

Trump offers to meet N. Korea's Kim

Proposes 'handshake' meet at the demilitarised zone on North-South border; Pyongyang welcomes it

REUTERS
OSAKA/SEOUL

U.S. President Donald Trump proposed a weekend meeting with Kim Jong-un at the demilitarised zone (DMZ) between North and South Korea on Saturday, an encounter North Korea said would be meaningful in advancing relations if it goes ahead.

If Mr. Trump and Mr. Kim do meet, it will be for the third time in just over a year, and four months since their second summit broke down with no progress on U.S. efforts to press North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons.

North Korea said that a weekend meeting between Mr. Kim and Mr. Trump, who is scheduled to return to Washington on Sunday, would be "meaningful", although it had not had an official proposal.

Mr. Trump made the offer to meet Mr. Kim in a comment on Twitter about his trip to South Korea, where he landed on Saturday after wrapping up the G20 sum-



Promoting peace: A banner in Seoul showing photos of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, South Korean President Moon Jae-in and U.S. President Donald Trump. ■ AFP

mit in Osaka, Japan. "While there, if Chairman Kim of North Korea sees this, I would meet him at the Border/DMZ just to shake his hand and say Hello(?)" Mr. Trump said, later telling reporters his offer was a spur-of-the-moment idea: "I just thought of it this morning."

"If he's there, we'll see each other for two minutes, that's all we can, but that will

be fine," he said, adding he and Mr. Kim "get along very well".

'Meaningful meet'

About five hours after Mr. Trump's offer, a senior North Korean official said a summit between Mr. Trump and Mr. Kim in the DMZ would be "meaningful" in advancing relations.

"We see it as a very inter-

esting suggestion, but we have not received an official proposal," Choe Son-hui, North Korea's first Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, said in a statement, state news agency KCNA said.

"If the DPRK-U.S. summit meetings take place on the division line, as is intended by President Trump, it would serve as another meaningful occasion in further deepening the personal relations between the two leaders and advancing the bilateral relations," Ms. Choe said.

Later, Mr. Trump told a news conference: "We may be meeting with Chairman Kim... Kim Jong-un was very receptive."

He added: "We won't call it a summit. We'll call it a handshake," and said he would be very comfortable stepping over the border into North Korea if he met Mr. Kim at the DMZ.

"We're working things out right now," Mr. Trump said after his arrival in Seoul, when asked whether there

will be a three-way meeting with Mr. Kim and South Korean President Moon Jae-in on Sunday. "Were going to see."

U.S. special envoy Stephen Biegun said on Friday that the U.S. was ready to hold constructive talks with North Korea to follow through on a denuclearisation agreement they reached last year, South Korea's Foreign Ministry said.

Mr. Biegun told his South Korean counterpart, Lee Do-hoon, that Washington wanted to make "simultaneous, parallel" progress on the agreement reached at a summit between Mr. Trump and Mr. Kim in Singapore in June last year, the Ministry said in a statement.

Both sides had agreed to establish new relations and work towards denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula but talks stalled in February as the two sides failed to narrow differences between U.S. calls for denuclearisation and North Korean demands for sanctions relief.

A conciliatory tone at G20

U.S. President showed readiness to cooperate on major issues

STANLEY JOHNY

President Donald Trump went to Osaka as tensions, especially trade ones, were on the rise between the U.S. and several other countries, both its friends and foes.

A day before the summit opened, he fired a salvo on India, saying India's tariffs are unacceptable. Mr. Trump had been critical of Japan's trade practices as well and has also launched a tariff war with China. Besides, the talks his administration initiated with North Korea have been stalled for months, while the U.S. was on the brink of a war with Iran a few days earlier. But at G20, despite these tensions, the world saw a more conciliatory Trump.

'Deal in the offing'

In two days, he held talks with a host of leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Vladimir Putin of Russia, Xi Jinping of China and Shinzo Abe of Japan. Before the crucial talks with Mr. Modi, he said that "a very big deal" with India was in the offing. "I think we were going to have some very big things to announce. Very big trade deal," he observed.

Later, both India and the U.S. said the leaders had a "productive" meeting on subjects such as trade, 5G technology, energy security and the Iran crisis.

In the case of Japan, Mr. Trump had repeatedly attacked Tokyo for the trade imbalance. In 2018, the U.S. had a trade deficit of \$67 billion with Japan while the total trade stood at about \$220 billion. At Osaka, Mr. Abe provided the U.S. President with a list of recent Japanese investments in the U.S. "We are very very happy about that," Mr. Trump told reporters about the list.



Talking big: President Donald Trump in Osaka on Saturday. ■ AFP

Mr. Trump's most remarkable turnaround was on China with which the U.S. had a \$378.6 billion trade deficit in 2018. After trade talks between the two sides collapsed in May, he had threatened to impose tariffs on the \$300 billion worth Chinese products that are currently spared in the tariff war. The U.S. accuses China of wrong trade practices, currency manipulation and technology theft.

NEWS ANALYSIS

The Trump administration has slapped 25% additional tariffs on \$200 billion of Chinese goods, prompting Beijing to retaliate. After trade talks failed, the U.S. had launched a global campaign against Chinese telecommunication giant Huawei.

Talks with Xi

In talks on Saturday, both Mr. Trump and Chinese President Xi agreed to resume trade talks. Mr. Trump said the U.S. would hold off on further tariffs and allow American companies to sell hi-tech equipment to Huawei, a key demand from China. In return, China would buy large amounts of U.S. farm goods.

The most surprising announcement, however,

came on Saturday early morning when Mr. Trump tweeted that he was ready to meet North Korean leader Kim Jong-un in the demilitarised zone between the North and South Korea. Talks between the U.S. and North Korea have stalled after the Hanoi summit of Mr. Trump and Mr. Kim in February failed to produce any result. Mr. Trump's sudden call for another meeting suggests that he's keen on pursuing the diplomatic route with North Korea despite the recent setback.

Attack on journalists

While the U.S. President dialled down tensions and appeared more willing to work with world leaders to resolve differences and disputes, there's one section of people he continued to attack even in Osaka — journalists. "Fake news is a great term isn't it," he joked with Mr. Putin, referring to his favourite attack on America's liberal media.

When journalists surrounded Mr. Trump and Mr. Putin with questions after their meeting, the former even quipped: "Get rid of them." And then he asked the Russian leader, "You don't have this problem in Russia, but we do," to which Mr. Putin responded, "We also have. It's the same."

ELSEWHERE



Haftar vows to attack Turkish assets in Libya

Libyan strongman Khalifa Haftar has threatened to attack Turkish interests in Libya after suffering a serious setback in his push to take the capital Tripoli, accusing Ankara of backing his rivals. He accused militias backing the Tripoli-based Government of National Accord of executing his wounded troops. ■ AFP

'Nobody has blamed MBS for Khashoggi murder'

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Saturday that he is "extremely angry" about the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi but that nobody had "pointed a finger" at Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. The comments came despite a recent report that judged it "inconceivable" that the Prince was unaware. ■ AFP

Taliban kills 25 pro-govt Afghan militia members

At least 25 pro-government militia members were killed in a Taliban attack in northern Afghanistan on Saturday, officials said, as the U.S. was due to start a new round of talks with the militants in Qatar. The attack happened in Nahrin district of Baghlan province before dawn. ■ AFP

Turkey confident of averting U.S. sanctions

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Saturday that he was confident there would be no U.S. sanctions against Turkey over a Russian missile deal, following reassurances from Donald Trump. Ankara's push to buy Moscow's S-400 missile system has strained ties between allies. ■ AFP

Dubai's Princess Haya flees UAE with children

She is reportedly in hiding in London

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
LONDON

Princess Haya Bint al-Husseini, the sixth wife of Dubai's billionaire ruler, has reportedly fled the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with £31 million and their two children following the break-up of their marriage.

According to media reports, the wife of Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum — the Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE — is believed to be in hiding in London.

The Princess is said to be seeking a divorce after initially fleeing to Germany with her children, where

China proposes 5G tie-up with India, Russia

Xi calls for expanding cooperation in high technology, connectivity and energy

ATUL ANEJA
BEIJING

Chinese President Xi Jinping on Friday pitched for a partnership with New Delhi and Moscow for expanding a joint footprint in the cyberspace.

In his remarks at the Russia-India-China (RIC) trilateral on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Osaka, Japan, Mr. Xi urged the three countries, in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Vladimir Putin, to "expand cooperation in 5G network, high technology, connectivity, energy and

other areas," Xinhua reported. He also called for reforming the World Trade Organization (WTO), based on consensus.

Mr. Xi also proposed during the meeting that the three countries should become guardians of "global and regional peace and stability". Without going into details, he said the trio should "advocate a common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security concept..."

Earlier this month, the three leaders, along with heads of five other Eurasian

countries, deliberated on counterterrorism, and related common security issues, during the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

The trio will meet again in Vladivostok at the Eastern Economic Forum, where Mr. Modi will be the chief guest.

Mr. Xi said the three countries should jointly combat terrorism in all forms, and work together to address global challenges such as climate change and cybersecurity. He pointed out that the rise of protectionism and

unilateralism had seriously affected the stability of the global landscape, dragged down world economic growth, and exerted a negative impact that cannot be ignored on the international order on which emerging-market countries and developing countries depend.

The Chinese President also stressed that the three countries need to promote a multipolar world and make international relations more democratic. The three leaders decided to institutionalise their "informal summit" on the sidelines of the G20.

Liberal, pro-LGBT ideas are being imposed on the majority: Putin

Russian President defends law banning gay propaganda

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
OSAKA

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Saturday blasted ideas of freedom of sexuality and gender identity, saying that they are being forced on an unwilling majority, leading to political changes like the election of Donald Trump.

Speaking at a press conference following the G20 summit in Japan, Mr. Putin said Western liberalism is "devouring itself" and defended Russia's ban on "gay propaganda", after criticism from musician Elton John.

'An overreach'

"In some European countries, parents are told that girls can no longer wear skirts to school? What is this?" he said in a rambling monologue blasting policies meant to encourage tolerance. "There is a real overreach and this liberal idea begins devouring itself," he



Russian President Vladimir Putin. ■ AFP

said. "There are all kinds of things now — they came up with six or five genders: transformers, trans... I don't even understand what it is."

He said parts of society are "rather aggressively coercing" the majority to accept new attitudes. "You can't impose your point of view by force," he said. "Representatives of the liberal idea impose certain sexual education in schools, parents don't want it and are practically jailed... people are fed up," he said. "This may explain the Trump phe-

nomenon, his victory, this is why unhappy people take to streets in Western Europe."

While everyone is blaming Russia for political meddling, these are the real "deep reasons" for discontent, he said.

Mr. John on Friday addressed Mr. Putin with a series of tweets after Mr. Putin said Russia had "no problem" with LGBT people and wants everyone to be happy. Mr. John said it did not match Russia's actions, following recent censorship of his film *Rocketman*.

But Mr. Putin on Saturday said Mr. John is a "musical genius" who is "wrong".

"We have a very calm attitude about LGBT community," he said. "We have a law everyone criticises us for, the law on banning propaganda of homosexuality to minors... But listen, let a person grow up, become an adult, and decide who he is. Leave the children alone."

'Russian official in U.K. staged Salisbury attack'

Probe pins blame on GRU network

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

An open-source investigation has found that a top Russian military intelligence officer coordinated last year's Salisbury chemical attack from a London hideout using his phone and a few messaging apps.

The award-winning website Bellingcat said late on Friday that its joint analysis with the BBC helps establish the command structure Moscow's GRU network of foreign agents used to poison former Russian spy Sergei Skripal and conduct other attacks.

The findings "shed light

on the likely chain of command for this (and other) GRU overseas operations, with one coordinating senior officer communicating with headquarters in Moscow while the team on the ground receive limited to no new instructions," the report said. "Evidence obtained by us on other international operations involving the same team suggests that this is a stable GRU operational model."

British officials have identified the two Russians suspected of delivering the nerve agent to Salisbury as GRU agents Alexander Mishkin and Anatoly Chepiga.

THE HINDU GROUP

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~~Ringa Ringa Roses~~
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^{Atishoo! Atishoo!}
~~Husha! Bussha!~~

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Princess Haya Bint al-Husseini. ■ GETTY IMAGES

she requested political asylum.

Princess Haya has not been seen in public since May 20 and her social media accounts, which are usually full of photos of her charitable work, have not been active since February.