

Trump Confirms Details of Second Summit with North Korea, Touting Its Potential as 'Economic Powerhouse'

WASHINGTON - President Trump is looking forward to this month's summit with Kim Jong Un, saying Friday that he sees the potential of an "Economic Powerhouse" in North Korea.

Following what he called a "productive meeting" between a top U.S. envoy and Pyongyang, Trump tweeted Friday evening that a time and date for a second summit have been "agreed upon."

"It will take place in Hanoi, Vietnam, on February 27 & 28," he tweeted. "I look forward to seeing Chairman Kim & advancing the cause of peace."

Trump also tweeted that he has hope that North Korea will grow as an economic



power as it distances itself from its nuclear missile program.

"North Korea, under the leadership of Kim Jong Un, will become a great Eco-

omic Powerhouse," he wrote. "He may surprise some but he won't surprise me, because I have gotten to know him & fully understand how capable he is. North Korea will become a different kind of Rocket - an Economic one!"

A statement from the State Department released Friday confirmed the meeting's progress, stating that representatives from both countries "discussed advancing President Trump and Chairman Kim's Singapore summit commitments of complete denuclearization, transforming U.S. - D.P.R.K. relations, and building a lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula." (Fox News)

Neighbor News

Iran FM Zarif to Visit Lebanon amid Tel Aviv-Beirut Tensions

TEHRAN - Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif will pay a visit to Lebanon amid growing tensions between Beirut and Tel Aviv.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said Zarif will travel to Lebanon at the head of a delegation on Sunday to hold talks with senior officials in the West Asian country. The trip comes amid reports of a massive military exercise held by the Israeli army to simulate a war on Lebanon. Yiddish News reported on Friday that the drill in-

involved tanks and warplanes.

The maneuver comes days after the secretary general of Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement expressed his readiness to bring defense systems from Iran in order to confront Israeli aircraft.

Syria and Iraq are accepting Iran's help with benefiting from it, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said, adding, "Whatever the Lebanese Army needs to become the strongest regional army, I am willing to go to Iran and bring it." (Press TV)

Turkmenistan Eyes to Export Electricity Through Uzbekistan

ASHGABAT - The work is underway to implement a project for the supply of Turkmen electricity along the Turkmenistan-Uzbekistan-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (TUTAP) route, Trend reports with reference to the Turkmenistan State News Agency.

In January, the State Bank for Foreign Economic Affairs of Turkmenistan signed an agreement with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for a sum of \$500 million for financing the project of modernization of the energy network of Turkmenistan. Actively connecting Turkmenistan to a sin-

gle Central Asian energy system plays an important role in opening up additional possibilities for the increase of the scope of supply of Turkmen electricity within the framework of the international "Turkmenistan - Uzbekistan - Tajikistan - Afghanistan - Pakistan" (TUTAP) project.

Earlier, Turkmenistan's Minister of Energy Charymyrat Purchekov presented the report on the implementation of the project for the construction of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan power transmission line to Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov. (Trend)

Uzbekistan, ADB Discuss Strengthening of Technical Co-Op

TASHKENT - Uzbek Ministry of Finance held a meeting with representatives of the Asian Development Bank, headed by Werner Liepach, Director General for Central and West Asia, Trend reports via Uzbek media. The meeting was devoted to further strengthening technical cooperation in such areas as public-private partnership (PPP), energy, transport, agriculture and improving the public procurement system. Deputy Prime Minister - Uzbek Minister of Finance Jamshid Kuchkarov and senior officials discussed the priorities and partnership strategy for 2019-2023. Liepach noted the importance of developing PPPs and welcomed

the introduction of additional measures that would be useful to support investment projects, as well as the development of the newly created PPP Development Agency under the Ministry of Finance. Recently, the ADB has increased its loan funds allocated to Uzbekistan, providing new loan commitments to the business plan of operations in the country (BIP) for 2018-2020. BIP fully supports the national development strategy of the country and reflects the updated development priorities of Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan is the country with the largest loan from ADB in the region in 2018 with a project portfolio of \$2.9 billion. (Trend)

Pakistani Gov't to Initiate Process for Wildlife Protection

ISLAMABAD - The Pakistani government is pondering to make strict laws to ensure wildlife protection and stop illegal hunting in the country, local reports said Saturday.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government has sought recommendations from the ministry of climate change, and experts working on protection of wildlife, for forming an effective policy to protect wildlife. Pakistan currently has 174 types of mammals, 177 species of reptiles and 668 species of birds. Over 90 of these animal species are considered endangered, including snow cheetahs found in northern areas. In addition, 50 species of mammals, 27 birds and 17 types of insects are also endangered, Express Tribune reported.

In its recommendations, the ministry of climate change said the government, community members, non-governmental organizations and other institutions should seek support from the general public to protect endangered species.

It also proposed that provincial wildlife departments should pay special attention to the conservation of endangered animals. The government directed Zoological Survey of Pakistan, a department under the ministry of climate change, which carries out survey and research on distribution, population, and status of animal life in Pakistan, to continue ascertaining statistics for wildlife species and their living conditions, and present its periodic report. (Xinhua)

Hypersonic Fever: France Enters the INVINCIBLE Gliders Game, But Does It Have What It Takes?

PARIS - The French Defense Ministry says it's embarked on its own hypersonic glider quest, promising to test a prototype missile shield-piercing device in 2021, after Russia and China tested their gliders and the US began developing one. The question now is whether Paris is able to deliver on the ambitious -and potentially costly- military project, as questions have been raised whether it would even have a plane to lift off such a weapon.

"We have decided to issue

a contract for a hypersonic glider demonstrator," Defense Minister Florence Parly said late in January, unveiling the V-MaX (Experimental Maneuvering Vehicle) project. The hypersonic weaponry systems have been truly a hot thing among the major powers lately, with several of them successfully testing such devices or, at least, embarking on research and development programs. Last March, Russia unveiled a whole range of entirely new weapons, ... (More on P4)... (13)

UNITED NATIONS - A Chinese orchestra on Friday evening entertained diplomats and overseas Chinese at the UN General Assembly hall in celebration of the Lunar New Year. The performance by the Suzhou Symphony Orchestra marks the first time that the UN headquarters hosts a concert celebrating the most important holiday of the global Chinese community.

The orchestra, conducted by the renowned Chen Xieyang, played a

medley of Chinese and Western music as well as a fusion of traditional and modern works, including well-known Chinese folk song Jasmine Flower and classics by J. Strauss, Jr. and Tchaikovsky. Completing the repertoire, the musicians played three more pieces, Beijing Happiness, Beautiful Flower and Full Moon and Radezky March, after the conductor had to return twice following an enduring applause by the audience.



Friday's music, mostly of upbeat tempo, sent festive vibes across the hall.

Elliot Downey, an asso-

ciate director of admissions with Tianjin Juilliard School, said the highlight of the evening for ... (More on P4)... (11)

Pope Meets with Spanish Migrant Rescue Group Leader



ROME - Pope Francis has met with the founder of a Spanish aid group whose ship has been blocked from

leaving port to resume rescuing migrants in the Mediterranean. It's at least the second time

that Francis has met with Oscar Camps, founder of Proactiva Open Arms. The Vatican said Saturday

that Francis also met Friday with the mayors of Madrid and Barcelona, both of whom represent far-left, pro-migrant parties. Last month, Spanish authorities blocked the Open Arms' ship from leaving Barcelona's port, saying it violated maritime regulations on previous trips requiring rescued migrants to be brought to the nearest port. Open Arms has said it only brought the migrants to Spain because both Italy and Malta refused. Francis has made the plight of refugees a priority of his pontificate. (Fox News)

EU Urges May to Seize Labour Opening as Way out of Brexit Impasse

BRUSSELS - It's a proposal that is not even on the table, and reverses Theresa May's determined position - but EU officials are still urging her to grasp an offer from the Labour opposition to break an impasse over the terms of Britain's EU exit.

The Conservative prime minister gave no sign during her visit to Brussels on Thursday of softening her rejection of a permanent EU-UK customs union, as Labour proposes, European Union sources said. But for many in Brussels, the possibility of Labour

support for an orderly Brexit that avoids the likely chaos of "no-deal" is the only way out of the deadlock, and justifies an attempt to influence Britain's highly tribal internal politics. "We are still very much in the party politics perspective. The only hope is that, at some point, the threat of 'no-deal' disruptions would mobilize minds in the UK," an EU diplomat briefed on May's talks in Brussels said on Friday. "For now, May is still looking at her own party ... (More on P4)... (14)

Pompeo Seeks to End Hungary's Eastward Drift on Europe Trip

WASHINGTON - US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo is hoping to stall inroads of Russian and Chinese influence as he visits two of the European Union's most quarrelsome members, Hungary and Poland. The top US diplomat arrives Monday in Hungary and will also visit Slovakia and Poland, in each NATO ally highlighting Washington's role in the fall of communism 30 years ago. Poland, eager for a strong US relationship amid a resurgent Russia, is teaming up with Pompeo to hold a two-day conference on the Middle East, which has drawn limited interest as Europeans balk at President Donald Trump's hawkish line on Iran. ... (More on P4)... (15)

Seeking Influence, Egypt's Sisi to Chair African Union

CAIRO - Nearly six years after the African Union shut it out in the cold, Egypt will take the organisation's helm -- and strengthening multilateral powers is unlikely to be on the agenda. Cairo's tenure "will probably concentrate on security and peacekeeping," said Ashraf Swelam, who heads a think tank linked to the country's foreign ministry. Incoming AU chair President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi will likely focus less on "financial and administrative reform" than his predecessor, Swelam added. Such reform was the cornerstone of outgoing AU chairman Paul Kagame's year in the role. The Rwandan president has pushed for a continent-wide import tax to fund the AU and reduce its dependence on external donors, who still pay for more than half the institution's annual budget. ... (More on P4)... (16)

Saudi Arabia Accused of Helping Citizens Charged with Rape & Child Porn to Flee 8 US States

RIYADH - Saudi Arabia appears to have been systematically helping its US-based citizens to evade American justice for serious crimes, possibly by providing fake passports and private planes. Late last year, the Oregonian reported five cases of suspects successfully fleeing charges in the state of Oregon, which was temporarily home to about 1,000 students from Saudi Arabia. But the same news outlet has now discovered a total of 17 cases across eight states and even Canada, suggesting the ploy is an established practice.



Most of the cases involve a similar scenario: after an arrest, the Saudi consulate hires a legal team and eventually posts bail, which in two cases constituted \$1 million and \$500,000. Once the suspect is released, even if they had surrendered their interna-

tional travel passport, they somehow manage to leave the country, before then appearing back in Saudi Arabia. Sameer Noorah was speeding on a suspended license in 2016 when he hit and killed a 15-year-old girl. ... (More on P4)... (12)

Suspect in Deadly Paris Fire Handed Preliminary Charges

PARIS - Paris prosecutor's office says the suspect in the fire that killed 10 people in the French capital this week has been handed preliminary arson charges. The suspect, a woman who prosecutors say has been hospitalized at least 13 times in the past decade for mental health issues, was placed in provisional detention Friday night in the investigation into the fire at the nine-story apartment building.

Besides the deaths, 96 other people were injured in the blaze, including eight firefighters. The suspect had been sent to a police psychiatric infirmary for psychological evaluation. Police say she indicated during the first part of her detention that she wasn't behind the fire early Tuesday that was the deadliest in Paris since 24 people died in a 2005 hotel fire. (Fox News)

Venezuela's Guaido: 'We Will Do What Is Necessary'

CARACAS - Opposition leader Juan Guaido is challenging President Nicolas Maduro for control of crisis-hit Venezuela, a country plagued by hyperinflation, shortages of basic necessities and rampant violence.

Guaido has declared himself interim president and has been recognized as such by dozens of countries, but Maduro, buoyed by support from the armed forces, has declined to step aside. In an interview with AFP, Guaido discusses the entry of foreign aid, contact with the military and whether he would be willing to allow the highly-controversial step of foreign military intervention.

- Foreign military intervention - Question: Would you use your prerogatives as speaker of the National Assembly and acting president to authorize the intervention of foreign military forces? "We will do everything possible, once again, this is obviously a very, very controversial subject, but making use of our sovereignty and, within our jurisdictions, we will do what is necessary."

- Entry of foreign aid - Question: How is the entry of humanitarian aid advancing? "When we have sufficient supplies, we are going to make a first entry attempt. We know that there is a blockade in Tienditas (on the border with Colombia)." ... (More on P4)... (17)