study	
15.6. Medical research	
16. The Last Meals.....	358
16.1. The end of Malaysian tourism	
16.2. Restaurants and North Korean cuisine	
16.3. The Royal meal	
16.4. Rice	
17. Last Night.....	373
17.1. Return to the hotel	
17.2. North Korean cinema	

18. Goodbye.....	381
18.1. Departure from Pyongyang International Airport	
18.2. The international departure terminal	
18.3. Return flight to Beijing	
19. The Future.....	389
References	392

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PREFACE

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea, more commonly known as North Korea or the DPRK, is perhaps one of the least traveled places on the globe. The geopolitical issues in the country have often denied historians and travelers the opportunity to fulfill their aspirations. Perhaps the greater loss is the opportunity to know the 23 million people who live in North Korea as people with emotions, families, tradition, and most of all, a desire for friendship and hospitality. *Christmas in North Korea* is an endeavor to introduce readers to some of the aforementioned aspects through rarely seen photographs and descriptions acquired during a personal journey.

Readers will learn about the skyscrapers in Pyongyang city visible from Mansu Hill. The city was established in 30 BC and remained the capital of Korea from 1392 to 1910 AD, with the Lee dynasty as the last rulers. Readers will also learn about Kaesong City, the word Kaesong meaning "open the wall." The city was the capital of the Koryo dynasty, which ruled from 918 to 1392 AD. The city is adjacent to the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) and it is the home of ginseng tea. Photographs from the Armistice Signing Room, where, on July 27, 1953, an armistice was signed between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United Nations (UN) will be presented in later sections. In the background, the armistice museum highlights historical aspects, including the UN flag left behind on the table and the lack of South Korean representation in the armistice process. Photographs from the scenic background of the Pyongyang-Kaesong highway will be discussed. The Goryeo or Koryo Museum built in 992 AD—which used to be a university that trained government officials and is now a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site—will be discussed in later sections. Culinary lovers will discover what an 11-course meal, reserved for royalty, is like. This book will be one of the very few that takes readers into the rarely seen world of what many only know as North Korea. I will discuss many viewpoints, attempting to ensure that each of them is represented in a fair and equitable manner.

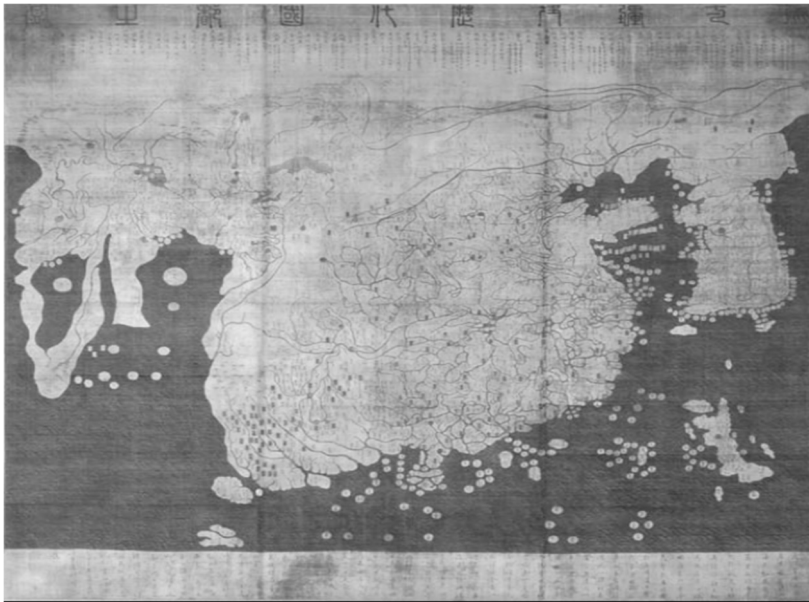
1. THE JOURNEY TO NORTH KOREA

1.1. Introduction to the Korean Peninsula

My first introduction to Korea happened when I was an eighth-grade student in Islamabad, Pakistan, almost four decades ago. As I waited for the school bus on the street, I noticed another student who, based on appearance, was from an East Asian country, also waiting for another bus 10 meters from where I stood. To start a conversation, I approached him to ask where he was from. He responded that he was from South Korea and was going to an international school. In Islamabad, being the capital of the country and housing numerous diplomats from across the world, such encounters were hardly surprising. What was somewhat surprising, however, was the emphasis on “South.” For the sake of curiosity, I asked him more about the term ‘South’ and whether there was another country named North Korea. His response was intriguing, and he refused to discuss the issue and had a clear disdain for North Korea. For someone who was born and raised in the time of the bitter history between East and West Pakistan, and having relatives in both the East and West, the negative tone in referring to geographic boundaries was not unfamiliar. However, students like myself have to focus on studies rather than trying to understand geopolitical situations. I did make a trip to the British Council close to our school to read more information from *Encyclopædia Britannica*, a fast source of information at a time when web-based sources were not available. I did not foresee that one day I would visit both Koreas. International travel for kids from middle-class families in Pakistan was rarely thought of as a possibility.

Four decades later, I was fortunate to be able to visit both Koreas, collectively known as the Korean Peninsula. The peninsula is located in the Pacific Ocean, appearing as a southward extension of about 1,100 km from the northeastern border of China (East Asia). A search on the web today suggests that maps of Korea may have existed as early as 1145 AD, as suggested in *History of the Three Kingdoms* by Kim Pu-shiks Samguk Sagi. The Korean Peninsula was not clearly identified in the earlier map by Muslim historian and geographer Al Masudi (871–957 AD) in his book *The Meadows of Gold and the Quarries of Jewels*. Documents suggest that Yi Hoe and Kwon Kun completed a detailed map in 1402 AD under the Yi

dynasty. The map was designated as Honil Gangni Yeokdae Gukdo Ji Do or ‘map of integrated lands and regions of historical countries and capitals.’ The map, created over 600 years ago, bears a remarkable resemblance to current maps. The peninsula was named ‘Korea,’ which was probably derived from Goryeo or Koryo which is the name of the Korean dynasty established in 918 by King Taejo. The Korean Peninsula covers an area of 220,847 km², surrounded by the Sea of Japan to the east, the East China Sea with the Korea Strait and small islands to the south, and the Yellow Sea to the west. The Amnok River separates it from China, and the Duman River represents its boundary with China and Russia.



(Honil Gangni Yeokdae Gukdo Ji Do or ‘map of integrated lands and regions of historical countries and capitals)

“North Korea,” with the official name of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), is situated in the northern part of the Korean Peninsula, between the latitudes 37°N and 43°N and longitudes 124°E and 131°E, and spreads over an area of 120,540 km² with a population of 25 million people. The country was founded on September 9, 1949, and this day is immortalized as the National Day of the DPRK. The world was given a unique insight into North Korea from the perspective of a tourist when Villy Bergström, a former vice director of the Swedish National Bank, visited

North Korea in 1971, and wrote a book, *Bilder från Nord-Korea*, about his visit. [1] Since then, North Korea has captured the fascination of tourists and journalists from a non-political perspective.



(Present map of the Korean peninsula)

1.2. Tour to North Korea

Air China and Air Koryo are the two airlines that have regular flights connecting Pyongyang city and Beijing thrice a week. Only a few thousand tourists enter the DPRK each year. Visitors are only granted visas through specific tour groups, whose itineraries are carefully planned by tour guides with certain areas being strictly off-limits. Although I wanted to fly Air Koryo, which is the state-owned national-flag-carrying airline of North Korea based at Pyongyang International Airport, Air China was chosen by the organizers for my trip in 2015. In the early 1950s, SOKAO (Soviet–North Korean Airline) was established as a joint venture between North Korea and the former Soviet Union. The airline got a boost by the acquisition of a Tupolev Tu-154, a three-engine medium-range narrow-body airliner, from the Soviet Union. SOKAO became one of the 17 non-Russian airlines to possess this plane. The airline changed its name to Air Koryo in March 1992. With the acquisition of Tupolev Tu-204-300 aircraft from Russia, transcontinental flights were made possible. [2] However, Air Koryo suffered a serious blow when the European Union banned it in 2006 due to safety and maintenance concerns. [2] While I was there, the flight

from Beijing to Pyongyang city by Air China appeared to be staffed by North Koreans, who walked through the aisle and proudly distributed copies of *The Pyongyang Times*. Another budget airline, China Spring Airline, is another project aiming to provide air travel between China and North Korea and has been in the concept phase since 2015.



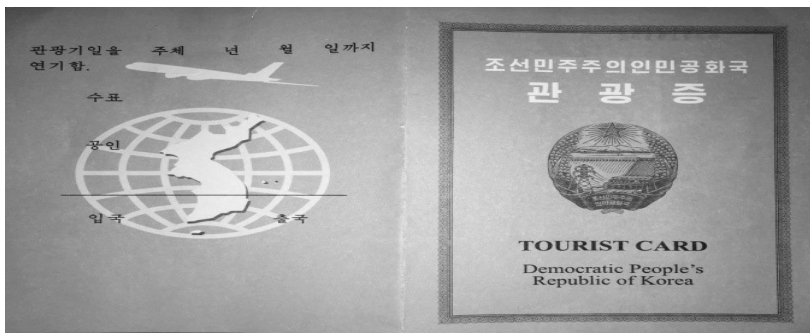
(Air Koryo Tupolev Tu-204-300 at Vladivostok Airport [Picture credit: Leukhin Fedor, Source: VVO_1540, License: Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic, used without modification])

The travel agency in China arranged the necessary documentation for my travel to North Korea. My Chinese hosts, who had graciously arranged the trip, told me to arrive at Beijing Capital International Airport in front of international departures. Although two other colleagues were set to join me on my journey from the US, both opted out at the last minute. One cited the lack of a US consulate and his discomfort with requesting assistance through the Swedish consulate while in North Korea. With immense excitement, I arrived at the location expecting to see the travel agent holding some form of identification for our meeting. Instead, I was unable to find my travel liaison in the airport for almost half an hour, leading to frantic phone calls to my Chinese hosts. In the end, a woman recognized me based on my photograph and led me to meet a man who spoke little, if any, English. He handed me my travel documents, including the ticket, tourist card, and instructions in English regarding the do's and do not's in North Korea. In advance of my trip, the language gap worried me considerably in terms of what to expect in North Korea. I was to learn, upon my arrival in

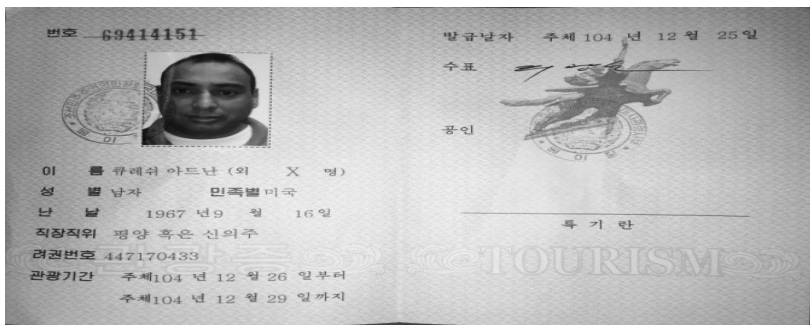
the country, that Swedish and British tourists were visiting North Korea frequently and local guides are therefore quite familiar with English.



(Boarding pass)



(Tourist Card exterior)



(Tourist card interior)

The gate at Beijing Capital International Airport responsible for the flight to Pyongyang city was crowded with travelers and almost all of them appeared to be Korean. A large amount of cargo was accompanying these travelers.

During the flight, the mountains comprising 80% of the Korean terrain could be seen. I was able to get good pictures of the landscape of North Korea on the flight. One couldn't help but gaze in awe at the majestic mountain ranges that cover North Korea. The distant marks of the river flowing into the Korean Bay, which is the northern extension of the Yellow Sea, were barely visible.

My travel occurred at a time when a few hundred American citizens were visiting North Korea every year, as part of an estimated total of 4000–5000 foreign visitors each year. However, events were taking place that were to transform the tourism industry. A US citizen with Korean ancestry, Kim Dong Chul was imprisoned by the government of North Korea just a few months previously in October 2015 and sentenced to 10 years of hard labor for alleged crimes. My departure from Pyongyang city occurred just five days prior to the interrupted departure of another US citizen, Otto Warmbier, a 22-year-old student. On January 2, 2016, Warmbier was detained at Pyongyang International Airport prior to his departure, with allegations of attempting to steal a propaganda poster from his hotel. The Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) announced that Warmbier had been detained for a “hostile act against the state.”[3] In a press conference on February 29, 2016, Warmbier stated that he had attempted to steal a propaganda poster from the restricted, staff-only area of the second floor of the Yanggakdo Hotel. Warmbier was subsequently sentenced to 15 years imprisonment with hard labor in March 2016. However, he was repatriated to the US and arrived in Cincinnati, Ohio, on June 13, 2017, in a comatose state and died on June 19, 2017. Coincidentally, Warmbier and I stayed in the same hotel just days apart. In 2019 in a report published by Reuters, Joseph Yun, the former US special envoy for North Korea, said that he had signed an agreement in 2017 with the North Koreans for the payment of US\$ 2 million for the student's hospital care as a prerequisite to securing Warmbier's release.

A detailed account of the sad story of Warmbier was chronicled by Doug Clark. In his account, Warmbier and other visitors went aboard the USS *Pueblo*, an American navy ship that was captured by the North Koreans in 1968. Warmbier was somewhat taken aback when he heard about the 82

American sailors captured with the ship who endured beatings and starvation for 11 months before being released. The article stated:

“On New Year’s Eve, the Young Pioneers went drinking at a fancy bar, though according to Gratton [Warmbier’s roommate], no one got belligerently drunk, as some reports would later suggest. After the bar, Gratton says, they celebrated the final hours of New Year’s Eve with thousands of North Koreans in Pyongyang’s main square. The group then returned to their hotel, known as the ‘Alcatraz of Fun’ because of its island location....Some Young Pioneers headed to the bar. Gratton went bowling, and lost track of Otto. It was only later that he would wonder about ‘the two-hour window that none of us can account for [Otto].’ North Korea would later release grainy CCTV camera footage of an unidentifiable figure removing a framed propaganda poster from a wall in a restricted area of the hotel, with North Korean authorities claiming it was Otto. During the televised confession, Otto would read from a handwritten script that he had put on his ‘quietest boots, the best for sneaking’ and attempted the theft at the prompting of a local Methodist church, a university secret society, and the American administration, ‘to harm the work ethic and motivation of the Korean people’ and bring home a ‘trophy.’ Many of the confession’s details didn’t square—for one, Otto was Jewish, not affiliated with a Methodist church—making experts suspect the words weren’t originally Otto’s. Whatever happened during those lost hours, when Gratton returned to his and Otto’s room, around 4:30 A.M. on January 1, Otto was already snoozing.” [4]

The North Korean English newspaper provided during the flight was already presenting details about the ongoing trial of Hyeon Soo Lim, a pastor at the Light Korean Presbyterian Church in Toronto, Canada. A whole page of the newspaper was dedicated to the trial and it reported interference of Canadian observers in the court. The newspaper stated that prosecutors were seeking the death penalty for high crimes against the state and its leadership. Lim had reportedly made more than 100 trips to North Korea since 1997 and was involved in supporting a nursing home, a nursery, and an orphanage unrelated to the charges brought against him. However, the North Korean government suspected him of other anti-government activities during his visits, the details of which were never made public. Ultimately, he was sentenced to life imprisonment.

In July 2017, US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson authorized a “Geographical Travel Restriction” on US citizens to forbid them from entering North Korea. Spokeswoman Heather Nauert said: “Once in effect, US passports will be invalid for travel to, through and in North Korea, and individuals will be required to obtain a passport with a special validation in order to

travel to or within North Korea,” [5] and that the policy will be in effect after 30 days. US Representative Joe Wilson, a Republican from South Carolina, introduced a bill with Democratic Representative Adam Schiff to ban Americans from traveling to North Korea as tourists in 2017, following the detention of at least 17 US citizens in the past decade. The H.R.2732 North Korea Travel Control Act, introduced on May 25, 2017, was forwarded by the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific to a full committee in an amended manner on July 27, 2017. This bill directs the Department of the Treasury to “issue regulations prohibiting transactions related to travel to, from, or within North Korea by any person subject to US jurisdiction unless authorized either by a general or specific license issued by the Treasury. The Treasury may not issue such a license for travel if the primary purpose of which is tourist activities.” [6]

Tourism also took an additional setback after the arrest of businessperson Michael Spavor, a Canadian, who was arrested for violations of China’s national security laws. He was the director of Paektu Cultural Exchange, an organization that promotes investment and tourism in North Korea. He had played a role in Dennis Rodman’s visit to North Korea. The arrest occurred in Dandong on the Chinese side of the China–North Korea border in December 2018. He was also involved in the Wŏnsan development project, a coastal city on the Sea of Japan in North Korea, which was being developed as a summer destination with resorts and entertainment under the Wŏnsan Zone Development Corporation. [7]

1.3. Introduction to *The Pyongyang Times*

My first introduction to *The Pyongyang Times* occurred during the flight from Beijing to Pyongyang city. The English newspaper was distributed without cost to the passengers. *The Pyongyang Times* is a state-owned English- and French-language newspaper published by the Foreign Languages Publishing House every week. It is one among a dozen newspapers in North Korea, with the most popular ones being *Rodong Sinmun* by the Workers’ Party of Korea (WPK) and *Joson Inmingun* by the Korean People’s Army. However, *The Pyongyang Times* is perhaps the most popular among foreign visitors. As I would learn reading the paper dated December 19, 2015, there is a structure to the eight-page newspaper. The front cover is usually devoted to Kim Jong-un, particularly focusing on his public activities and visits to various institutions in the country. One of the first things I noticed was the date on the newspaper, which states “Juche 104.” In 1997, the country announced a new North Korean, or Juche, calendar which starts from 1912, Kim Il-sung’s birth year. The December

19 issue was focused on celebrations being held to honor the anniversary of the demise of Kim Jong-il. The page concluded with “under the leadership of supreme leader Kim Jong-un, true to the instructions of Kim Jong-il.” The next page highlighted Kim Jong-un’s visit to a catfish farm and the concert “The People’s Yearning” that took place in the East Pyongyang Grand Theater. The next few pages detailed various ideological and technological advances in the nation, including coverage of the third national conference of finance and banking officials held at the People’s Palace of Culture. The fluorescent celadon, a Koryo traditional ceramic, was discussed. There were also propaganda pieces against the US and supportive articles on Russia commending the nation for “giving rise to a new Russia-led anti-terror alliance that brushes aside the US-led coalition.” Foreigners could also use ‘Juche Chat’ which is an English outlet for North Koreans that often has articles and viewpoints supporting mainstream North Korea.

The Pyongyang Times

No. 51 (2 878)

Weekly

Saturday, December 19, Juche 104(2015)

PYONGYANG, DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Kim Jong Un pays homage to Kim Jong Il, inspects catfish farms

Kim Jong Un, first secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea, first chairman of the DPRK National Defence Commission and supreme commander of the Korean People's Army, visited the Kumsan Palace of the Sun at 9:00 on December 17 on the occasion of the demise of Chairman Kim Jong Il.

He was accompanied by high-ranking military officials.

At the hall where the statues of President Kim Il Sung and Chairman Kim Jong Il stand, he paid his respects to them along with the accompanying officials.

He then made his way to the hall of immortality where the Chairman lies in state, and made a deep bow to him with utmost reverence.

He looked round the room that houses the orders the Chairman had received from foreign leaders and organizations, the hall of immortality and the rooms in which the sedan, electric car, ship and carriage he had used are preserved.

Kim Jong Un inspected the May 9 Catfish Farm.

He was accompanied by secretary O Sa Yong and deputy director Jo Yong Won of the WPK Central Committee.



Looking at the view of the farm, he said he revisited the farm in a year, which has undergone a facelift, adding that another record of fish farming has come into being in the country, which

pays farming on a scientific, intensive and industrial basis at a high level.

He looked round a mosaic mural depicting Chairman Kim Jong Il, a monument to the field guidance of

the peerlessly great persons of Mt Paektu and a room for education with revolutionary relics.

SEE PAGE 2

Nation cherishes memory of Kim Jong Il with growing yearning



Huge crowds of people climb up Mansu Hill in Pyongyang to pay a floral tribute to Chairman Kim Jong Il.

Service personnel and people of the DPRK mourned Chairman Kim Jong Il on December 17 to mark the fourth anniversary of his death.

As immense yearning pervaded the country for the great leader who had put his heart and soul into achieving national prosperity all his life to show socialist Korea as a Juche-oriented state with invincible might.

Senior Party and state officials visited the Kumsan Palace of the Sun to pay homage to him.

Service members and people from all walks of life also visited the plaza of the palace and statues and large portraits of President Kim Il Sung and Chairman Kim Jong Il throughout the country with

irrepressible yearning for him.

Remembrance concert "The people's yearning" was held in Pyongyang.

The performers sang highly of the noble revolutionary career and exploits of the peerless patriot and legendary great man who continued a forced march for the well-being of the people and prosperity of the coming generation all his life.

Youth and students gave concert "We will travel one road forever" and workers, farmers and women

held meetings respectively to pledge themselves to build a thriving socialist country on this land as early as possible under the leadership of supreme leader Kim Jong Un true to the instructions of Kim Jong Il.

SEE PAGE 2

2

The Pyongyang Times

Saturday, December 19, Juche 104(2015)

Supreme leader inspects catfish farms, calls for increased output

FROM PAGE 1

The May 9 Catfish Farm is the first of its kind in the country, and the Chairman is the pioneer of the country's catfish farming, he said.

He made the rounds of the general control room, sci-tech dissemination room, hatching building, indoor pools, water-filtering ground, feed factory and other places to inquire about details of production and modernization.

The farm has established a computer-controlled general system, made production processes and business activities scientific and IT-based at a high level and set up a scientific water recycling system to save water and make the best use of it, he said.

It has built a process of producing the feed that tends to be floating and started the production in real earnest, providing a guarantee for reducing the feed consumption unit as much as possible, he noted.

The farm's experience tells that it is essential to strive to make fish farming scientific, intensive and industrial with science and technology placed above all in order to achieve a signal success in pisciculture, he said, stressing the need for other units in the fish culture sector to learn from the farm's achievement.

With the wave of the nationwide efforts to improve the people's living standards sweeping across the country, he noted, the farm has undertaken a modernization project and overfulfilled its production target, adding to public excitement. This year, which sees laudable achievements all the end of the

year, is a meaningful year of victories which will be written down in the annals of the country's history, he added.

He spoke highly of the labour feats performed by the farm's officials and employees, scientists, technicians and soldier builders who have turned the farm into a monument in the era of the WPK.

Supreme leader Kim Jong Un visited the Samchon Catfish Farm, accompanied by Hwang Pyong So and other senior officials.

Looking round the room for education with revolutionary ethics, he said that the officials and employees of the farm should produce more catfish to add brilliance to the leadership exploits performed by Chairman Kim Jong Il.

As he made the rounds of the farm, he inquired about details of production and business activities

and specified tasks to be tackled in turning the farm into a world-level catfish producer.

It is needed, he said, to launch an operation in a big and audacious way on the basis of a scientific economic calculation in order to strengthen the farm's material and technical foundations, especially by building more hatching grounds and indoor and outdoor pools and setting up a latest feed production facility so as to build up the farm's production capacity significantly.

He referred to the need to build a large-capacity reservoir in the nearby area rich in spa water resources and establish a system of recycling used water.

The farm should be developed into the country's leading catfish farm in terms of production capacity and Juche-oriented, scientific, intensive and industrial level, he

noted, adding that the success and experience the Pyongyang Catfish Farm and the May 9 Catfish Farm achieved in their modernization efforts should be adopted positively for the farm to make its production and business activities intelligent, IT-based, digitized and automated.

He said that he would send a large contingent of designers, civil engineers, scientific and technicians to help push the modernization project.

He expressed belief that the farm would be transformed into a wonderful establishment which is loved by service personnel and people and which will bring actual benefits to them, saying that the country is undergoing a sea change at a marvelous speed.

By PT staff reporter

DPRK great leaders on Mansu Hill.

Remembrance: People remember their great leader on his death anniversary

FROM PAGE 1

Progressive people around the world joined the Koreans in cherishing the memory of the Chairman.

The Nigerian and Ugandan presidents and the chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Korean Federation sent messages to the DPRK supreme leader.

Resident diplomatic envoys, representatives of international organizations, military attaches, other foreigners and overseas Koreans visited the Kumsusan Palace of the Sun Chairman.

The Palestinian and Nigerian presidents sent baskets of flowers to the statues of the

DPRK great leaders on Mansu Hill.

Final baskets also came from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation and the Central Council of the Union of Communist Parties-Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Orchestra of the 21st Century of Russia, the Myong Pheon Orchestra of Japan, the family of Zhou Wenhua, Chinese anti-Japanese revolutionary martyr; the family of Zhou Wei, daughter of Zhou Baosheng who was related to China's anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle and other foreign political parties, organizations and families.

Baskets of flowers were placed at the statues by officers of the country offices of the World Food Programme, World Health Organization, UN Children's Fund and UN Food and Agriculture



A concert "The people's yearning" takes place at the East Pyongyang Grand Theatre in memory of Chairman Kim Jong Il.

A variety of events such as remembrance meeting, photo exhibition and film show took place in different countries including Bangladesh, Tanzania, Germany, Serbia and Nigeria.

By Jong Sun Bok PT

Saturday, December 19, Juche 104(2015)

The Pyongyang Times

3

Meeting calls for improving finance and banking

The third national conference of finance and banking officials took place at the People's Palace of Culture on December 13.

The conference was held to mark the 45th anniversary of Chairman Kim Jong Il's policy on daily production and financial review, a Korean-style management system, management method, and the 25th anniversary of the publication of his work **On Improving Finance and Banking**.

It took stock of the successes made in finance and banking in the past as well as experiences, and discussed tasks and ways to financially guarantee the cause of building a thriving nation.

It was attended by leading officials of commissions, ministries, national agencies, provinces, cities and counties, exemplary finance and banking officials, and persons of meritorious deeds.

Premier Pak Pong Ju, member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea, read the letter **Let Us Dynamically Accelerate the Building of a Thriving Nation by Bringing About a Turn in Finance and Banking** superior leader Kim Jong Il said in the participants in the conference.

The supreme leader exhorted the entire staff of finance and banking to manage the economy in a planned manner and regulate

and control the management and operation of state economic institutions and industrial establishments by means of money.

He referred to the fact that finance and banking in the country developed on a constant basis under the close concern and energetic guidance of President Kim Il Sung and Chairman Kim Jong Il while financially ensuring the socialist construction and the people's national and cultural life.

To improve finance and banking is an essential requirement for speeding up the building of a thriving country, he stated, adding the country's own reliable financial sources should be provided in order to build a people's paradise which has strong national power and in which everything thrives.

He stressed the need for the finance and banking sector to consolidate in every way the independent and popular financial system provided by the great leaders, fully aware of the weighty responsibility assumed for the Party and people and improve finance and banking in a revolutionary manner as required by the developing reality.

The general task to be tackled is to financially guarantee the Party's socialist construction leadership and the building of a thriving socialist nation with credit by

consolidating the country's financial basis and securing smooth monetary flow, he said. He called on the finance and banking officials to fulfill the sacred duty they assume for the country and people and thus bring about a fresh turn in their work.

Vice-Premier Ro To Chol, alternate member of the Political Bureau of the WPK Central Committee and chairman of the State Planning Commission, delivered a report.

He said today the country's finance and banking has greeted a new golden age thanks to the energetic guidance of leader Kim Jong Un.

The supreme leader, he noted, saw that investment was concentrated on this sector to rapidly boost all other sectors and an enormous sum of money directed to the building of an economic giant in order to positively step up the drive to make the socialist sector and key industries Juche-based.

consolidate the basis of self-reliance economy and make history by bringing about 'gold mountains', 'gold fields' and 'gold seas' on this land.

Marked progress has been made in finance and banking in the past under the wise leadership of the WPK, he said.

He referred to the tasks to be implemented by the sector, including the issue of satisfying the need for land for fully carrying out the Party's line of promoting the two fronts simultaneously and people-oriented policies by properly combining the state's unified and planned guidance and the creativity of independent units in the management of finance and enhancing the function and role of the state budget.

Speeches were made at the meeting in which a letter of pledge to supreme leader Kim Jong Un was adopted.

By Chae Chol Nam PT



The third national conference of finance and banking officials is held at the People's Palace of Culture.

Industrial sectors see growth

Working people are exerting themselves to increase production in response to the appeal of the employees of the Hwanghae Iron and Steel Complex who called on all the workers across the country to greet the Seventh Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea with unprecedented labour feats.

Those at the Kim Chaek Iron and Steel Complex have completed the modernization of major production processes with the help of scientists and technicians of different units.

They applied the CNC technology to the processes of producing and processing of steel products, and the hot rolling process and to the cold-rolled type continuous, large mill and the heat control command system, while finishing the modernization of the hydrogen generating ground and several other projects.

The upgrading of the major production processes has opened up bright prospects for making quality rolled steel, while

saving a great deal of electricity, materials and manpower. Major facilities and materials, which were imported in the past, have come to be made domestically, making it possible to further consolidate the foundation for self-reliance on production and provide workers with better working conditions.

Workers of the Hwanghae Iron and Steel Complex are increasing iron production under the Juche-based system by maintaining equipment and managing technology in a responsible manner in all the production processes including a large oxygen plant and oxygen-blowing blast furnace.

Fishermen in different parts of the country are also making signal successes.

Those under the North Phyeung Provincial Fisheries Management Bureau who started this year's fishing in early March conducted positive fishing operations in the Monggongpho and northern fishing grounds in the West Sea, thereby overfulfilling their

annual assignments for seafood production and fishing by 26.4 per cent and 4.6 per cent respectively.

The Wonsu Fishery Station carried out its yearly fishing assignment ahead of schedule by increasing fishing time and fish catch per netting.

The Hwangnam Fertilizer Complex has started production after an overhaul of equipment in overall production processes. Builders at the North Phyeung Provincial Taidan Reclamation Complex are stepping up the earth piling and stone covering for excavating dyke No. 3 of Honggondo Island.

According to a plan for completing the tasks in month, they are pressing on with the project simultaneously, conducting a socialist emulation drive between companies under the complex.

They have done more than 50 per cent of earth piling and over 10 000 square metres of stone covering.

By Chae Hwa Sun PT



The Hwanghae Iron and Steel Complex boasts steel output.

4

The Pyongyang Times

Saturday, December 19, June 10(2015)



Korea International Sports Travel Company

The Korea International Sports Travel Company, inaugurated nearly 20 years ago, has offered foreign tourists a variety of services, especially for sporting activities in the DPRK.

A wave of zeal for sports in the country and its rise in the international sports arena are attracting considerable attention of the sports world and enthusiasts around the world.

A growing number of foreign athletes and enthusiasts are eager to visit the country to promote sports with local counterparts and enjoy themselves.

Pyeongyang and other major cities boast lots of sports and cultural facilities.

Typical facilities in Pyongyang include Kim Il-Sung Stadium, May Day Stadium, Pyongyang Indoor Stadium, Ice Rink, Yanggakdo Football Stadium, Mirim Riding Club, Meari Shooting Gallery and Pyongyang Golf Lane.

The biggest draw in the sports village on Chongchon Street, dotted with gymnasiums

for weightlifting, basketball, swimming, volleyball, table tennis, handball and badminton and complete with Taekwon-Do Hall, Soan Football Stadium and Soan and Pyongyang baths.

The well-equipped facilities provide tourists with chances to share skills with locals and satisfy their needs playing marshall, football, volleyball, basketball, badminton, ice hockey, skiing and skating.

Most popular is marathon tourism. Every April Pyongyang hosts an international marathon event to mark the Day of the Sun dedicated to the birthday of President Kim Il-Sung.

The participants are to relish fresh air, beautiful scenery and hospitality of citizens, running through main streets of Pyongyang.

This year's event drew hundreds of foreign runners, and at least a hundred of them came to Pyongyang through the company.

Sports teams provided by the company are enjoying popularity among foreign

tourists and the number of applicants goes up year on year.

As need or desire arises, tourists may travel around the

country, visiting scenic spots and historic sites.

Tourism itinerary varies in accordance with stay, course and pattern.

The company works together with dozens of foreign partners.

Add: Chakjam-dong, No.1, Mangyongdae, District, Pyongyang, DPRK.

Tel.: 0085-02-3811101

(8222-189991 or 341-8034)

Fax: 0085-02-3481109

3414410/3414415

E-mail: kait@kita.co.nk

By Jung Hwa Sun PT



Marathon enthusiasts from around the world start from Kim Il-Sung Stadium as part of the 2013 JAAF-Sun Mangyongdae Prize Marathon Race.

Photos feature nation's yearly development

With eye-opening events taking place around the year, the country has taken another big stride forward.

Saek-haet in Pyongyang has undergone a sea change with the Sci-Tech Complex built as an up-to-date science and technology hub on the picturesque Taedong River.

Around the sweeping wave of great upswing in the people's living standard, fish and fruit farms have reaped rich harvests adding pleasure to the people.

Thanks to the government's care for the coming generation, the whole country is full of sounds of children laughing, singing and laughing—from the capital city of Pyongyang to the Maishyong N' Resort.

By Jung Sun Bok PT



A good haul at a fish farm in landlocked Jagang Province.



Apple growers are delighted to gather good harvest.



A nocturnal view of Saek-haet where the gorgeous Sci-Tech Complex sits.



Children enjoy themselves riding sleds at the Maishyong N' Resort.

Saturday, December 19, Juche 104(2015)

The Pyongyang Times

5

Sci-tech dissemination halls conducive to keeping abreast of latest information

More than 1,000 sci-tech dissemination halls have been built this year at institutions, industrial establishments and cooperative farms.

The Pongpyong Kim Jong Suk Textile Mill has upgraded its hall to the instruction of supreme leader Kim Jong Un also, on his visit to the factory in December 2014, pointed to the need to remodel the room so that the employees could have access to latest scientific and technological information.

The Janghung Vegetable Cooperative Farm in Salsang District, Pongpyong, a model in the building of socialist rural culture, has furnished the hall with a library, online reading room and technical study room and has opened it as a regular

hall, reaping rewards in agricultural production.

The Kim Jong Suk Silk Mill, Misun Mining Complex, Chollima Steel Complex and Songhae Deep-sea Fishery Complex have also built the halls in line with the requirements of the age of knowledge economy and are running them on a scientific basis.

The Chongli Labeuac Factory, Namhung Youth Chemical Complex and December 5 Youth Mine are trying to improve production and business activities by training the personnel through the proper operation of the dissemination halls, and their experiences are being generalized across the

country.

Similar achievements have been made by such cooperative farms as Chongnam of Kangso District, Ogha of Ansa County, Saam of Ryongchon County and Samgung of Jeryong County, where farmers are keeping themselves abreast of latest science and technology.

The Central Tree Nursery has built a database and set up a network in its dissemination hall to promote advanced forestry throughout the country.

The sci-tech dissemination halls are giving thousands of officials and working people chances to attend online school courses.

By Jong Sun Bok PT



Workers of the Pongpyong Children's Foodstuff Factory attend an online lecture in the sci-tech dissemination room.

Distance education grows popular

Distance education is gaining momentum in the DPRK. Distance education is part of the efforts to make all the people keep abreast of science and technology. Distance education college at Kim Il Sung University has developed a program to make it possible to promote international exchange.

Kim Chuk University of Technology has established a system based on mobile communication network and updated the contents of education.

Kim Ilwong JK University of Education has started to provide in-service training for teachers. More than 500 teachers have submitted applications to the distance education college at Kim Chuk University of Technology.

Compiled from KCNA

New program offers a wide choice of medicines

Lecturers and researchers at Pongpyong Medical College and the college hospital have developed "Yaksumo 2.0," a program that gives a wide range of information about medicines.

The fast progress of the pharmaceutical industry results in a drastic increase of medicines in terms of their forms and kinds. New medicines worldwide are so numerous that even the pharmacists find it hard to distinguish them — a factor that has some negative impacts on the clinical practices.

According to information available, human and material losses caused by misuse of medicines and shoddy products are beyond imagination.

This requires that a database of the pharmaceutical actions, indications and side effects of medicines which are in wide use or newly produced in the world is established to help improve medical services.

But the database is expected to be so voluminous and prohibitively costly.

A research team led by Han Ho, deputy director in charge of pharmaceuticals, and U Song Chon, lab head, succeeded in developing a program which provides abridging information about thousands of medicines.

Yaksumo 2.0F consists of three parts: introduction, treatment and interaction. The parts of introduction and treatment deal with Koryeo medicines and Western

medicines separately. The program gives detailed information on Koryeo medicine and therapies.

Users have access to a wide range of information about at least 7,000 kinds of Western and Koryeo medicines, as well as therapies for thousands of Western and Koryeo medical

syndromes.

Also explained are negative interactions that may occur when more than two kinds of drugs are dosed together.

The developers are providing services to hospitals, healthcare centres and users of tablet PCs and smartphones) across the country in a bid to promote appropriate clinical practices both among health workers and ordinary people.

By Choe Chol Nam PT



A still from "Yaksumo 2.0F."

Fluorescent celadon developed



A Koryeo celadon in the light (left) and in darkness (right). The Celadon Production Unit of the Mansudae Art Studio has created luminous Koryeo celadon that exudes the fascinating beauty of the traditional ceramic ware even in the dark.

In the course of exploring the way to develop a fresh time-honored Koryeo celadon that earns worldwide fame, Han Song Nam, Kim Il Hock and other artists of the production group came up with a novel idea of applying a light-emitting material to its body.

They worked on the making of a luminous substance that can withstand high baking temperatures.

Through intense speculation and research, the artists overcame technical problems arising in making the substance and established a new manufacturing process, thereby succeeding in creating the luminous celadon with great ornamental and visual effects.

The pottery looks like ordinary Koryeo celadon by day, but its milky emit

beautiful, graceful and bright green-glow fluorescent light by night.

For example, when the design like Manchurian crane, flowers, tortoise and the sun shed light, they produce a 3-D effect and look as if they are floating in the dark.

If the pottery is exposed to light for a minute, it shines in the dark for about two hours and if for ten minutes, for over ten hours.

As soon as it was produced, it has won great popularity among lots of pottery lovers.

The technique of manufacturing the luminous new celadon has opened up new horizons for the decoration of the pottery which has a 1,000-year history. This pointed at the natural exhibition of inventions and new technologies held in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Workers' Party of Korea and the country's liberation.

By Pang Un Ju PT

6

The Pyongyang Times

Saturday, December 19, June 104(2015)

Great exploits for national reunification remembered forever

Chairman Kim Jong Il dedicated his whole life to the reunification of the country. He always paid deep attention to the reunification issue, true to the earnest requests of President Kim Il Sung.

He scientifically proved the validity and truthfulness of the reunification policy on the reunification movement and illuminated the path to independent reunification.

He upheld the President's initiatives for reunification, namely the three principles of national reunification, the 10-point programme for the great unity of the whole nation and the proposal for founding a Democratic Federal Republic of Korea, and formulated them as the three charters for national reunification.

Running through the three charters are the spirit of national independence, regarding sovereignty and dignity of the nation as its lifeline, and love for the country and nation geared to independent and peaceful reunification through inter-Korean reconciliation and great unity of the whole nation.

The Chairman also set forth the five-point policy for the overall unity of the nation, a decisive factor in addressing the reunification issue independently and peacefully. It is one of his great exploits to be etched in the history

of the national reunification movement that he wisely led the struggle to open up new vistas for independent reunification, ushering in the "June 15 reunification era".

To bring about a new turning point in the north-south relationship, he headed the historic Pyongyang summit in June 2004, in which a joint declaration with By Our Nation itself and the south agreed to resolve the reunification issue independently and peacefully.

In the joint declaration, the north and the south agreed to resolve the reunification issue independently and peacefully, and the low-level federation proposed by the north and the south's commonwealth system have something in common, and agreed to work together for reunification in this direction. They also reached agreement on the repatriation of unaccounted long-term prisoners to the north, the exchange of visiting groups of split families and relatives and other humanitarian issues, as well as promoting balanced development of both economies and expansion of cooperation and exchange in all domains.

After the publication of the joint declaration, eye-opening achievements were made on other matters, making the nationals experience what reunification is like.

"June 15 reunification era," former unaccounted long-term prisoners in the south returned to the north, and lots of people joined the mainstream of the reunification movement.

Meanwhile, more than 20 rounds of minister-level talks, over a dozen economic cooperation promotion committee meetings and hundreds of talks, contacts, exchanges and joint events took place, producing a series of

agreements to the delight of the people.

Workers, farmers, youths and students, women, educators and others met to hold a joint national event to commemorate the foundation day.

June 15 grand festival for national reunification and other reunification-oriented events. Also other epoch-making events took place: the second railways and roads in the eastern and western parts of the

country were reconstructed after being buried for over half a century with clouds of ships and airplanes shuttled along the direct sea and air routes.

Athletes from the north and the south jointly created the venues of international sports events preceded by the reunification patriots, demonstrating the spirit of reunification will to the world.

The great exploits of the Chairman for national reunification are engraved upon the hearts of the Korean people, and they remain a source of encouragement to the reunification movement.

Kim Chun Song



Inter-Korean railways are relinked in June 2003.

Canada-based Korean clergyman sentenced to life imprisonment

Kim Hyon Su, Korean-Canadian clergyman, was tried at the Supreme Court of the DPRK on December 16 on charges of plotting to overthrow the DPRK government following the US and south Korean authorities' policy of political terrorism and hostility to the DPRK.

Kim Hyon Su allegedly admitted his conspiracy to overthrow the DPRK government at a news conference on July 20.

The case, which was expected to come under Article 60 (subversion) of the DPRK Criminal Code, was examined in the trial with indiscreet filed and arrangement given.

During the hearing, the accused pleaded guilty to the charges that he severely slandered the supreme dignity and system of the DPRK with deep-rooted prejudice against it, plotted to overthrow its system

under the cover of religion, conducted false propaganda about it among overseas Koreans and took active part in the operations of the US and south Korea to lure and abduct DPRK citizens and in their programmes for "siding defectors from the north".

Kim Hyon Su was sentenced to penal servitude for life.

By Kim Rye Yong PT



Korean-Canadian Rev. Kim Hyon Su (first from right) is in the dock at the Supreme Court of the DPRK.

Who is to blame?

The 14th south Korea-US disarmament and non-proliferation meeting was held in south Korea, where the US forces fell bent on invalidating the DPRK are entitled.

What is more ridiculous is that south Korea found fault with the missiles and missiles of the DPRK in its conduct.

Given that they talked about "security through the settlement of the nuclear issue", it is whimsical to look at once again

the Korean peninsula.

Less than a few years after ceasing in Korea in the 1950s, the US introduced nuclear weapons into south Korea in breach of the armistice agreement, and it later sped up their deployment, thereby turning the south into its largest nuclear arsenal in the Far East in the 1990s.

South Korea has staged nuclear war games against the DPRK for decades in collusion with the US and their likeness has grown each year.

And the Obama administration that advocates a "nuclear-free world" has put spurs to nuclear arms buildup in disregard

of the DPRK's demand for discontinuing nuclear war rehearsals, let alone withdrawing its makes from the south.

The US is planning to squander \$348 billion in upgrading nuclear forces as a whole including strategic nuclear bombers, submarines capable of being loaded with nuclear missiles and ICBMs, in a little over a decade. It recently test-fired a long range air-to-ground Harpoon missile.

According to a recently revised south Korea-US atomic energy agreement, south Korea is allowed to reprocess spent fuel and enrich uranium up to 20 per cent. It is clear that this will only serve to egg south Korea, which has long pushed nuclear armament on the sly, on to possess makes.

It has struck a deal with the US to purchase a new type of Harpoon missile worth \$10 million.

Facts show that the US and south Korea are just responsible for military buildup and nuclear proliferation.

By Rye Hyon Sop PT

Saturday, December 19, Issue 104(2015)

The Pyongyang Times

7

DPKR delegate refers to importance of peace pact with US

The plenary session is of great significance in attaining the Asian people's common goal of peace, stability and mutual development. An Tong Chun, Deputy Secretary of the DPKR, said at the opening ceremony of the 10th anniversary of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly on December 19.

He attended the event leading the DPKR delegation.

Today, due to his powers of influence, subsequent to the Asian Pacific region, the security environment in Asia are getting more tangled, he said, pointing out importance of the position the Korean peninsula situation occupies in ensuring peace and stability in the continent.

The DPKR aspires for peace and wisdom for peaceful ideas of independence, peace and friendship, he added.

He continued to say:

"The DPRK government has set it as an important political objective to actively share up the economy and improve the people's livelihood and channelled all efforts into it under the outstanding Singapore leadership of supreme leader Kim Jong Un."

"State investment and efforts are being concentrated on raising the people's dietary life level higher with crop farming, animal husbandry and fishery as the base, and the growth of the overall economy is maintaining a steady upward trend."

"As an astonishing high rate has been created in the construction

sector, lots of structures have been completed and lots of events that help promote public welfare have been provided this year alone."

"We have more to do in the future than we have done so far, which requires economic exchange with and investment from Asian countries."

"Economic development zones are being established in different parts of the country, projects for developing tourism provide friendly and institutional and legal measures taken to ensure sustained economic development and substantially improve the people's living standards, and tension on the Korean peninsula is of no help to the peninsula."

"The lesson of the grave incidents in August when a small incident of outburst origin led to the brink of war is an instant reminder that peace can no longer be maintained on the peninsula by the existing armistice agreement."

"As the US and South Korea incessantly stage military exercises in and around the peninsula under various pretexts, there is a growing danger that another, unexpectedly, grave situation may be created by any incident."

"Out of a desire to put an end to the unstable condition

that is persisting in the peninsula and establish a durable peace mechanism, the DPKR reconsidered its stand to immediately replace the truce with a peace treaty."

That the US, a signatory to the armistice agreement which has a substantial power to exert the agreement and exercises the wartime operations control of the south Korean army, and its following forces still turn away from ending the truce, and that the regional peace and stability should pay clear attention to putting an end to the US policy hostile towards the DPKR, the greatest obstacle to the settlement of the peninsula issue, and establishing a durable peace mechanism."

"The DPKR is consistent in its position that the north and south of Korea should be reunified by the federation formula in order to ease the tension and ensure peace and stability on the peninsula."

"It is also consistent in its stand to terminate the tension by such peaceful means as dialogue and negotiation and build a single cooperation to peace and stability in Northeast Asia."

"With firm confidence that the replacement of the Korean Armistice Agreement with a peace accord and the achievement of reunification by federation formula are a way to substantially contribute to the Asian peace and stability, the DPKR will make every possible effort in this end."

Compiled from KCNA

Outer space not monopoly of US

The US Congress recently adopted a decision that only the US has the right to determine what should and can be brought from outer space.

Austrian newspaper *Die Presse* said on December 13 that the US Congress studies rules against the international practice on space research and utilization, adding that granting the right of space exploration only to the US authorities is a far demand of the international practice which has been in place for over 50 years.

The international agreement stipulates that every country is treated with the right to decide on space research according to their national interests irrespective of their levels of economic and scientific development and that any particular country is not allowed to disturb or infringe this right in pursuit of a monopoly on space.

Nevertheless, the US seeks its exclusive possession of space, attempting to use outer space as a lever to realize its wild ambition for world domination.

Today, space is widely used in collecting image and observation data for land and natural resource survey, economic protection, disaster prevention, harvest estimation and weather forecast. It is also used for information, broadcasting and the Internet.

Amidst intensive international efforts for peaceful space development, the DPKR launched its first earth observation satellite Kwangmyongsong 1 in August 1998 and succeeded in sending Kwangmyongsong 2 and 3-2 into orbit in April 2009 and December 2012 respectively.

The US, however, described the DPKR's space launches as "missile launches" and "threats

to peace", and clamoured for sanctions against the country.

It is none other than the US that has long used space as a means of aggression and domination.

It is squandering a colossal sum of money on the militarization of space while trying to deprive anti-US countries of their legitimate right to space development.

But its panger-like logic cannot work.

By Choe Yong Nam PT



The Iranian people set up the Star and Shripes.

Russia tries to regain the past glory

Russia has maintained a high profile throughout the year despite a series of shocking events.

Political unity of the population remains stable.

President Vladimir Putin said in his 2015 New Year Address that love for the motherland is the most ardent and noblest feeling calling on the people to work together responsibly for unity, solidarity, truth and dignity, impartiality and honor of the country and to realize everything they have planned for themselves, children and future.

The victorious Great Patriotic War 70th anniversary celebrations took place in Moscow and other places with pomp and ceremony, implanting patriotism in the minds of the people, soldiers and youths.

The all-Russia youth organization "Russian students' movement" was inaugurated as part of a programme to educate and train the younger generation to become persons with the "values" inherent in Russian society, and noble patriotism and self-sacrificing spirit for the dignity and prosperity of Russia displayed by the older generations were widely encouraged.

The President's approval rating has risen to its record high in recent years.

The strength of Russia is illustrated by its military capacity.

Russia made consistent efforts to regain the military muscle of the former Soviet Union even in the unfavorable internal and external circumstances.

In decided its military policy against the US and NATO's gaining military upper hand over it.

In December last year it drew a new military doctrine to counter the US and the West's strategy for containing Russia, in which it detailed the major tasks to maintain combat preparedness of the conventional forces and the nuclear forces.

Since it launched a military campaign against the IS in the Syrian territory at the request of the Syrian government on September 30, Russia has made marked achievements in Syria, giving rise to a new Russia-led anti-terror alliance that breaks aside the US-led coalition.

The DPKR and Shanghai Cooperation Organization summits held in Ufa, Russia, in July showcased Russia's international standing.

The BRICS summit adopted an economic partnership strategy which will be in force till 2020 at the proposal of Russia along with the US declaration, which reflected in common, of the growing world political and economic animosity and joint stand on pressing issues arising in becoming diversified cooperation between member states.

The SCO summit was a world media spotlight as it drew the largest number of representatives since its foundation in 2001. It adopted several resolutions related to its extension, specifically the start of admission procedures for India and Pakistan.

All in all, Russia got its way in the face of challenges.

By Kim Rye Yong PT

PHOTO BY THE PRESSURE PHOTO

8

The Pyongyang Times

Saturday, December 19, Juche 104(2015)

DPRK players successful at 6th IMAG

The 6th International Martial Arts Games took place in New Delhi, India, in December, attracting wide attention of martial artists and fans across the world.

It brought together over 1,600 players from dozens of countries and regions including the DPRK, India, the UAE and the US.

At the opening ceremony on December 4, the chairman of the organizing committee of the IMAG and the chairman of the International Martial Arts Games Committee made congratulatory remarks, followed by athletes' parade and lighting of the cauldron with the flame lit in Pyongyang.

At the end of the opening ceremony, the DPRK's Taekwon-Do players gave a demonstration.

Wherever the Korean players showed dynamic pattern movements and self-defence

techniques and thrilling scenes of destruction, the audience burst into thunderous applause and cheers.

The DPRK won six gold medals in Taekwon-Do pattern and self-defence events.

Debutant Han Kang Guk won the titles in the men's individual fourth-grade pattern and men's self-defence and Ju Un Ha in the women's individual first-grade pattern.

Pak Chol Rim and O Ji Hyang also came first in the men's individual first-grade pattern and women's individual third-grade pattern and women's self-defence respectively.

An enlarged meeting of the executive committee and the eighth conference of the IMAG took place during the games.

The enlarged meeting reviewed the work of the organizing committee of the games and examined the

martial arts federations which applied for admission, agenda items to be submitted to the executive and members of the

new leadership to be elected and the host country of the 7th international martial arts games stand for 2017.

The 1st IMAG took place in Pyongyang in 2009.

By Choi Chol Nam PT



Korean Taekwon-Doists celebrate their win at the awards ceremony, holding the national flag.

Osandok Prize Games go on

Women's five-a-side tournament, which began on December 4 as part of the Osandok Prize Games, is going on at Handok Gymnasium on Chongchon Street, Pyongyang.

The competition runs in youth and juvenile divisions, and is decided by round-robin matches.

The youth division draws seven teams, and the match between the Pyongyang and Nangpyeong teams was fierce.

Both teams, winners of all three consecutive matches, started up speed from the kickoff seeking chances of scoring.

The Nangpyeong took the lead with the 70-minute opener on the basis of fast passes and accurate shots.

But the Pyongyang mounted strong offensive and finally won the game 3-2. No. 5 Pak Sol Gyong and No. 7 Choi Chong Mi, who had already

scored a lot to contribute to the team's victories in the preceding games, also scored in it with strong long-distance shots.

The Hwasappi is following the two teams closely.

In the juvenile division, where eight teams are competing, the April 25 and Solbarku are dominant with their winning streaks so far.

By Pang Un Ju PT



Women's football match is played between the Pyongyang and Nangpyeong teams, in which the former beats the latter 3-2.

Winter solstice and red-bean gruel



Red-bean gruel with small dumplings.

Koreans ancestors called November in the lunar calendar *angmuot*, or the month of winter solstice, and the day of the month with the longest day of daylight in the year *ang*, or the winter solstice.

As hours of daylight begin to grow longer from the winter solstice, they celebrated the day as a folk holiday, regarding it as "small New Year's Day."

When the day fell in the first ten days of November in the lunar calendar, people called it "early winter solstice." But when it came thereafter, they called it "late winter solstice."

They believed that the winter was cold when the former came and it was not so cold when the latter came.

In the past Koreans observed the holiday, playing folk games and preparing special foods.

Rice gruel prepared with red bean was regarded as the typical food for the day.

Historical records suggest the habit dates back to the period of the three kingdoms. According to old poem "Red-bean gruel" written by a renowned Koryeo poet, it was an old custom to prepare red-bean gruel on the day and share it with neighbors.

The gruel is made by boiling red bean and rice, added with small round cakes of *seulgwan* or glutinous rice flour kneaded with hot water. As they took

like bird's eggs they are called "bird's egg" dumpling or rice dumpling.

Koreans still keep to the custom of eating in many small that if they have many of these dumplings on the winter solstice they will become healthier and be given more blessings.

A few bigger dumplings were put into the porridge and the children who ate them were very pleased that fortune smiled on them. Adults looked back upon the year eating the porridge, and thought they got now one year older. And they shared the gruel with neighbors, promoting harmony with them.

The custom was helpful to adding colour to life and developing winter food. It has been passed on till today. This year's winter solstice falls on December 22.

By Jong Sun Bak PT

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PYONGYANG, DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Kim Jong Un inspects machine factory, sees live-fire drill

Kim Jong Un, first secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea, first chairman of the DPRK National Defence Commission and supreme commander of the Korean People's Army, inspected the January 18 General Machine Factory which has modernized all the production processes at the highest level and established a cultured way of production and life in an exemplary fashion.

He was accompanied by O Su Yong, Jo Yong Won and Hong Yong Chil.

As he made the rounds of the revolutionary relic hall and the room dedicated to the factory's history, he said the factory's today owes much to President Kim Il Sung, who had laid the foundations for a socialist industrial state from scratch, and Chairman Kim Jong Il, who had made painstaking efforts to develop the country's machine-building industry. He looked around the factory to inquire about details of the modernization and production.

The factory's integrated manufacturing system, which monitors all of production and business activities in real time, analyses data and takes relevant measures, has attained the highest level in the machine-building industry at home, he said.

The factory, he noted, has been developed in keeping with the trend of the industrial development in the 21st century as a flexible manufacturing system has been set up consisting of CNC machine tools, industrial robots, unmanned material truck, automatic warehouse and others.

He acquainted himself with the

specifications of different products and stressed the need to make all the products at the highest level so that they could be favoured by customers. He highly praised the officials, employees, scientists, technicians and soldier builders for the blood, sweat and tears they shed in carrying out the modernization project, and had a photograph taken with the factory officials and employees.

Supreme Commander Kim Jong Un inspected attack-and-defence manoeuvres between KPA

large combined units 526 and 671.

The military exercises were designed to ensure that mechanized troops overcome different sorts of obstacles set up by defensive troops in real war situations so as to check their capacity to advance that has been improved since last year's drill of the same kind. They were also aimed at taking measures to address the problems arising in advance and obstacle installations in winter conditions and making the whole army bubble with enthusiasm for training as the anti-

Japanese guerrilla did on Mt. Paektu.

At the observation post Kim Jong Un was briefed on the drill plan and observed the manoeuvres. He was pleased to see the fiercely waged live-fire drill, and said it was flawless and it is needed for the People's Army to organize such a drill many times.

He highly appreciated the drill and set forth tasks to be served as guidelines for enhancing military exercises.

By PT staff reporter

Kimchi making listed as world intangible heritage



Kimchi making at the Pyongyang Rest Home.

The 10th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the UNESCO, which was held in Windhoek, Namibia, decided to add kimchi making custom nominated by the DPRK to the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Kimchi is made by mixing vegetables like cabbage and radish with fish or pickled fish and fermenting them. It has high nutritive and pharmacological value as well as refreshing taste

and special flavour of its own. It has been Koreans' favorite food since olden times.

Kimchi, symbolic of the Korean nation, is a health food which is now gaining popularity across the world.

Koreans eat kimchi in all seasons and it has so much variety.

A UNESCO document released before the final review says that the Koreans not only share skills of making delicious kimchi in different seasons but also help each other with the collection of ingredients and preparation for making it.

The traditional custom is passed on from one generation to another in each family.

By Pang Un Ju PT

Canada's rhetoric against court ruling refuted

"We are very surprised that the Canadian government dares to pick a quarrel with us voicing concern over our legitimate judicial acts and describing them as 'violations of international law', far from feeling guilty about the heinous crimes committed by its citizens," a DPRK Foreign Ministry spokesman told KCNA on December 22.

SEE PAGE 1