

North Korea Leader Dies

This past weekend Kim Jong Il, known in his country as “dear leader” and strict ruler of communist North Korea, died of a heart attack at the age of sixty-nine. One of his sons appears to be in place to succeed him.

CNN

Kim Jong Il had led North Korea since 1994, when his father – the nation’s founder, Kim Il Sung – died at age 82. During his 17 years in power, the country suffered a devastating famine even as it built up its million-strong army, expanded its arsenal of ballistic missiles and became the world’s eighth declared nuclear power.

The news of his death spurred South Korea, which remains technically at war with the North more than five decades after their 1950-53 conflict, to put its military on high alert. But across one of the world’s most heavily fortified borders, South Korean President Lee Myung-bak told his citizens “to go about their lives” in the meantime.