



**ONE-WAY INTEREST.** This September 2, 2014 photo shows an entrance in Sinuiju, from North Korea to China using the "Korea China Friendship Bridge" — the old bridge connecting the two socialist states over the Yalu river. A new bridge that was built was supposed to be a key link for trade and travel between China's underdeveloped northeast provinces and a much-touted special economic zone in North Korea — so key that Beijing sank more than \$350 million into the mammoth, three-kilometer-long structure that was slated to open this past fall. Now, it is beginning to look like Beijing has built a bridge to nowhere. The letters read: "Korea China Friendship Bridge." (AP Photo)

## China's \$350M bridge gets scant North Korean welcome

By Eric Talmadge  
The Associated Press

**T**OKYO — The bridge was supposed to be a key link for trade and travel between China's underdeveloped northeast provinces and a much-touted special economic zone in North Korea — so key that Beijing sank more than \$350 million into it.

Now, it is beginning to look like Beijing has built a bridge to nowhere.

An Associated Press Television News (APTN) crew in September saw nothing but a dirt ramp at the North Korean end of the bridge, surrounded by open fields. No immigration or customs buildings could be seen. Roads to the bridge had not been completed.

The much-awaited opening of the new bridge over the Yalu River came and passed on October 30 with no sign the link would be ready for business anytime soon. That prompted an unusually sharp report in the *Global Times* — a newspaper affiliated with the Chinese Communist Party — quoting residents in the Chinese city of Dandong expressing anger over delays in what they had hoped would be an economic boom for their border city.

The report suggested the opening of the mammoth, three-kilometer bridge has been postponed "indefinitely."

## Indonesia tests female police recruits' virginity

By Niniek Karmini  
The Associated Press

**J**AKARTA, Indonesia — Indonesia must stop subjecting female police recruits to physical tests in an effort to determine whether they are virgins, according to a leading human-rights group, describing the practice as degrading and discriminatory.

Human Rights Watch said in a report that such tests were a longstanding practice in Indonesia, where patriarchal attitudes and practices in the security forces are common.

The report was based on interviews with female police officers and police applicants in six Indonesian cities who had undergone the so called "two-finger" test to determine whether their hymens are intact.

The requirement is even posted on the jobs website for Indonesia's national police. In mid-November, it read, "In addition to the medical and physical tests, women who want to be policewomen must also undergo virginity tests. So all women who want to become policewomen should

Beijing and Pyongyang have made no official comment.

Foreign analysts have suggested the apparent lack of progress might indicate wariness in Pyongyang over China's economic influence in the country, which has been growing substantially in recent years as Pyongyang has become more isolated from other potential partners over its nuclear program, human-rights record, and other political issues.

Since its founding, North Korea has been exceedingly cautious of becoming too dependent on either of its superpower neighbors, China and Russia, preferring to play each off the other. That pattern seems to be repeating itself now.

The official media, while saying little about business with China, have lately been playing up the importance of improving trade and political ties with Moscow. Leader Kim Jong Un last month sent a powerful party cadre as his special envoy to Russia to discuss how to bolster such ties.

Better ties with Moscow could further dilute Beijing's leverage over the North, the limits of which became apparent when the North went ahead with its first nuclear test in 2006. Beijing has repeatedly urged North Korea to abandon nuclear weapons, to no avail.

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keep their virginity."

Citing medical experts, Human Rights Watch said the physical tests are useless in determining virginity.

Indonesian police spokesman Maj. Gen. Ronny Sompie urged people not "respond negatively" to the tests, saying they were aimed at ensuring applicants were free from sexually transmitted diseases. He said both male and female recruits also get blood tests for STDs.

"All of this is done in a professional manner and did not harm the applicants," Sompie said.

Human Rights Watch has documented the use of abusive virginity tests by police in several other countries, including Egypt, India, and Afghanistan.

In a video interview recorded by the group, a 24-year-old Indonesian woman said she was among 20 applicants who underwent the test.

"I feared that after they performed the test I would not be a virgin anymore," she told the group in a silhouetted video interview. "They inserted two fingers with gels ... it really hurt."

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