




# King Yeonsan

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King Yeonsan (1476-1506) was the tenth king of the Joseon Dynasty and considered one of the worst rulers in Korean history. Born with the name Yi Yung, he was the son of Queen Yun, the first wife of King Seongjong who was deposed and executed when Yeonsan was three. Proclaimed the crown prince at seven, he was educated through the system for the royal education system known as Seoyeon, and his academic knowledge didn't fall short compared to his predecessors. Though he appeared to be a promising monarch early on, he soon became a despot whose rule was plagued by bloodshed and hedonism.

While his father had strived to maintain a tenuous balance of power between the royal family and court officials, King Yeonsan distrusted officials and gradually established an absolute monarchy. He had many court officials executed, exiled, or deposed in two purges of the literati. The first occurred in 1498, after the king heard that an official of the Sarim faction had criticized King Sejo of cliquing together and disrupting the affairs of the nation in the royal records. The official was brutally executed, and many Sarim scholars were exiled, causing the second purge.



The second purge occurred in 1504, when King Yeonsan instigated another bloodbath to punish those responsible for his mother's death. Over this period, he consolidated his autocratic rule by terrorizing the court, with 239 officials executed, dismissed, or exiled. After this purge, the roles of Samsa, consisting of three offices: Office of Inspector General (Saheonbu), Office of Censors (Saganwon), and Office of Special Advisors (Hongmungwan) diminished significantly. They were meant to check and balance the power of the king and the officials, but King Yeonsan could not be contained.

Based on powerful regal power, King Yeonsan enjoyed hunting and led a luxurious life, resulting in a bad state of national funds. He closed the Seonggyeongwan royal university and the Wongak Buddhist temple for his personal pleasure, as residents were evicted from lands so he could set up hunting grounds. In addition, speech and learning were heavily censored under his reign. As a result of these hardships, King Yeonsan was eventually toppled in a coup in 1506 and exiled to Ganghwa Island, where he died weeks later.



# **TERROR ATTACK IN ST. PETERSBURG KILLS 14**

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At 2:40 p.m. on Apr. 3, an explosive device detonated on the Saint Petersburg metro line, as the train was in transit after leaving Sennaya Ploshchad station. 14 passengers were killed in the blast, including several university students. Another device was discovered at the Ploshchad Vosstaniya metro station, across the Fontaka River, however it was disarmed by police before exploding.

The suspect has been identified as Akbarzhon Jalilov, a Russian citizen of Uzbek ethnicity, originally from Kyrgyzstan. The remains of Jalilov were discovered in the train car – pointing to an apparent suicide bombing operation. No organization has yet claimed responsibility for the attack, and the motives of the attacker have not been confirmed. Russian authorities have collected evidence that he had links to radical Islamic groups. The attack may have served as retribution for Russian military action in Syria, where the armed forces are engaged in assisting President Bashar al-Assad to reestablish control over Syria and defeat insurgency movements.

In a televised statement, President Vladimir Putin announced that both the municipal and federal governments “will do everything to support

families of the victims and injured.” The President later attended a remembrance ceremony and laid flowers for the deceased outside the targeted station. World leaders, including U.S President Donald Trump, telephoned President Putin to offer condolences. President Trump is reported to have offered his “full support” to Russia in response to the attack. Several cities around the world carried out memorial services and lit up landmarks in the colors of the flag of the Russian Federation.

This is the first attack of its kind in almost seven years in Russia – the last bombing on a metro service in the country occurred in Moscow in 2010, when two female attackers belonging to the radical Caucasus Emirate group took 40 lives in a coordinated suicide bombing. Historically, Islamic terror attacks in Russia originate from jihadi independence movements in Caucasian areas such as Chechnya and Dagestan. Jalilov’s Central Asian origins may cause a shift in Russian foreign policy and counter-terrorism measures towards the region. Furthermore, there are now fears of discrimination and even reprisal attacks towards ethnic Central Asians residing in Saint Petersburg.