The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

North Korea Seeks AI Collaboration With Russia – Reports

July 23, 2025



Valery Sharifulin / TASS

North Korea is dispatching artificial intelligence researchers and students to Russia and other countries in a bid to strengthen its domestic tech sector even as international sanctions limit these efforts, the South Korea-based independent news outlet NK News reported.

"We are sending exchange students, interns and researchers to countries including Russia," Kim Kwang Hyok, director of the AI Institute at North Korea's Kim Il Sung University, said in an interview with a pro-Pyongyang outlet based in Japan cited by NK News.

Kim acknowledged that international sanctions remain a major barrier to technological exchange.

"Information technology, especially AI, is a core area under UN Security Council sanctions, so such cooperation faces significant obstacles," he said.

Despite those challenges, North Korean researchers continue to work on AI applications

domestically.

Related article: Russia to Launch Direct Flights From Moscow to North Korean Capital on July 27

Kim said his institute developed a translation program called Ryongma, which supports seven languages including English, Chinese and Russian and has been available on mobile phones since 2021.

He also pointed to efforts to integrate AI into North Korea's healthcare sector, saying that developers are currently building an intelligent platform for use at a hospital under construction in Pyongyang.

Still, experts say North Korea faces steep technical limitations. South Korean authorities have observed that only three semiconductor plants are currently operating in the country, a bottleneck that could impede any large-scale AI rollout, NK News reported.

Even Russia, North Korea's most likely partner in the field, may struggle to provide meaningful assistance.

A former South Korean diplomat with experience in Moscow told NK News that Russia lacks the domestic capacity to supply the high-performance chips or GPUs needed for advanced AI research, relying heavily on imports for such hardware.

Russia and North Korea have deepened their alliance since Moscow's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2025/07/23/north-korea-seeks-ai-collaboration-with-russia-reports-a89927