

Trump and North Korea's Kim Predict Success in High-Stakes Nuclear Summit

HANOI - North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and U.S. President Donald Trump met in Vietnam on Wednesday for a second summit that the United States hopes will persuade North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons in exchange for promises of peace and development.

Kim and Trump shook hands and smiled briefly in front of a row of their national flags at the Metro-pole hotel in the Vietnamese capital, Hanoi, before heading to dinner together.

Trump told reporters he thought the talks would be very successful, and asked if he was "walking back" on denuclearization, said "no".

At their historic first summit in Singapore last June, Trump and Kim pledged to work toward denuclearization and permanent



peace on the Korean peninsula but little progress has been made.

Kim said they had overcome obstacles to hold

their second summit and praised Trump for his "courageous decision" to begin a dialogue.

"Now that we're meeting here again like this, I'm

confident that there will be an excellent outcome that everyone welcomes, and I'll do my best to make it happen," Kim said.

Trump and Kim held a 20-minute, one-on-one chat before sitting down to dinner with U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo Trump's acting Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney, Kim's top envoy, Kim Yong Chol, and North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Yong Ho.

On Thursday, the two leaders will hold a series of meetings, the White House said. The venue has not been announced.

"We're going to have a very busy day tomorrow ... Probably a very quick dinner," said a smiling, relaxed looking Trump, seated beside Kim at a round table with the other four officials and two interpreters. (Reuters)

Egypt Rebukes Turkey in Spat with EU after Executions

CAIRO - Egypt rebuked Turkey's President Tayyip Erdogan on Wednesday after he criticized European leaders for attending a summit hosted by Cairo days after nine men were executed.

Erdogan and his foreign minister accused European Union leaders of hypocrisy for telling Turkey reinstating the death penalty would end hopes of joining the bloc yet attending a summit hosted by Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi.

"Turkish President Erdogan once again speaks

to us about Egypt and its political leadership, clearly showing hatred and furthermore expressing his continued embrace of the terrorist Brotherhood group," Egyptian foreign ministry spokesman Ahmed Hafez said in a statement.

Relations between Ankara and Cairo have been strained since the Egyptian military, then led by Sisi, ousted President Mohamed Mursi of the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood in 2013 after mass protests against his rule. (Reuters)

PARIS - German Chancellor Angela Merkel is heading to Paris to meet with French President Emmanuel Macron to discuss Brexit, relations with the United States and other European issues.

Wednesday's meeting comes one day after British Prime Minister Theresa May said Parliament would get the chance to vote to delay Britain's scheduled March 29 departure from the European Union. Such a delay would require other EU members' approval. Merkel and Macron will

Macron, Merkel to Hold Talks on Brexit and other EU Issues



also evoke the French-German defense partnership, according to the French president's office. The leaders in January

signed a pact renewing their countries' decades-long friendship. They pledged to increase cooperation in the areas of foreign and defense policy, fighting crime and terrorism, international development and research. (Fox News)

Billionaire List Shows \$1T Hit from '18 Market Meltdown



BANGKOK - The stock market meltdowns in 2018 obliterated \$1 trillion of the fortunes of the world's richest individuals, according to a list by wealth compiler Hurun Report.

The report, China's version of the Forbes rich list, showed Chinese billionaires still outnumbered those from any other country as of Jan. 31, at 658. Several newly mint-

ed ones amassed wealth through big share offerings, while 212 Chinese tycoons lost their dollar billionaire status. The U.S. had 584 billionaires, followed by Germany with 117. The biggest gains in wealth last year came in the areas of technology, media and telecoms, followed by real estate and other investments, manufacturing and retailing.

The wealthiest Chinese was e-commerce giant Alibaba's founder Jack Ma, the world's 22nd most wealthy person, with \$39 billion. (AP)

Italy Has Excessive Economic Imbalances, a Risk to Euro Zone: EU

BRUSSELS - Italy is facing excessive economic imbalances and the policies of its government are making matters worse, posing a threat to other euro zone countries, the European Commission said on Wednesday.

However, the EU executive arm, whose job is to analyze the economic performance of each of the EU's 28 countries and warn of trouble ahead, said it would wait until it receives Italy's reform program in April before taking

action. "Italy is experiencing excessive imbalances. High government debt and protracted weak productivity dynamics imply risks with cross-border relevance, in a context of still high level of non-performing loans and high unemployment," the Commission said.

Last year, Italy narrowly escaped an EU disciplinary procedure over its very high public debt, which under EU rules should be falling every year. (Reuters)

Trump Adviser Kushner Arrives in Turkey for Talks with Erdogan

ANKARA - White House adviser Jared Kushner arrived in Turkey on Wednesday for talks with President Tayyip Erdogan that are expected to focus on a U.S. peace plan for the Middle East.

Kushner, who has responsibility for Washington's Israel-Palestinian policy, has said the plan will address final-status issues of the conflict, including establishing borders.

He was scheduled to meet Erdogan at the presidential palace in the Turkish capital Ankara at 3 pm (1200 GMT), the presidential office said. No media statement has been scheduled.

Erdogan has been one of the most vocal critics of President Donald Trump's support for Israel. (Reuters)

Kremlin Says Cyber Attacks on Russia often Launched from U.S. Territory

MOSCOW - The Kremlin on Wednesday said that U.S. territory was constantly being used to launch cyber attacks against Russia, but said it was unable to confirm a U.S. media report that the U.S. military had disrupted the internet access of a Russian troll farm.

The Washington Post reported on Tuesday that the U.S. military had disrupted the internet access of a Russian troll farm accused of trying to influence American voters on Nov. 6, 2018, the day of the congressional elections. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters he did not know how much truth there was to that media report. (Reuters)

At Least 4,500 Abuse Complaints at Migrant Children Shelters

WASHINGTON - Thousands of accusations of sexual abuse and harassment of migrant children in government-funded shelters were made over the past four years, including scores directed against adult staff members, according to federal data released Tuesday.

The cases include allegations of inappropriate touching to staff members allegedly watching minors while they bathed and showing pornographic videos to minors. Some of the allegations included inappropriate conduct by minors in shelters against other minors, as well as by staff members. Rep. Ted Deutch, D-Fla., re-



leased the Health and Human Services Department data amid a hearing on the Trump administration's policy of family separations at the border. The data span both the Obama and Trump administrations, and were first reported by Axios. From October 2014 to July 2018, the Office of Refugee Resettlement, a

part of Health and Human Services, received 4,556 complaints, including allegations of sexual abuse, harassment and inappropriate behavior. Of those, the Justice Department received 1,303 more serious sex abuse complaints, including 178 allegations of sexual abuse by adult staff, officials said. (Reuters)

Iraq Says It Can Help Return IS Fighters to Their Countries

BAGHDAD - Iraq's prime minister says his country could help repatriate captured Islamic State group fighters to their countries if asked.

At his weekly presser late Tuesday, Adel Abdul-Mahdi says Iraq would put on trial foreign fighters who participated in terror attacks in Iraq.

"It is one battle and Iraq should fulfill its duties and obligations," he said. During a visit to France this week,

Iraqi President Barham Saleh said among the militants who will be put on trial in Iraq are 13 suspected French nationals who have been transferred to Iraq from Syria.

Iraq has received more than 200 Iraqi IS militants from the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces militia in two successive batches last week, out of an estimated more than 500. (Fox News)

China, Russia, India to Strengthen Cooperation after Foreign Ministers' Meeting

HANGZHOU - China, Russia and India on Wednesday agreed to enhance coordination and cooperation, firmly uphold multilateralism and jointly fight against terrorism.

The agreement came as Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj held the 16th meeting of the foreign ministers of China, Russia and India in Wuzhen, eastern China's Zhejiang Province.

Noting that the world today is undergoing unprecedented changes that have not been seen in the past 100 years, Wang said China, Russia and India, as influential major powers and important emerging economies, should enhance coordination, converge consensus, cement cooperation and jointly promote world peace and stability.

Wang said leaders of the three countries successfully held a meeting in Argentina last November, which pointed out the direction for and provided a strong impetus to trilateral cooperation.

He suggested that the three countries should firmly safeguard the international system with the United Nations (UN) as the core, and adhere to the principle of non-interference in internal affairs and deepen counter-terrorism and security cooperation. (Xinhua)

Neighbor News

Iran's President Rejects Resignation of His Foreign Minister

TEHRAN, Iran - Iran's president rejected the resignation of his foreign minister on Wednesday, throwing his full support behind the diplomat who negotiated the country's nuclear deal with world powers as both men face growing pressure from hard-liners under American pressure.

President Hassan Rouhani earlier gave a speech praising Mohammad Javad Zarif after the foreign minister's sudden resignation shocked the Islamic Republic late on Monday night. His rejection of the resignation, reported by the state-run IRNA news agency, continued that praise.

"Since I consider you in

the front line of resistance against broad pressures by the U.S., I consider acceptance of your resignation against the expedience of the country and I do not agree with it," Rouhani reportedly told Zarif.

Zarif responded the same way he offered his shock resignation: Via Instagram. "I hope that the Foreign Ministry, with coordination of all and supervision of the supreme leader and the president, will be able to carry out its responsibilities rigorously in the framework of constitution, law and general policies of the system," Zarif wrote in a caption overlaid on a waving Iranian flag. (AP)

Nuclear Pakistan and India Can't Afford Miscalculation, Should Resolve Crisis, Says PM Khan

ISLAMABAD - New Delhi and Islamabad cannot afford a new war with the weapons they now have, Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan said, adding that he and Indian PM Narendra Modi have to find a way out of the ongoing security crisis.

In a short televised address on Wednesday, Khan said neither he nor his Indian counterpart, Narendra Modi, would be in control of the situation, if the ongoing hostilities escalate further.

Khan added Pakistan is willing to work with India to investigate the suicide bombing of its

police officers in Kashmir which happened two weeks ago and led to this week's conflict between the two countries. The attack was claimed by the jihadist group Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), which India accuses Pakistan of harboring.

But just like any other sovereign nation, Pakistan cannot allow another country to act "as judge, jury and executioners" on its territory, he said. Wednesday's attack on targets in India by Pakistani warplanes was meant as a show of force and determination to defend its sovereignty, the PM stressed. (RT)

Turkmenistan Puts Forward Initiative for Special UN Program on Aral Sea Basin

ASHGABAT - Turkmenistan came forward with an initiative for developing a special UN program for the Aral Sea Basin, Trend reports referring to the Vatan newspaper.

The document is intended to provide an integrated approach to solving the Aral crisis with the broad participation of all interested parties.

Turkmenistan is chairing the International Fund for the Aral Saving (IFAS) this year.

Established in the 1990s by Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, IFAS aims to finance joint projects and programs to save the Aral Sea and improve the environmental situation in the Aral Sea region. IFAS was granted an ob-

server status in the UN General Assembly in December 2008.

The fund pays special attention to improving the regional action plan on environmental protection in Central Asia and speeding up the process of accession of the region states to the Framework Convention on Environmental Protection for Sustainable Development.

This issue was discussed at a government meeting. President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov ordered to monitor the progress of implementation of projects of environmental significance in order to ensure environmental management and the successful preservation of the environment overall. (Trend)

French Company Plans to Introduce Block Chain Technology in Uzbekistan

TASHKENT - The French company Bureau Veritas is interested in introducing block chain technology in Uzbekistan, Trend reports via Uzbek media. In addition, the French have shown interest in establishing cooperation for the digital modernization of compulsory insurance of third party liability system.

"Our company plans to implement a real-time synchronization web platform with public and private registries," said Bureau Veritas vice president Olivier Moreau.

The program will provide an automated, transparent and traceable process for identifying operators at the level of physical users. The company is ready for initial investment in implemen-

tation of this project. Earlier one of the first block chain companies in South Korea, Glosfer, signed memorandums of cooperation with the Center for Support of Entrepreneurship and Farming of Uzbekistan, as well as the Export Support Fund for small businesses and private entrepreneurship at the National Bank. In addition, several large foreign companies intend to develop the block chain in various fields.

Bureau Veritas is the world's second-largest provider of compliance and certification and laboratory testing services in the areas of quality, health, environment and social responsibility (QHSE-SR). (Trend)