

Trump Won't Rush North Korea on Denuclearization; Peace Deal Possible

HANOI - U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korea's Kim Jong Un hold a second summit this week with no real expectation of a final deal on ridding the North of nuclear weapons but hope raised on Monday for an official peace on the peninsula at long last. The two leaders are due to meet in the Vietnamese capital, Hanoi, on Wednesday and Thursday, eight months after their historic summit in Singapore, the first between a sitting U.S. president and a North Korean leader.

There they pledged to work toward the complete denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, but their vague agreement has produced few results. U.S. Democratic senators and security officials have warned



Trump against cutting a deal that would do little to curb North Korea's nuclear ambitions.

Trump, speaking in Washington on the eve of his departure for Vietnam, said he believed he saw eye to eye with Kim and that

they had developed "a very, very good relationship". But he appeared to play down any hope of a major breakthrough, saying he would be happy as long as North Korea maintained its pause on weapons testing.

"I'm not in a rush. I don't want to rush anybody," Trump said. "I just don't want testing. As long as there's no testing, we're happy."

North Korea conducted its last nuclear test, its sixth, in September 2017. It last tested an intercontinental ballistic missile in November 2017.

Before the freeze, the North conducted a series of tests that it says has given it powerful nuclear bombs and missiles capable of delivering them to the U.S. mainland. (Reuters)

Neighbor News

Pakistan's Court Dismisses Ex-PM Sharif's Appeal, Bail Plea

ISLAMABAD - A Pakistani appeals court has rejected former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's appeal over a seven-year prison sentence for corruption and refused to grant him release on medical grounds.

The Islamabad High Court's two-judge panel announced its ruling on Monday after the appeal hearings concluded last week.

Sharif's aide Shahid Abbasi says the former premier's team will take the case to the Supreme Court. Sharif is in custody in hospital where he is being treated for heart-related issues. He and his family members have been embroiled in several trials on corruption charges after the Supreme Court disqualified him from office in July 2017. An anti-graft tribunal had sentenced Sharif to 10 years in another corruption case last year but that sentence was later suspended pending appeal. (Fox News)

Russia, Azerbaijan, Iran Discuss Creating Energy Corridor

TEHRAN - Russia, Azerbaijan and Iran are discussing the technical conditions of creating an energy corridor at the level of experts of energy companies, Russian Deputy Energy Minister Anatoly Yanovsky told Trend.

"Following the discussions, the sides will determine the economic efficiency of the functioning of this energy bridge and make a decision on the expediency of launching the project," he said.

"If a decision is made to implement the project, the creation of an energy bridge will allow providing each country with electricity during periods of its shortage by other countries," Yanovsky added. In 2018 Azerbaijan, Russia and Iran created a working group to discuss the issue of uniting the energy systems of the three countries. The working group consists of 18 people (six people from each country). The group must prepare technical specifications for a feasibility study for uniting the electricity systems of the three countries and a draft agreement on the joint development of a feasibility study. Earlier in 2015, Azerbaijan and Iran signed a memorandum of understanding on the exchange of electricity. (MNA)

Uzbek Capital to Hold Uzbek-British Council on Trade, Industry

TASHKENT - The 24th meeting of Uzbek-British for Trade and Industry Council (UBTIC) will be held in Tashkent (Uzbekistan) from February 28 to March 1, Trend reports with reference to the Uzbek media.

"The upcoming UBTIC annual session will bring together entrepreneurs from Uzbekistan and the UK to provide an opportunity for both parties to learn more about the business opportunities available in both countries. The event will consist of two parts: the official plenary meeting and the private sector sessions," the British embassy said.

This year the event will be attended by more than 100 businessmen representing more than 55 British companies. The embassy states that this is the largest number of participants in the history of UBTIC. The plenary session will be chaired by Uzbek Deputy Prime Minister Elyor Ganiyev and British co-chair Baroness Emma Nicholson. During the plenary session, the parties are expected to discuss practical measures for the development of trade and investment between the UK and Uzbekistan, cooperation in the field of health, education and tourism. A number of memorandums of understanding are also expected to be signed by both parties. British companies' representatives will also meet with a wide range of Uzbek officials, state-owned enterprises and private sector representatives to exchange information about business opportunities and discuss potential cooperation in the future. (Trend)

Ashgabat, Seoul Hold Business Talks

ASHGABAT - Seoul has hosted the 7th meeting of the intergovernmental Turkmen-South Korean commission on trade, economic, scientific and technological cooperation, Trend reports with reference to the Turkmen Foreign Ministry Feb. 25. At the meeting, the sides discussed prospects for cooperation in the trade, economic, financial and industrial fields, in the fields of energy and mineral processing, construction and transport, agriculture and fisheries, as well as in the sphere of culture, tourism, healthcare, standardization, as well as scientific, information and communication technologies, education.

On the same day, a joint business forum was also held, which brought together more than 100 representatives of state agencies and business circles. It was earlier reported that Seoul hopes for partnership with Turkmenistan in such areas as development of gas fields, creation of petrochemical and gas infrastructure. Meanwhile, Ashgabat and Seoul pay special attention to the transport sector in the context of development of transit and logistics infrastructure along the East-West and North-South routes, giving access to European and Middle Eastern markets. (Trend)

'Green Book' Wins Best Picture in an Upset at The Oscars

LOS ANGELES - The segregation-era road-trip drama "Green Book" was crowned best picture at the 91st Academy Awards, delighting those who see the film as a feel-good throwback but disappointing others who ridicule it as an outdated inversion of "Driving Miss Daisy." In a year when Hollywood could have made history by bestowing its top award on Netflix ("Roma") or Marvel ("Black Panther") for the first time, the motion picture academy

instead threw its fullest support Sunday behind a traditional interracial buddy tale that proved as popular as it was divisive. But Peter Farrelly's "Green Book" weathered criticism that it was retrograde and inauthentic to triumph over more acclaimed films and bigger box-office successes.

It was an unexpected finale to a brisk, host-less ceremony that was awash in historic wins for diversity, including Spike Lee's first competitive Oscar. (AP)

Iraq's President in Paris; Will Discuss French IS Detainees

PARIS - Iraqi President Barham Saleh is starting a two-day visit to France with a focus on the country's security and the fight against the Islamic State group in the region. Saleh will have a working lunch Monday with French President Emmanuel Macron. They are expected to discuss the case of French citizens who traveled to fight with IS in Iraq and Syria and are now being detained by the U.S.-led coalition's forces. The U.S. has called for countries to take back and try their own nationals.



France's official position states that French "terrorist" fighters "must be tried wherever they committed their crimes," according to

the French foreign affairs ministry. The French presidency said France intends to reaffirm its full support to Iraq to face challenges regarding security, stability, inclusive governance and the country's reconstruction. (Fox News)

China Says Hopes World Provides 'Constructive' Help to Venezuela



BEIJING - China hopes that the international community can provide "constructive" help to Venezuela based on re-

spect for the country's sovereignty, the foreign ministry said on Monday, after Venezuelan troops repelled foreign

aid convoys. Violent clashes between security forces and a U.S.-backed opposition attempt on Saturday to bring aid into the economically devastated country left almost 300 wounded and at least three protesters dead near the Brazilian border. The United States has threatened new sanctions and Brazil has urged allies to join a "liberation effort". China hopes Venezuela can remain peaceful and calm, the Foreign Ministry said, and reiterated

Beijing's opposition to foreign interference in Venezuela's internal affairs or the use of "so-called 'humanitarian aid' for political aims". "We again call on the government and opposition in Venezuela to seek a political resolution under the framework of the constitution and law, and call on the international community to do more that really benefits Venezuela's stability, economic development and improvement in livelihoods," the ministry said. (Reuters)

After Putin's Warning, Russian TV Lists Nuclear Targets in U.S.

MOSCOW - Russian state television has listed U.S. military facilities that Moscow would target in the event of a nuclear strike, and said that a hypersonic missile Russia is developing would be able to hit them in less than five minutes. The targets included the Pentagon and the presidential retreat in Camp David, Maryland. The report, unusual even by the sometimes bellicose standards of Russian state TV, was broadcast on Sunday evening, days after President Vladimir Putin said Moscow was militarily ready for a "Cuban Missile"-style crisis if the United States wanted one. With tensions rising over Russian fears that the United States might deploy intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Europe as a Cold War-era arms-control treaty unravels, Putin has said Russia would be forced to respond by placing hypersonic nuclear missiles on submarines near U.S. waters. (Reuters)

UAE Says Its First Astronaut Going into Space in September

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates - The United Arab Emirates has announced the date the first astronaut from the Gulf Arab nation will go into space. The UAE said on Monday it will send either Hazza al-Mansouri or Sultan al-Nayadi to the International Space Station on Sept. 25 aboard a Russian Soyuz rocket. Organizers had said they'd announce the astronaut who's going but instead gave just the launch date. Dubai's ruler, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, had already announced the astronauts' names last September. The UAE has a fledgling space program with big ambitions. It launched its first locally made satellite, KhalifaSat, in October from Japan. It wants to launch a probe to Mars in 2020. The UAE also says it wants to colonize Mars by 2117, with a fully functioning city of 600,000. (Fox News)

Global Rules-Based Order Clearly Under Threat: EU's Tusk

SHARM EL-SHEIKH, Egypt - The rules-based global order is "clearly under threat", the chairman of European Union leaders Donald Tusk said on Monday. "We have agreed here, in Sharm el-Sheikh, that both sides will work together to defend it," he said at a summit of EU and Arab leaders.

"Multilateral solutions remain the best way to address threats to international peace and security. This is true when we talk about the situation in Syria, Libya, Yemen or the Middle East peace process." (Reuters)

Britain to Ban Lebanon's Hezbollah as Terrorist Group

LONDON - Britain said on Monday it plans to ban all wings of Hezbollah due to its destabilizing influence in the Middle East, classing the Lebanese Islamist movement as a terrorist organization. London had already proscribed Hezbollah's external security unit and its military wing in 2001 and 2008 respectively, but now wants to outlaw its political arm too.

"Hezbollah is continuing in its attempts to destabilize the fragile situation in the Middle East - and we are no longer able to dis-



tinguish between their already banned military wing and the political party," Home Secretary (interior minister) Sajid Javid said. "Because of this, I have taken the decision to proscribe the group in its entirety," he added in a statement. The Iran-

backed Shi'ite group is already deemed a terrorist organization by the United States which last week expressed concern about its growing role in Lebanon's government. Hezbollah lawmakers termed that a "violation of sovereignty". (Reuters)

Hijacking Foiled on Bangladesh-Dubai Flight, Suspect Killed

DHAKA, Bangladesh - A passenger flight made an emergency landing Sunday in Bangladesh after an armed man attempted to hijack the plane, and he was later killed in an exchange of gunfire with military commandos, officials said. The suspect asked to speak to the prime minister before dying from his injuries.

The flight, operated by state-run Biman Bangladesh Airlines, left the capital, Dhaka, at 4:35 p.m. heading for Dubai via Chittagong.

The pilot made the emergency landing in Chittagong about 40 minutes after takeoff, after a crew member reported "suspicious behavior" by the man, said Rezaul Karim, an official with the Bangladesh military's inter-service public affairs office.

All 143 passengers and seven crew members aboard the Boeing 737-800 were safely evacuated, Air Vice Marshal Mofidur Rahman said at a news conference broadcast live on Somoy TV. (AP)

'Another Balls-Up': Theresa May Ridiculed after Awkward Pool Game with Italian PM

LONDON - The Twitterati were amazed at UK Prime Minister Theresa May's lack of skill while playing pool with her Italian counterpart, Giuseppe Conte. The PM's awkward dance moves were brought up, and a barrage of Brexit jokes followed.

Theresa May's uncomfortable moment was brought to light courtesy of Conte himself. On Sunday, the Italian PM shared a short video of him inviting May to play a friendly game of pool as the two mingled on the sidelines of the EU-Arab League summit in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt. Visibly taken aback by the suggestion, May immediately admitted that she was "hopeless" at the game. "You have to show me how," she told Conte. The Italian did just that by casually taking the first shot. When May's turn came, her chief of staff Gavin Barwell rushed to the rescue. He did his best to show the struggling boss how to position her hand on the table and strike the ball.

The clip abruptly ends just when May begins taking her shot, sadly leaving the viewers on a cliffhanger. Nevertheless, the British PM was widely mocked on social media for what seemed to be total ineptitude at the popular game of pool.

One person even suggested that the video was deliberately cut short to save the politician from further embarrassment. (RT)