

Orang is a county seat in North Hamgyong Province with a 2020 estimated population of 98,886.

This coastal city shares its history with the surrounding locales and would have become part of the ethnic Korean kingdom of Goryeo in 1107. A great deal of administrative reorganization occurred in 1952 throughout the country, and that is when the current form of Orang County was established.

There is a possible hillfort at 41.404621° 129.606508° and a historic defensive wall 723 meters long at 41.364129° 129.720613° .

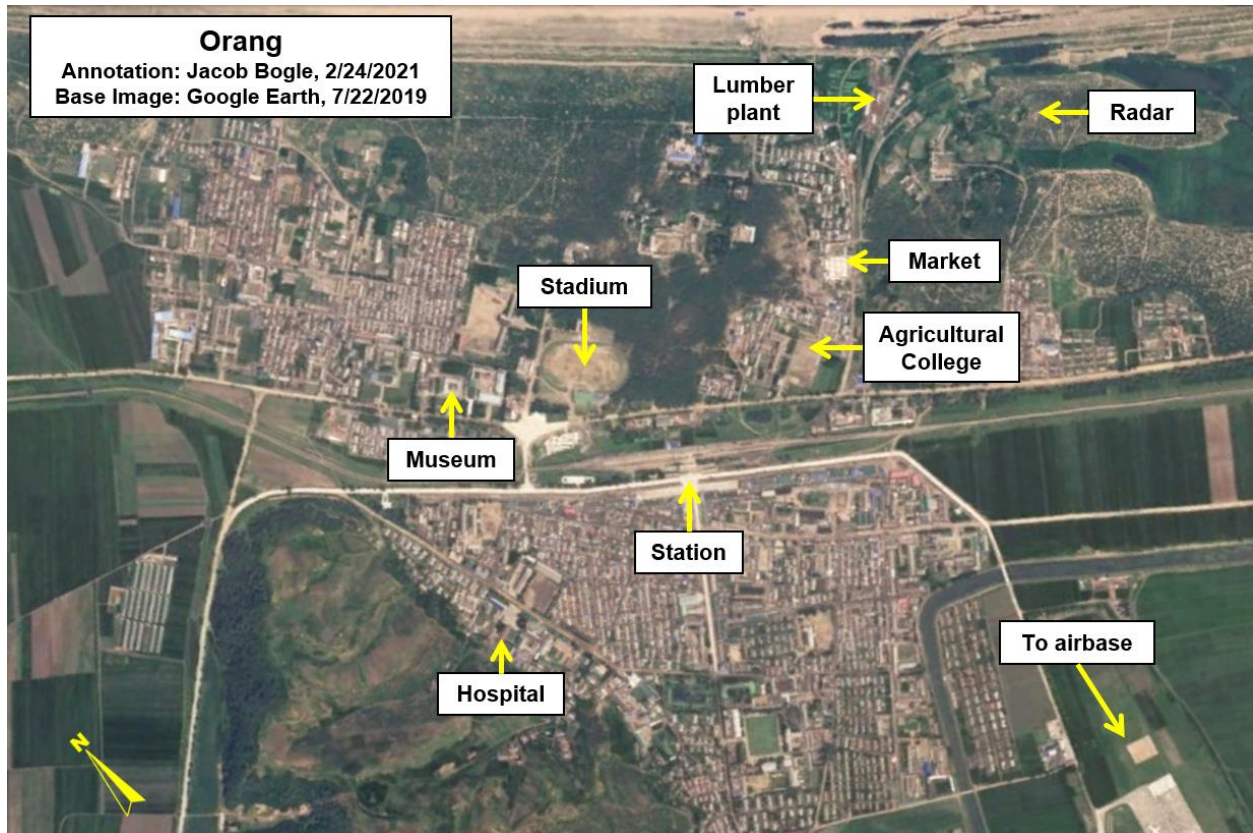
During the Korean War, the UN offensive into northern Korea came to Orang after the Battle of Kilju. On Nov. 12, 1950, DPRK troops crossed the Orangchon (Orang River) and forced the UN forces back. Due to bad weather preventing reinforcements from getting to the town, the American heavy cruiser *USS Rochester* was sent to provide naval gunfire support. By Nov. 20, Orang had been taken and six days later, Chongjin was encircled by the South Korean military. However, by January 1951, the entire area had been retaken by Communist forces.

Orang lies in a small coastal plain surrounded by three rivers; the Orangchon is the longest, Junamchon, and the Jubukchon which empties into the sea north of town. The county also has two lakes. The largest is Janygon Lake and then Mugye Lake.

The Orangchon cuts deep into the hills that make up most of the county and provides a good environment for the construction of hydroelectric dams. There are five along its main course including the [Orangchon-Phalhyang Hydroelectric Dam](#) that was completed in 2019. At least two more are under construction.

There is another dam that was finished in late 2019-early 2020 but it was apparently destroyed by flooding in October 2020.

Since 2000, the town has grown slowly. A new housing complex was built to the north of the stadium, the stadium was renovated in 2015/2016, a children's driving park was built in 2018, and the market was given permanent structures and covers 4,000 sq. meters.



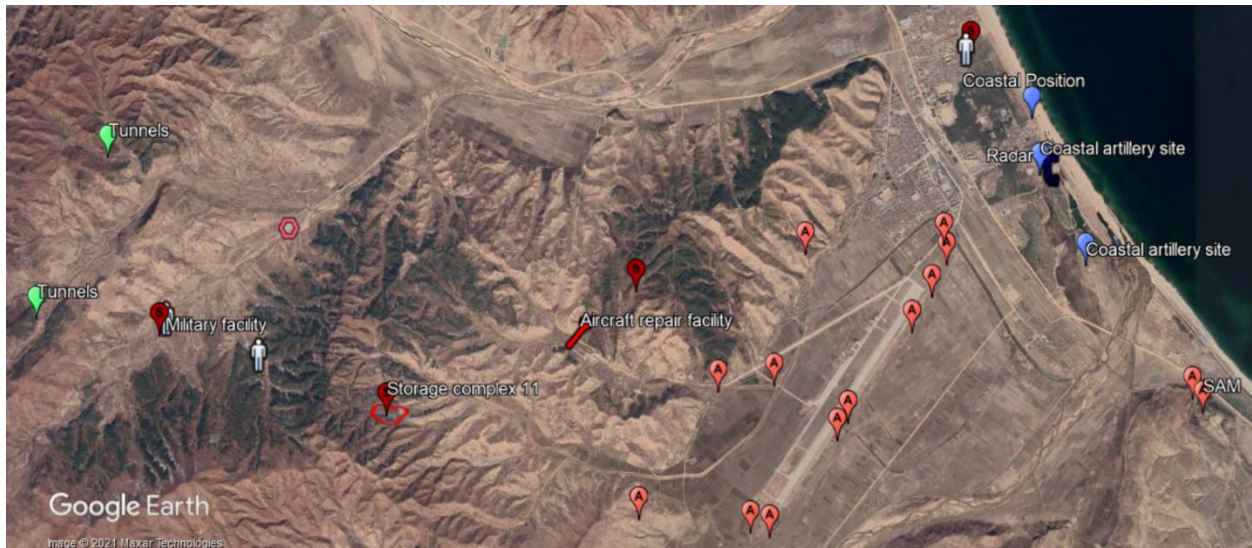
Economy

The economy is small but diversified. There are some agricultural fields, a saltern covering about 410 hectares, limited fishing, a small tourism industry to sights like Janygon Lake, and there is work in support of the Orang Airfield.

Orang is also home to a farming college, hospital, and has numerous small shops. Then there's the aforementioned hydroelectric dams, a small lumber facility, and an unidentified complex that may be another college at 41.455596° 129.659248°.

The county has sufficient access to the country's cellular phone network and has had access since 2011.

Military



Military sites around the town. Based on the 2021 AccessDPRK Map. “A” icons are anti-aircraft-artillery batteries.

Orang is home to the 8th Air Division, a training division that uses older aircraft like the Chinese-built Shenyang J-5 and the An-2 biplane. North Korea has converted the An-2's to serve infiltration roles as they can fly low and avoid most modern radars. The base has an associated training site on the Orang River, where targets are painted onto a small island (41.377208° 129.722653°) and pilots can practice by dropping dummy bombs onto the targets.

The airbase was originally called Hoemun-ri and was built by the Japanese. Its current form has a 515-meter-long underground facility and an aircraft repair center.

The immediate area has 13 anti-aircraft batteries, a surface-to-air missile battery, and three coastal defense sites, along with a radar installation. The southern coast of the county also has four coastal defense sites, another radar installation, and a small navy patrol station.

Orang is 17 km north of the [Puam-dong Submarine Base](#) and there are several smaller military facilities in the county.

***Originally created for an AccessDPRK Patreon supporter. Free online access has been granted by the patron. This city brief has been edited for tone, context, and added references when needed.**

Jacob Bogle, February 2021 (updated March 2023)

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