

# Kim Arrives in Vladivostok, Russia for FIRST EVER Summit with Putin

VLADIVOSTOK - Kim Jong-un's armored train has reached Vladivostok, a city in Russia's Far East, which will host the first-ever meeting between Kim and President Vladimir Putin.

The summit, which is scheduled for Thursday, will be hosted by the Far Eastern Federal University at its new campus on Russky Island, which is across the bridge from Vladivostok.

The program of the visit has largely been kept secret, but evidence of preparations for the high-profile meeting has been floating around since Monday.

The armored train arrived at the station in Vladivostok hours after crossing the Korean-Russian border on



Wednesday morning. As it was coming to a stop, Korean bodyguards in black business suits and white gloves poured out onto the



platform. They wiped clean the door that their leader would soon exit from, and put in place a

small ramp connecting the train car and a red carpet prepared for Kim.

Kim had a smaller welcoming ceremony at the Russian border town of Khasan, where he was offered bread and salt as a gesture of hospitality, and a short tour to a historic building which has significance for the North Korean ruling family. Accompanied by senior Russian officials, Kim went to the terminal square, where a military band in full parade uniforms played national anthems of North Korea and Russia. The visiting dignitary and his delegation were then treated with a military tattoo. He then boarded a diplomatic limousine and left in a motorcade as the band played a farewell tune. (RT)

## Neighbor News

### 'Lift Sanctions & Apologize If You Want to Talk,' Iran's Rouhani Tells Washington

TEHRAN - The US should first drop sanctions and apologize, if it wants to sit down for negotiations, Iran's President Hassan Rouhani said, after Washington stepped up "maximum pressure" on Tehran.

"Negotiation is only possible if all the pressures are lifted, they apologize for their illegal actions and there is mutual respect," Rouhani said on Wednesday.

He stated that Tehran is open to talks with Washington, but the US is simply "not ready for any dialogue" and only seeks to "subdue the people of Iran."

Iran's Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, meanwhile, said that the country will thwart any attempts of the US to block

its oil trade. "The efforts to boycott the sale of Iran's oil won't get them anywhere. We will export our oil as much as we need and we intend," Khamenei wrote on Twitter.

The warning came after US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, announced that Washington will stop issuing sanction waivers for the buyers of Iranian oil. It was done as part of the campaign to apply "maximum pressure" on Tehran, he said.

The two states remained in a diplomatic standoff after President Donald Trump unilaterally pulled the US out of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on the Iranian nuclear program last year. (RT)

As an HSE engineer, Saleem prefers strict project criteria without sacrificing the environment. She said the plant, which has entirely adopted China's technology and standards, is an environmentally friendly one. "On some parts, Chinese standards are stricter," said Saleem, who once worked on environmental consulting for the Washington-based International Finance Corporation. "We definitely opt for the best option." At first, however, ... (More on P4)... (15)

### China-Aided Hydroelectric Plant to Brighten Homes, Hearts in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD - Three years ago, 28-year-old Maryam Saleem decided to forgo an urban life in Pakistan's capital Islamabad and head to the remote mountains. She found out later that she had made the right decision.

Salaleem is working at the construction site of Karot Hydropower Plant, some 70 km east of the capital. It, with roaring juggernauts and raging muddy currents, turned out to be "quite noisy," compared to a "very peaceful and quiet" Islamabad.

Nevertheless, "my decision was not wrong," Saleem said. She now is a health, safety and environment (HSE) engineer at the hydropower station, a major pilot project of the China-Pakistan

Economic Corridor (CPEC). It is expected to be completed in 2021 and generate 3.2 billion units of cheap, clean electricity for Pakistan.

"My life is totally changed by the project" for the better, she said.

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### Slovak Prime Minister to Meet with Trump in May

BRATISLAVA, Slovakia - Slovakia's prime minister says he has been invited by U.S. President Donald Trump to meet him next month in Washington.

Prime Minister Peter Pellegrini says he will meet Trump in the White House on May 3.

The visit coincides with the 30th anniversary of the 1989 "Velvet Revolution" in former Czechoslovakia and the 15th anniversary of Slovakia's

membership in NATO. Pellegrini says the economic and defense cooperation between the two countries and defense spending will be on the agenda on their talks. Slovakia recently signed a deal to buy 14 F-16 military jets from Lockheed Martin as it seeks to replace Soviet-era jets.

Pellegrini said on Wednesday he would also like to discuss Trump's threat to impose tariffs on cars and car parts imported from Europe. (AP)

### Philippines' Duterte Gives Canada 1 Week to Take Back Garbage or 'We Will Declare War'

MANILA - Filipino President Rodrigo Duterte on Tuesday reportedly threatened to "declare war" against Canada within the next week if the country fails to remove tons of garbage that was previously shipped to Manila.

Duterte, in remarks aired by state media and reported by The Canadian Press, said he will "give a warning to Canada maybe next week that they better pull that thing out or I will set sail."

"I will declare war against them. I will ad-



vised Canada that your garbage is on the way. Prepare a grand reception. Eat it if you want to," he said. "Your garbage is coming home."

Between 2013 and 2014, Canada shipped tons of waste in 103 containers to the Philippines and, in

the years since, has been pushing the Southeastern Asia country to dispose of it. When ... (More on P4)... (11)

### Turkey to Get First S-400s in July Despite US Pressure, Russian Arms Trade Official Confirms



ISTANBUL - Moscow will start shipping its S-400 air defense missile systems to Turkey this summer, the chief of Russia's state arms trade agency said.

The deal is going through as Ankara ignores pressure from its ally, the US. Aleksandr Mikheyev of Rosoboronexport told Russian media on

Wednesday that all issues pertaining to the contact have been "settled," and Russia and Turkey are now working on its execution.

Earlier this month, President Vladimir Putin ordered shipment of the S-400s to Ankara to be accelerated.

Turkey chose to stick with the contract despite intense pressure from its ally Washington to scrap the deal. US officials and lawmakers said that getting Russian-made weapons will undermine NATO's security. The Pentagon

suspended delivery of F-35 fighter jets to Turkey, saying that Ankara will not get the promised planes, unless it refuses to take the S-400s.

Turkish officials, meanwhile, strongly rebuffed all attempts to derail the deal with Russia and insisted that the nation is free to buy arms from whoever it wants. Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu argued that Ankara may order more S-400s if the Pentagon refuses to sell US-made Patriot air defense missile systems to Turkey. (RT)

### New Zealand and France to Call for an End to Online Terror

WELLINGTON, New Zealand - New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said Wednesday that she and French President Emmanuel Macron will host a meeting in Paris next month seeking to eliminate acts of violent extremism and terrorism from being shown online.

Ardern said she and Macron will ask world leaders and chief executives of technology companies to agree to a pledge called the "Christchurch Call,"

named after the New Zealand city where dozens of people were killed in attacks on mosques last month.

Ardern didn't release any details of the pledge, saying they were still being developed. She said she'd been talking with representatives from companies including Facebook, Twitter, Microsoft and Google along with world leaders and felt they could reach consensus by keeping the pledge tightly focused. (AP)

### World Stocks Subdued as Wall Street Eyes New Record Highs

BANGKOK - Stock markets were subdued in Europe and Asia on Wednesday as investors look to corporate earnings for clues on whether the S&P 500 will hit another all-time record close.

The FTSE 100 in Britain lost 0.3% to 7,502 while the CAC 40 in France was flat at 5,590. The DAX in Germany gained 0.8% to 12,336. On Wall Street, the future contract for the Dow was up 0.1% while the S&P 500 future contract was roughly flat. The lackluster start for the day followed news that a U.S. delegation will visit Beijing next week to continue trade negotiations. Chinese officials will visit Washington for more talks starting May 8. (AP)

### Rights Group Denounces 'Unfree and Unfair' Egyptian Vote

CAIRO - The referendum approved by Egyptian voters that allows President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi to extend his rule to 2030 was held in an "unfair and unfree" environment and has "no pretense to legitimacy," an international rights group said.

Human Rights Watch said the three-day vote on a set of constitutional amendments, which concluded Monday, was "marred by serious flaws," including reports of citizens being forced to vote or bribed with food and money.

"The constitutional amendments are a shameless attempt to entrench the military's power over civilian rule, and the referendum took place in such an unfree and unfair environment that its results can have no pretense to legitimacy," Michael Page, the ... (More on P4)... (13)

### \$1 Billion in Notre Dame Donations: Philanthropy or Rich Patrons Seeking Praise?

PARIS - With wealthy donors giving a billion dollars to restore Notre Dame following the devastating fire, some have been left asking why the money only comes after tragedy strikes. RT guests debate the Notre Dame patrons' priorities.

"Two years ago you couldn't get a crumb out of [the billionaires]," argues journalist and social commentator Sonia Poulton. When Notre Dame was dilapidated and crumbling in a less-newsworthy way, these same rich donors were nowhere to be found, she noted. Poulton believes the billionaires are "show-ponying" trying to outbid



one another, but only because there are laurels to be won. Meanwhile, these same figures still won't lift a finger to help handle worsening economic issues in France including a steep rise in homelessness.

Former Republican US state senator John Lou-

don, on the other hand, says that critics have no right to tell others what to do with their money, regardless of how they think it should be spent. Arguing that France faces large numbers of vandalized churches every year, he believes it's "a beautiful ... (More on P4)... (12)

### China Charges Former Interpol President with Bribery

BEIJING - China announced Wednesday that it has formally arrested former Interpol President Meng Hongwei on suspicion of accepting bribes.

The indictment from the Supreme People's Procuratorate comes after Meng was expelled last month from public office and the ruling Communist Party.

Meng was elected president of the international police organization in

2016, but his four-year term was cut short when he was detained by Chinese authorities during a visit to China last October. At the time, he was also one of China's vice ministers of public security.

The party's disciplinary committee said an investigation found that Meng was guilty of serious legal violations. It said in a statement that he abused his power in order to satisfy his family's "extravagant lifestyle." (AP)

### Peace, Honesty and Cheap Gas: Ukraine's New Leader Shoulders High Expectations

KIEV - When the Ukrainian president played by actor Volodymyr Zelenskiy faces a corrupt parliament in his TV comedy, he fantasizes about blasting them all away with two submachine guns.

Now that Zelenskiy has been elected president in real life, Margarita Bulava, who voted for him, hopes he will have a similarly transformative effect on the country's politics.

One of Zelenskiy's biggest challenges will be meeting the expectations of voters like 28-year-old event hostess Bulava, who had never voted before last Sunday's presidential election. Now she has an ambitious wish-list. There should be no inflation. People like her mother, who works in a laundry in Poland, should stop needing to move abroad for better paid jobs. There should be peace with Russia. Wages should be higher, and pensioners should be able to afford their heating bills without having to sell flowers in the subway.

"It's a huge plus that he has never been in politics because he is completely from another sphere. He sees the situation in the country through the eyes of the people," said Bulava. But what if the new president fails to deliver? "It's very scary if really none of this succeeds because expectations are really very big and everyone believes that something really should happen," she said after working out at her gym in Kiev.

A comedian and ... (More on P4)... (14)

### Foreign Investments in Uzbekistan Increase by Over 90%

TASHKENT - The volume of foreign investments and loans attracted to Uzbekistan in January-March 2019 amounted to \$1.2 billion, which is 91.2 percent more than the same period last year, Trend reports with reference to State Statistics Committee of Uzbekistan. The highest growth rates are observed in the Jizzakh region, where the inflow of foreign investments increased 20.7 times.

Almost all regions of the country recorded an increase in foreign investments and loans. The flow of investments has declined only in Bukhara region. In monetary terms, the largest

amounts were provided to the Kashkadarya and Navoi regions, over \$473 million and \$236 million respectively.

Most of the investments from abroad were made in the form of loans (over \$946 million), of which \$887 million were provided under the guarantee of the state. Direct investments amounted to \$284 million.

In the first quarter of 2019, about \$3.5 billion was spent, mainly due to centralized sources of financing (41.8 percent share) including, among others, state budget funds and the Fund for Reconstruction and Development of Uzbekistan. (Trend)

### South Korea Wants US to Backtrack on Iran Decision

TEHRAN - South Korea is sending a delegation to the United States to seek an extension of waivers which Washington ended on Monday with the aim of bringing Iran's oil exports to zero.

The delegation led by Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Affairs Yoon Kang-hyun will seek details on the US decision not to grant any waivers on imports of Iranian oil beyond May 1.

"As we have some time until the May deadline, we're planning to try to see if we can persuade the US government to extend waivers," an unnamed South Korean

government official told Reuters.

South Korea is a key buyer of Iranian condensate, an ultra light oil Iran which is mainly used as a raw material to make petrochemicals such as plastics.

According to Reuters, Seoul has told US officials that there are few options for getting the same quality of Iranian condensate from other suppliers.

Asian customers favor Iran's South Pars condensate for its rich yield of naphtha which is a key feedstock for petrochemicals and a gasoline blending component. (Press TV)