

Seoul Calls for Three-Way Talks after Trump-Kim Collapse

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea has proposed semi-official three-way talks with the United States and North Korea as it struggles to put nuclear diplomacy back on track after the collapse of a summit between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. The proposal for the talks came during a National Security Council meeting on Monday led by South Korean President Moon Jae-in, who said it was Seoul's "outmost priority" to prevent nuclear negotiations between the U.S. and North Korea from derailing.

At the meeting in Seoul's presidential palace, Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha said the proposed talks,



which could include civilian experts from the U.S. and South Korea, would help settle differences over how much sanctions relief Washington should provide North Korea in

exchange for nuclear disarmament steps. Last week's meeting between Trump and Kim in Vietnam broke down over what the Americans said were North Korea's

excessive demands for sanctions relief in exchange for a limited offer to shut down its aging main nuclear complex in Yongbyon. North Korea reportedly has other sites producing weapons-grade uranium hidden around the country.

Kang said the core issue is determining what disarmament steps North Korea could be persuaded to take in exchange for sanctions relief. Moon lobbied hard for the revival of nuclear diplomacy between the U.S. and North Korea following elevated tensions in 2017 over North Korea's missile and nuclear tests and Trump's threats to bring "fire and fury" on the North. Some experts say the ...*(More on P4)...*(13)

Lithuania to Ask Belarus to Switch Nuclear Plant to Gas

VILNIUS - Lithuanian prime minister Saulius Skvernelis will ask Belarus to convert its Russian-built nuclear power plant to gas provided by Lithuania's liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal and a planned gas link between Lithuania and Poland. The nearly-completed nuclear plant has long been viewed as a threat to its safety and national security by Lithuania, which says it is not built to the highest safety standards, an allegation which is denied by Belarus.

Astravets, which is near

the border with Lithuania, is being built by Russia's Atomstroyexport and financed with a \$10 billion loan from by Moscow. It expects to have the first of its two 1.2 gigawatt VVER 1200 reactors online this year and the next one in 2020. "It's up to Belarus to make a choice: to keep on having an energy sector which depends on the policies of a single country, or to make a strategic change," Skvernelis said on Monday, without naming Russia, the dominant supplier of energy to Belarus. (Reuters)

U.S. Returns Higher Diplomatic Status to EU's Washington Mission

BRUSSELS - U.S. President Donald Trump's administration has restored a higher protocol status to European Union diplomats in Washington after a snub that highlighted how the traditional allies were becoming estranged. The trans-Atlantic alliance has been damaged since Trump came to power in 2017 by feuds over trade, security and international affairs including accords on climate change and Iran's nuclear program. Late last year, the

Trump administration downgraded the protocol status for the bloc's diplomats without notifying Brussels. In a statement to welcome a new EU ambassador to Washington, the U.S. mission in Brussels said on Monday that the bloc had been restored to its previous status in the U.S. capital. "The United States and the European Union are a strong force when we work together," Gordon Sondland,



the U.S. ambassador to the EU, said in a message coinciding with the EU's new envoy, Stavros Lambrinidis, taking up his post in Washington. "Europe's security and success are inextricably ...*(More on P4)...*(14)

Venezuelan Opposition to March as Guaidó Returns, Risking Arrest



CARACAS - Opposition supporters in Venezuela were set to take to the streets Monday after leader Juan Guaidó

called for mass protests against President Nicolás Maduro -- as the self-declared interim president prepared to return

after a week touring Latin American allies. Guaidó's reappearance in Venezuela would pose an immediate challenge to the embattled Maduro, who will have to decide whether to arrest him for defying a travel ban -- thereby provoking strong international condemnation -- or allow him to enter unmolested, which would undermine his authority, analyst say. "I'm announcing my return to the country. I am calling on the Venezuelan people to mobi-

lize all over the country tomorrow at 11:00 am (1500 GMT)," Guaidó wrote Sunday on Twitter. Later, in a video with his wife shared on his social networks, he said if Maduro's government "tries to kidnap us ... it will be one of the last mistakes it makes." Guaidó, who has been recognized by more than 50 countries as Venezuela's interim president, did not say how or when he would return, though speculation is rife that a ...*(More on P4)...*(15)

US Says Closing Consulate in Jerusalem No Policy Shift

JERUSALEM — The United States has officially shuttered its consulate in Jerusalem, downgrading the status of its main diplomatic mission to the Palestinians by folding it into the U.S. Embassy in Israel. For decades, the consulate functioned as a de facto embassy to the Palestinians. Now, that outreach will be handled by a Palestinian affairs unit, under the command of the embassy. The symbolic shift hands authority over U.S. diplomatic channels with the West Bank

and Gaza to ambassador David Friedman, a longtime supporter and fundraiser for the West Bank settler movement and fierce critic of the Palestinian leadership. The announcement from the State Department came early Monday in Jerusalem, the merger effective that day. "This decision was driven by our global efforts to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of our diplomatic engagements and operations," State Department spokesman Robert Palladino said in a statement. (AP)

Award-Winning Egyptian Photojournalist Freed from Jail

CAIRO - Award-winning Egyptian photojournalist Mahmoud Abu Zeid was released on Monday after spending nearly six years in prison following his arrest while covering a bloody crackdown on protests. The photographer, widely known as Shawkan, faces five years of strict supervision and will be required to spend every night sleeping at his local police station, but he vowed to resume his work. Last year Shawkan received UNESCO's World Freedom Prize for his "courage, resistance and commitment to freedom of expression," dismaying the Egyptian authorities who accused him of "terrorist and criminal acts". Speaking at his home in Giza, he said the first moments of his release felt "as if I was flying." (AFP)

Greece Plans First 10-Year Bond Issue in 9 Years

ATHENS, Greece — Greece said Monday it is planning to issue a 10-year bond, in its second test of financial market confidence in the country since it officially exited its international bailouts in August. The Public Debt Management Agency said the issue, which comes on the heels of a credit upgrade, would be launched "in the near future" subject to market conditions. In January, Greece raised 2.5 billion euros (\$2.85 billion) through a healthily oversubscribed five-year bond. Although the country has a cash buffer of more than 26 billion euros, which would keep it going for a couple of years without issuing new debt, the government is keen to gradually normalize its access to capital markets through bond sales. (AP)

Pope: Vatican Next Year to Open Archives on Wartime Pius XII

VATICAN CITY — Declaring that the church "isn't afraid of history," Pope Francis said Monday he has decided to open up the Vatican archives on World War II-era Pope Pius XII, who has been criticized by Jews of staying silent on the Holocaust. Francis told officials and personnel of the Vatican Secret Archives that the archive would be open to researchers starting March 2, 2020. Pius was elected pontiff on March 2, 1939, six months before World War II erupted in Europe. Pius died on Oct. 9, 1958, at the Vatican summer residence at



Castel Gandolfo, near Rome. The Vatican usually waits 70 years after the end of a pontificate to open up the relevant archives. But the Holy See has been under pressure to make the Pius XII documentation available sooner and while Holocaust survivors are still alive. ...*(More on P4)...*(16)

Vatican archivists had already started preparing the documentation for consultation back in 2006, at the behest of Francis' German-born predecessor, Benedict XVI. The Vatican has defended Pius, saying he used behind-the-scenes diplomacy to try to save lives. ...*(More on P4)...*(16)

Global Stocks Rise on Reports US, China Close to Trade Deal

BEIJING — Most global stocks rose Monday after news reports said Washington and Beijing are close to an agreement to end their costly tariff war. Benchmarks in London, Frankfurt, Shanghai and Tokyo advanced after Bloomberg News and The Wall Street Journal, citing unidentified sources, said China was offering to cut tariffs and other restrictions on U.S. farm, chemical, auto and other products. They said the U.S. would remove most

sanctions on Chinese imports. A deal might be struck in time to be signed by Presidents Donald Trump and Xi Jinping this month, the reports said. But they cautioned the two sides still were negotiating on the issue that sparked the dispute: Chinese plans for state-led creation of global technology competitors. Washington, Europe and other trading partners say those violate Beijing's market-opening obligations. (AP)

Neighbor News

Xi Stresses Stronger Cultural Confidence

BEIJING - Chinese President Xi Jinping on Monday called on writers, artists and theorists to strengthen cultural confidence, serve the people with fine works, and guide the public with high moral standards. Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central

Military Commission, made the remarks when joining a joint panel discussion attended by political advisors from the sectors of culture and art, and social sciences. They are here for the second session of the 13th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. (Xinhua)

Pakistan Official: Train Service with India Resumes

LAHORE, Pakistan - A Pakistani railway official says a key train service with neighboring India has resumed in another sign of easing tensions between the two nuclear-armed rivals since a major escalation last week over disputed Kashmir region. Pakistan Railways spokesman Ejaz Shah says the train service, known as Samjhauta Express, left the eastern city of Lahore on Monday for India's border town of Atari, with

some 180 passengers on board. Pakistan suspended the train service last week as tensions escalated following India's airstrike on Tuesday inside Pakistan that India said targeted militants behind a Feb. 14 suicide bombing in Indian-controlled Kashmir that killed 40 Indian troops. Pakistan retaliated, shooting down a fighter jet the next day and detaining its pilot, who was returned to India two days later. (Fox News)

Iran's Top Leader Warns against Trusting Europe on Nuke Deal

TEHRAN, Iran - Iran's supreme leader has cautioned the country's government not to pin its hopes on Europe as Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers founders under U.S. pressure. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's website quoted him on Monday as saying the landmark 2015 nuclear deal "could not fix our economic problems."

The U.S. and the European Union disagree over several issues, including Iran. President Donald Trump pulled America out of the nuclear deal last year and re-imposed U.S. sanctions to pressure Tehran. Recently, France, Germany and Britain created a special trading arrangement to circumvent U.S. sanctions. (Fox News)

Turkmenistan to Attend Transport Corridor Project Discussion in Bucharest

ASHGABAT - The delegation of Turkmenistan will attend an inter-ministerial meeting to be held March 3-4 in Bucharest to discuss a project of creation of Caspian Sea-Black Sea international transport corridor, Trend reports with reference to the Turkmen government. Deputy prime minister, Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan Rashid Meredov will meet with his colleagues from Azerbaijan, Georgia and Romania. The agenda includes issues related to increasing freight traffic through the ports of Turkmenbashi, Baku, Poti, Batumi and Constanta, encouraging cooperation with all interested parties, including the EU and the creation of

a quadrilateral working commission on the implementation of this project. In order to improve the quality of transport services, it is planned to discuss the possibilities of using digital technologies and establishing information exchange. Following the meeting, it is planned to adopt the Bucharest Declaration, the Turkmenistan State News Agency reported. Ashgabat is lobbying for the creation of an extensive multimodal infrastructure covering the Caspian basin, continental Eurasia with access to the Black Sea and Baltic Sea terminals, South and Southeast Asia, the Middle East and countries of the Asia-Pacific region. (Trend)

Uzbekistan, Egypt Intend to Set Up Jvs for Fruit Processing

TASHKENT - The Uzbek-Egyptian business forum was held on March 1, 2019 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan during the visit of Egyptian delegation led by Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry of Egypt, Ahmed Taha Boraya, Trend reports via Uzbek media. The event was attended by representatives of business circles of the two countries: officials of more than 40 Egyptian companies, such as "Techno Marble", "El-Garhy Steel Group", "Delta pharma Bio (Bi-

oneer)", "Ready Made Garments Export Council", "Nile" Agricultural Ind. Co " and others joined the delegation to discuss bilateral cooperation and enhance business ties in various areas, including the production of building materials, pharmaceuticals, food products as well as expanding cooperation in the tourism sector. In his welcoming speech, the head of the delegation noted that Uzbekistan is a key partner for Egypt in Central Asia. (Trend)