

## 18. Mongolia



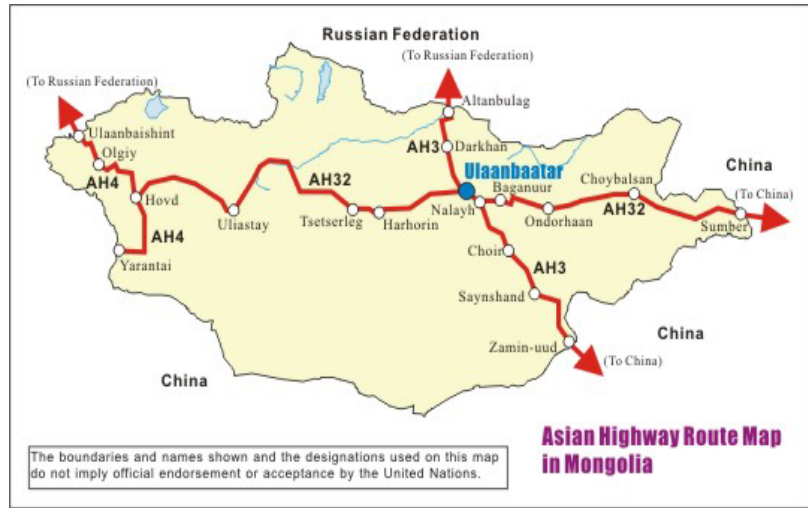
### A. Introduction

The Asian Highway routes link Mongolia to China and the Russian Federation. Roads are the primary means of transport for people and freight. The Government is implementing the “Millennium Road” project, with East-West links and North-South links to improve road connections with neighbouring countries. It is getting support from the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, the Kuwaiti

Fund and the Government of Japan. The Asian Highway routes in Mongolia provide important transit routes for China and the Russian Federation.

With an average elevation exceeding 1,500 metres, mountain ranges and high plateaus cover most of the north west and the central south, and the Gobi desert lies in the south and east. Wide seasonal variations in temperature, rugged terrain, and an arid climate limit agriculture; nomadic year-round grazing of sheep, goats, cattle, horses, yaks, and camels has been the major occupation for centuries. A small industrial sector is based primarily on livestock processing and the manufacture of textiles and consumer goods. Some timber is cut in the north, and coal, copper, molybdenum, tin, tungsten, and gold are mined and processed.

The population is composed primarily of Khalkha Mongols; there are also minorities of Oirat Mongols, Kazakhs, Chinese, and Russians.

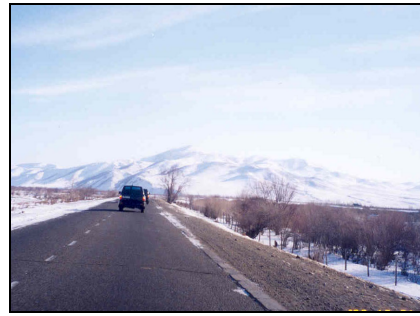


Country Profile	
Capital	Ulaanbaatar
Area	1.565 million sq km
Population	2,594,000 (2003)
Urban Population	57 per cent
GDP	US\$ 1.18 billion (2003)
GDP per Capita	US\$ 455 (2003)
Currency	Togrog/Tugrik
Total Length of Roads	49,250 km (2002)
Asian Highway route length	4,286 km
Number of Motor Vehicles	142,800 (2002)

## B. Asian Highway in Mongolia



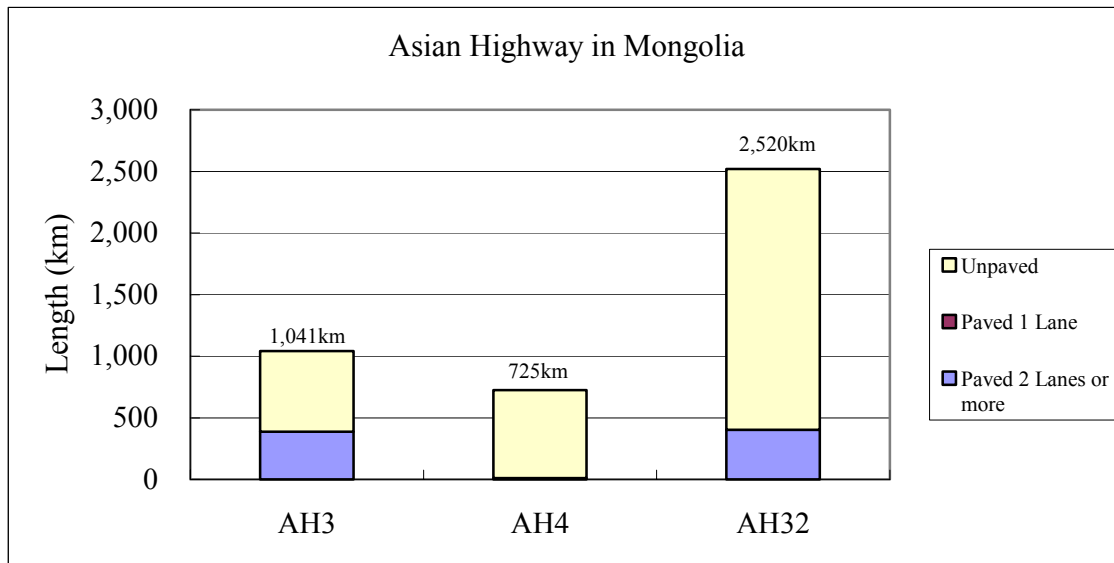
AH32 in Ulaanbaatar



AH3 near Ulaanbaatar

### Status of the Asian Highway in Mongolia

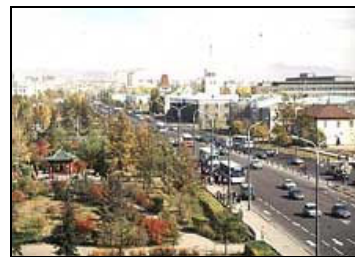
Route No.	Itinerary	Length (km)	Paved (km)		Unpaved (km)
			2 Lanes or more	1 Lane	
AH3	Altanbulag – Darkhan – Ulaanbaatar – Nalayh – Saynshan – Zamin-Uud	1,041	386		655
AH4	Ulaanbaishint – Hovd – Yarantai	725	11		714
AH32	Sumber – Choybalsan – Ondorhaan – Nalayh – Ulaanbaatar – Uliastay – Hovd	2,520	403		2,117
Total		4,286	800		3,486
Percentage		100	18.7		81.3



## C. Tourism spots along the Asian Highway

### Ulaanbaatar (AH3/AH32)

Ulaanbaatar is situated in central east Mongolia, along a large wide valley. Mountains surround the city. The Tuul River runs from east to west in the south of the city. Ulaanbaatar was built in 1778 and named the City of Felt. In 1924, it was declared the capital.



### Amarbayasgalant Monastery

The Amarbayasgalant monastery, located 360 kilometres north of Ulaanbaatar is one of the favourite destinations for visitors. It can be reached by jeep via Darkhan. Built in 1727-1736, the monastery was the second most important in Mongolia after Erdene Zuu monastery in Kharakhorum.

### The Gobi Desert

The Gobi Desert covers almost 30 per cent of the country. The area is often imagined as a lifeless desert. In reality, most of it is a land of steppes, rich with wildlife and vegetation and home for camel breeders. The climate is extreme with severe summers and winters.



### Kharakhorum

Mongolia's ancient capital, Kharakhorum, is Genghis Khan's fabled city. In its symbolic ruins, monumental walls with 108 stupas surround Mongolia's first Buddhist monastery, the Erdene Zuu, built in 1586. Turtles carved from stone mark the boundaries of the complex. Nearby are monuments and rock inscriptions erected in the 8th-9th centuries in memory of independence fighters.

## D. Sample itinerary

1. Arrive in the *Asian Highway* city of Ulaanbaatar.
2. Tour Ulaanbaatar, including the former Winter Palace of Mongolian rulers and the Museum of Bogd Khan. Visit the Museum of Religion, a former Buddhist monastery built in the Chinese-Tibetan style, and the modern part of the city via the Boulevard of Peace.
3. Depart for Bayangobi. Visit a horse-keeper's camp and see the making of airag, the Mongolian national drink of fermented mare's milk. Try horseback riding on Mongolian traditional wooden saddles before leaving for a ger camp at Bayangobi.
4. Depart for the site of the 13th century capital of the Mongolian Empire - Kharakhorum, the city from which Genghis Khan launched his attacks. Visit the ancient Erdene Zuu monastery built by Altan Khan, who proclaimed Buddhism as Mongolia's main religion. At night, enjoy a traditional Mongolian campfire dinner and spend the night in a ger camp.

5. Fly back to Ulaanbaatar. Visit the Gandan monastery, the main Buddhist temple. Stroll the monastery grounds and watch the monks in their prayers. See the magnificent statue of Migjid Janraisig decorated with pure gold and dressed in silk and precious stones.
6. Fly to the Gobi desert. Trek to the Eagle Valley National Park to view stunning landscapes. Continue to a ger camp, stopping for a visit at a camel farm to ride the camels and observe the nomadic lifestyles.
7. Tour Bayan Zag - the Flaming Cliffs, an archaeological site and home to some of the world's finest fossil discoveries, including fossilized dinosaur eggs.
8. Fly back to Ulaanbaatar for souvenir shopping and a folklore show featuring traditional dancers and hoomi (throat) singers.
9. Depart Ulaanbaatar.

#### **E. Government Department responsible for Asian Highway Network**

Department of Roads, Ministry of Infrastructure, P.O. Box 426, Post office 44, Ulaanbaatar 210644, Mongolia. Tel: (976-11) 325328; Fax: (976-11) 310503. Department of Roads, Web: [www.dor.mn](http://www.dor.mn).

#### **F. Useful Contacts for travel and tourism information**

Ministry of Infrastructure, Government Bldg. 2, Negdsen Undesni St. 11, Ulaanbaatar 210 646, Mongolia. Tel: (976-11) 321721; Fax: (976-11) 310612. Web: [www.mongoliatourism.gov.mn](http://www.mongoliatourism.gov.mn).