

## China–North Korea passenger train service resumes after six years

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**Dhaka: A passenger train from China arrived in Pyongyang on Thursday, March 12, marking the resumption of a cross-border rail service that had been suspended for nearly six years due to the COVID-19 pandemic.**

The train departed from the northeastern Chinese border city of Dandong and reached the North Korean capital later in the evening, according to Chinese state media reports.

Rail links between the two neighbors were halted in 2020 after North Korea imposed strict border closures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. The suspension disrupted one of the few international transport connections available to the isolated country.

China is North Korea's largest trading partner and a major source of

diplomatic, economic, and political support for Pyongyang.

China Railway said regular passenger train services between Beijing and Pyongyang also resumed on Thursday evening. The service will operate four times a week in both directions, specifically on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.

Meanwhile, the shorter Dandong–Pyongyang route will run daily, the railway operator said.

Journalists traveling on the K27 train from Beijing reported several carriages were reserved exclusively for passengers heading to North Korea. At Beijing's departure station, people gathered around the display boards to photograph the listing for the Pyongyang-bound train.

The overnight service makes several stops, including the northern port city of Tianjin, before continuing northeast to Dandong near the border.

Travel industry sources said passengers traveling from Beijing do not go directly to Pyongyang on the same train. Instead, their carriages are detached in Dandong and later attached to another train that crosses the border.

Those wagons first travel to the North Korean border city of Sinuiju, where entry and exit procedures are completed. The carriages are then connected to a domestic train that continues to Pyongyang.

China Railway said tickets are currently available for offline purchase in several Chinese cities. Anyone holding a valid visa can buy tickets.

Eligible passengers include Chinese citizens working or studying in North Korea, as well as North Koreans traveling abroad for work, study, or family visits.

Analysts remarked the resumption of the rail link reflects a gradual normalization of cross-border exchanges between the two countries following the pandemic.

Experts noted the renewed train service could improve people-to-people contact and economic interaction. However, it does not necessarily signal a major shift in Beijing's political or economic support for Pyongyang.

