

Lions, tigers and poodles? Dogs a big draw at Pyongyang zoo

By Eric Talmadge
The Associated Press

PYONGYANG, North Korea — Lions, tigers, and poodles? North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's latest gift to the residents of Pyongyang, the renovated central zoo, is pulling in thousands of visitors a day with a slew of attractions ranging from such typical zoo fare as elephants, giraffes, penguins, and monkeys to a high-tech natural history museum with displays showing the origins of the solar system and the evolution of life on earth.

But one of the most popular attractions might come as a surprise to foreign visitors. Just across from the hippopotamus pen and the reptile house, dozens of varieties of dogs — including schnauzers, German shepherds, Shih Tzus, and Saint Bernards — are on display in the “dog pavilion.”

One, a King Charles spaniel, was presented as a gift to Kim's father, Kim Jong Il, by “the U.S. company Tapco” in 1995. According to plaques above their pens, which — dog lovers will be relieved to know — are spacious and clean, Kim Jong Un himself chipped in by giving the zoo its schnauzers, poodles, German shepherds, and a Chihuahua.

Former South Korean President Kim Dae-jung, who pursued a sort of detente with Pyongyang called the “Sunshine Policy,” presented the North with a Jindo dog that now resides in the zoo.

North Korea's own national dog — yes, it has one, the puffy white Pung San breed — lives in a pen next to it.



Though somewhat shocking to those accustomed to thinking of dogs as companions or household pets, the zoo display may actually reflect an increasingly fond attitude toward dogs in North Korea. While dog meat is still a common dish in the North, and in China and South Korea as well, a small but growing number of North Koreans are keeping canines as pets.

People walking dogs on leashes are now seen from time to time in Pyongyang and some other cities. And instead of suggesting recipes, signs in the dog pavilion describe the best way to train a pet dog, suggesting that patience and kindness work better than harsh words.

Aside from the dogs, another unique feature of the zoo is the posting of signs above many of the animal habitats noting where the “gift animals” came from — which is intended to remind visitors of how much North Korea's leaders are loved and respected by leaders abroad. The signs also are meant to emphasize the benevolence of Kim Jong Un, who along with the dogs, donated tigers, giraffes, and many other animals at the zoo.

Pyongyang's central zoo actually dates back to 1959, when Kim Il Sung, the nation's first leader and the grandfather of Kim Jong Un, ordered it built on the outskirts of the city. According to an official history, the zoo started off with

DOGGY DISPLAY. Visitors feed dogs at the renovated central zoo in Pyongyang, North Korea. One of the zoo's most popular attractions might come as a surprise to foreign visitors. Just across from the hippopotamus pen and the reptile house, dozens of varieties of dogs — including schnauzers, German shepherds, Shih Tzus, and Saint Bernards — are on display in the “dog pavilion.” (AP Photo/Dita Alangkara)

only 50 badgers. That same year, however, it received its first “gift animals,” elephants donated by fellow socialist leader Ho Chi Minh of Vietnam.

Fittingly, the elephants, according to the zoo, were heroes in the socialist revolutionary movement because they helped the Vietnamese by carrying war materiel in the fight against French colonialism.

Another “gift animal” elephant was donated by Laos. Zebras and ostriches at the zoo were donated to Kim Il Sung by the leader of Tanzania, and orangutans were donated by the late President Suharto of Indonesia. The mayor of Kyoto, Japan, gave the old zoo a jaguar.

Renovations for the new zoo began in 2014 as part of Kim Jong Un's efforts to create more modern and impressive structures and leisure centers around the capital, including several major high-rise housing areas, an equestrian center, a sprawling new shooting range, and a giant water park in the city's center.

Though Pyongyang is far ahead of other North Korean cities, not to mention rural areas, in terms of development, there has been some growth elsewhere also, including the Masik Pass luxury ski resort near the port of Wonsan on the country's east coast.

North Korea calls diplomat defector ‘human scum’

By Kim Tong-Hyung
The Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea said a senior North Korean diplomat who recently defected to South Korea is a criminal and “human scum,” in its first official response to the defection.

The official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) also accused Seoul of using the defection of Thae Yong Ho, formerly a minister at the North Korean Embassy in London, as propaganda aimed at insulting the North Korean leadership. It also denounced the British government for ignoring international protocol by rejecting what it said were demands to have Thae

extradited back to the North and instead handing him over to the South.

KCNA said North Korea had ordered Thae to return to the North in June to be investigated for a series of crimes, including embezzling government funds, leaking confidential secrets, and sexually assaulting a minor.

It said Thae “should have received legal punishment for the crimes he committed, but he discarded the fatherland that raised him and even his own parents and brothers by fleeing, thinking nothing but just saving himself, showing himself to be human scum who lacks even an elementary level of loyalty and even tiny bits of conscience and morality that are required for human beings.”

In announcing the defection, Seoul's Unification Ministry said Thae was the second-highest North Korean official at the embassy and the most senior North Korean diplomat ever to defect to South Korea. In 1997, the North Korean ambassador to Egypt fled, but resettled in the United States.

More than 29,000 North Koreans have defected to South Korea since the end of the 1950-1953 Korean War, according to the South Korean government. Many defectors have said they wanted to leave North Korea's harsh political system and poverty. Pyongyang often accuses the South of deceiving or paying its citizens to defect, or claims that they have simply been kidnapped.

In April, 13 North Koreans working at a North Korea-operated restaurant in China defected to South Korea. It was the largest group defection since North Korean leader Kim Jong Un took power in late 2011. Later



DIPLOMATIC DEFECTOR. Thae Yong Ho, a North Korean diplomat speaking during an interview in Pyongyang, is seen in this image taken from video on April 5, 2004. Thae, who was based in London, has defected, according to South Korean officials. In announcing the defection, Seoul's Unification Ministry said Thae was the second-highest North Korean official at the embassy and the most senior North Korean diplomat ever to defect to South Korea. (AP Photo, File)

in April, South Korea also revealed that a colonel in North Korea's military spy agency had defected to the South last year.

The announcement of Thae's defection came amid North Korea's angry response to a U.S. plan to place an advanced missile defense system in South Korea. The North has warned of unspecified retaliation and fired several missiles into the sea.

World's first self-driving taxis debut in Singapore

By Annabelle Liang and
Dee-Ann Durbin
The Associated Press

SINGAPORE — The world's first self-driving taxis began picking up passengers last month in Singapore.

Select members of the public can hail a free ride through their smartphones in taxis operated by nuTonomy, an autonomous vehicle software startup. While multiple companies, including Google and Volvo, have been testing self-driving cars on public roads for several years, nuTonomy says it is the first to offer rides to the public.

Its launch in Singapore is beating ride-hailing service Uber, which plans to offer rides in autonomous cars in Pittsburgh, by a few weeks.

NuTonomy is starting small — six cars now, growing to a dozen by the end of the year. The ultimate goal, company executives say, is to have a fully self-driving taxi fleet in Singapore by 2018, to help cut the number of cars on Singapore's congested roads. Eventually, the model could be adopted in cities around the world, nuTonomy hopes.

For now, the taxis only run in a 2.5-square-mile business and residential district called “one-north,” and pickups and dropoffs are limited to

specified locations. Riders must have an invitation from nuTonomy to use the service. The company says dozens signed up for the launch; it plans to expand that list to thousands of people within a few months.

The cars — modified Renault Zoe and Mitsubishi i-MiEV electrics — have a driver in front who is prepared to take back the wheel and a researcher in back who watches the car's computers. Each car is fitted with six sets of Lidar — a detection system that uses lasers to operate like radar — including one that constantly spins on the roof. There are also two cameras on the dashboard to

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Difficulty level: Medium

#45928

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that the digits 1 through 9 appear one time each in every row, column, and 3x3 box.

Solution to
last issue's
puzzle

Puzzle #85146 (Easy)

All solutions available at
<www.sudoku.com>.

7	1	9	3	5	6	4	8	2
8	2	5	1	7	4	6	3	9
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9	6	3	5	8	2	7	1	4
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3	8	7	6	4	5	2	9	1
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