The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia Launches First Commercial Flight to North Korea in Decades

By AFP

July 28, 2025



Sheremetyevo International Airport in Moscow. **Maxim Shipenkov / EPA / TASS**

A Russian passenger jet landed in North Korea's capital on Monday, according to flight tracking data, marking the first commercial flight in decades between the two allied countries.

The Moscow-to-Pyongyang service by Nordwind Airlines comes as Russia and North Korea grow increasingly close, with Pyongyang supplying weapons and troops to aid Moscow's war effort against Ukraine, likely in exchange for technical support, according to experts.

Flight tracking site FlightAware showed a Nordwind Airlines Boeing 777 landing at Pyongyang's Sunan International Airport at 9:15 a.m. local time.

"This is a historic event, strengthening the ties between our nations," said Oleg, a Nordwind employee aboard the flight, in comments to AFP from Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport ahead

of departure.

Related article: Sun, Sea and the Russian Flag: Inside Vacation Season on the Beaches of Occupied Ukraine

Russian Natural Resources Minister Alexander Kozlov was among the passengers on the inaugural flight, according to state-run RIA Novosti.

A video posted by the new agency showed North Korean officials welcoming Russian travelers with flowers and taking their temperatures using electronic thermometers.

The Nordwind flight is expected to operate monthly. Tickets were priced at 45,000 rubles (about $570).

The launch of the route follows a rare visit by President Vladimir Putin to Pyongyang last year, during which the two heavily sanctioned countries signed a strategic partnership treaty that includes a mutual defense clause.

Western and South Korean intelligence agencies say North Korea has sent over 10,000 troops to Russia's Kursk region, along with large quantities of artillery shells, missiles and long-range rocket systems. Around 600 North Korean soldiers have reportedly been killed and thousands wounded fighting for Russia, according to Seoul's assessments.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has pledged full support for Moscow's war in Ukraine during recent meetings with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, North Korean state media reported.

Russia's state-run TASS news agency said the first return flight from Pyongyang to Moscow is scheduled for Tuesday.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2025/07/28/russia-launches-first-commercial-flight-to-north-korea-in-decades-a89976