

TENSION IN KOREA MEANS LOSS TO TOURISM INDUSTRY



The recent North Korean military activities have certainly stirred the diplomatic waters; South Korea is deeply concerned as it not only means a physical attack on its people but also, its economy. The tourism industry has already been affected.

Political unrest between North and South Korea prevails decades after the Korean War was concluded and the leaders of both countries find it difficult to maintain the status quo. The recent events are a tragic example of the escalating political tension between the North and South. On 23rd November North Korea fired artillery shells at the Yeonpyeong Island, killing four South Koreans. It is still too early to conclude what the total impact may be; however, South Korea already rings the alarm bells; **while the government fights to establish a strong tourism industry in the country, any notion of political unrest will immediately put an end to any promotion activities.**

End of the year is luckily not a busy season in terms of numbers of visitors; nevertheless, **many South Korean tour agencies have been reporting an increasing number of trip cancellations.** The government is carefully monitoring the situation and especially Japanese tourists are of concern. They generate a lot of income for South Korea and many have already decided to cancel their visits there following a caution issued by the Japanese authorities. The message is simple; **irrespective of the cancellation fees, travelers follow the political situation very carefully and worry about their safety.**

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