# Putin and Kim Jong-un's Luxury Limousine Joyride in Pyongyang Marks Historic Visit



Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un engaged in a well-staged public relations event on Wednesday, taking turns driving each other around in an Aurus limousine during Putin's visit to Pyongyang. This visit marked Putin's first trip to North Korea in nearly 25 years. The drive followed the signing of a deal that included a mutual defense pledge, which Kim described as an "alliance."

The event was tightly secured, and Russian state TV aired footage showing Putin and Kim in the luxury vehicle. Putin drove first, with Kim as the passenger, followed by Kim taking the wheel. The Aurus limousine, presented to Kim by Putin, is the official car model of the Russian president and is often likened to Rolls-Royce due to its luxury and design.

Kim, an automobile enthusiast, now possesses at least two Aurus limousines. He reportedly has a collection of high-end foreign cars, including Maybach, Mercedes-Benz, Rolls-Royce Phantom, and Lexus, despite UN Security Council resolutions prohibiting the export of luxury goods to North Korea.

Aurus Motors, which began manufacturing its cars in Russia's Tatarstan region, plans to start production in a former Toyota factory in St. Petersburg this year. This shift comes as Russia seeks to utilize idle car factories after global automakers exited the market following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. So far, 40 Aurus-branded cars have been sold in Russia this year.