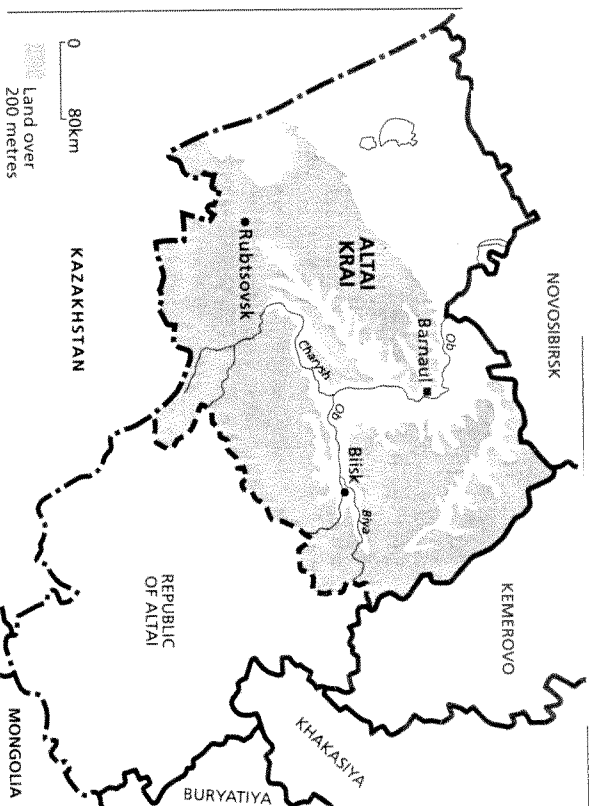


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Krais (Provinces)

Altai Krai

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Most of Altai Krai lies within the Western Siberian Plain. Part of the Western Siberian Economic Area, it has international boundaries to the south with Kazakhstan, the People's Republic of China and Mongolia. To the north lie the federal subjects of Novosibirsk Oblast, Kemerovo Oblast and the Republic of Khakassiya (formerly part of Krasnoyarsk Krai) and the Republic of Tyva lies beyond the eastern border. The eastern part of the Krai is constituted as the Republic of Altai (see above—formerly the Gorno-Altai Autonomous Oblast). Its major river is the Ob, which has numerous tributaries (there are altogether some 17,000 rivers within the territory). It has one main lake, the Teletskoye, although there are a total of 13,000 lakes, one-half of which are fresh water. About one-third of its total area is forested. In the east of the Krai are mountains, in the west steppe. The Krai (including the Altai Republic) occupies a total area of 261,700 sq km (101,040 sq miles). It is divided into 60 administrative districts and 12 cities, as well as the autonomous republic. It had an estimated population of 2,690,000 at 1 January 1996, of whom 52.5% lived in urban areas. Its population density at this time was 10.3 per sq km. In 1996 ethnic Russians comprised an estimated 90.3% of the population, Germans 4.8%, Ukrainians 2.4% and Altans just 0.1%. The Krai's administrative centre is at Barnaul, which had an estimated population of 593,000 at 1 January 1996. Other major cities are Blisk (227,400) and Rubtsovsk (168,400).

History

The territory of Altai Krai was annexed by Russia in 1738. The region was heavily industrialized during the Soviet period, particularly in the years 1926–40. Altai Krai was formed on 28 September 1937. On 13 March 1994, in accordance with a federal presidential decree of October 1993, a new provincial legislature, the Legislative Assembly, was elected, in place of the Provincial Soviet. The new legislature was bicameral, comprising a lower chamber of 25 deputies and an upper chamber of 73 deputies (one from each district in the Krai). The Legislative Assembly speaker, Aleksandr Surkov, a Communist, defeated the incumbent governor, Lev Korshunov, in the gubernatorial election of November 1996.

Economy

Altai Krai's gross regional product in 1995 totalled 14,887,600m. roubles, equivalent to 5,526,800 roubles per head. Its main industrial centres are at Barnaul, Bisk, Rubtsovsk, Novolaisk and Slavgorod. There are major river-ports at Barnaul and Bisk. It has well-developed transport networks—1,803 km (1,067 miles) of railway lines in 1997 and 15,673 km of roads, 13,860 km of which are paved. About one-quarter of its territory is served by water transport, which operates along a network of some 1,000 km of navigable waterways. There are five airports, including an international airport at Barnaul, with a service to Dusseldorf (Germany). The Krai is bisected by the main natural-gas pipeline running from Tyumen to Barnaul via Novosibirsk.

The Krai's principal crops are grain, flax, sunflowers and sugar-beets. Horticulture, animal husbandry and fur-animal breeding are also important. In 1995 some 23.2% of its work-force was engaged in agriculture, while total production in the sector amounted to 5,822,000m. roubles. The Krai contains substantial mineral resources, including silt, iron ore, soda and precious stones, most of which are not industrially exploited. Its main industries are mechanical engineering (including tractor manufacturing, primarily by the Rubtsovsk tractor plant), metallurgy, chemicals and petrochemicals, the manufacture of building materials, ore mining (complex ores, gold, mercury, silt), food processing (the Krai's agro-industrial complex is one of the largest in the country), textiles and light manufacturing. Barnaul contains one of the largest textile enterprises in Russia, producing cotton fibre and yarn for cloth. Industry employed 23.9% of the population in 1995 and total production in the sector amounted to a value of 9,976,000m. roubles.

In 1995 the economically active population in Altai Krai totalled 1,109,100, of whom 36,000 were unemployed. The average monthly wage at that time was 349,000 roubles, while the local budget showed a deficit of 88,900m. roubles in 1995. Continuing deficit problems contributed to the federal Government's decision of January 1999 to increase central subsidies to the province in that year. There was US \$28.53m. of foreign investment in the territory in 1995. At 1 January 1996 there were 1,500 small businesses registered in the Krai.

Directory

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