

Kim can visit the White House anytime he wants, says Trump

N. Korean leader welcomes 'handshake of peace' after meet

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PANMUNJOM

Moments after becoming the only sitting U.S. President to set foot inside North Korea, Donald Trump brought Kim Jong-un back over the dividing line for a meeting where they agreed to start working-level talks on Pyongyang's nuclear weapons.

Mr. Trump also said he had invited the young leader to the White House "anytime he wants to do it". "It was an honour that you asked me to step over that line, and I was proud to step over the line," he told Mr. Kim. As they sat down for discussions, Mr. Kim said their "handshake of peace" in a location that was "the symbol of the division of north and south" showed that "we are willing to put the past behind us."

Extraordinary sequel

Mr. Trump's entry onto North Korean soil – which he said was uncertain until

the last moment – is an extraordinary sequel to the scene at Mr. Kim's first summit with Moon Jae-in last year, when the young leader invited the South Korean President to walk over the Military Demarcation Line, as the border is officially known.

A Kim trip to Washington would be even more spectacular, although Mr. Trump said the visit would happen "at the right time."

Mr. Moon seized on last year's Winter Olympics to broker the process between Pyongyang and Washington, after tensions soared in 2017 as the North carried out multiple missile launches and its biggest nuclear test to date, while Mr. Trump and Mr. Kim traded mutual insults and threats of war.

The significance of the meeting in the no-man's-land splitting the peninsula – where the two sides and their allies fought each other to a standstill in the 1950-53

Korean War – was "obvious", said Stimson Centre Asia analyst David Kim.

"It's historic for Trump to be the first U.S. President enter North Korea soil, historic for Moon to meet, albeit briefly, with both leaders."

Hanoi disagreements

The Hanoi summit foundered on disagreements over what the North would be willing to give up in exchange for relief from sanctions that have hobbled its economy.

The DMZ has been a regular stop for U.S. Presidents visiting the South, a security ally – although Mr. Trump's helicopter was forced to turn back by fog in 2017 – while Panmunjom saw the first two summits between Mr. Moon and Mr. Kim last year.

"This was a great day," the U.S. President said before flying out on Air Force One. "This was a very legendary, very historic day."



Singapore, Hanoi, Panmunjom: Donald Trump with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and South Korean President Moon Jae-in at the border village of Panmunjom on Sunday. • AP

Taliban attack on election office kills 19

Workers were registering voters ahead of the Afghan presidential polls

REUTERS
KABUL

Taliban suicide bombers killed at least 19 people in an attack on a government office on Saturday night, officials said, in the latest episode of violence in Afghanistan as peace talks continue to end the war.

Election workers were registering voters ahead of presidential elections in September at an office in the Marooof district of the southern Kandahar province when fighters of the hard-line Islamist group launched an attack using four Humvee vehicles, officials said.

Eight election workers were killed, they said. Eleven Afghan security force members were also killed along



Talking peace, waging war: Members of the Taliban delegation arriving in Moscow for peace talks in May. • AP

side the four suicide bombers, said Tadeen Khan, the police chief of Kandahar.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack. Taliban spokesman Qari Yousuf Ahmadi said the group's fighters also killed 57 members of thesecurity forces in the attack and captured 11 others, but Afghan officials disputed the account.

The Interior Ministry in a statement said 25 Taliban insurgents were killed in the

clash. Fighting between the Taliban and Afghan forces has intensified even as leaders of the Taliban and U.S. officials hold talks in Qatar.

In a separate attack, Taliban fighters killed eight Afghan soldiers and injured eight others at a military checkpoint in Balabulak district in the western province of Farah, a local official said.

Mahmood Naemi, the deputy chief of the Farah council, said the clashes ended af-

Latest round of talks are crucial, says militant group

ASSOCIATED PRESS
ISLAMABAD

The seventh and latest round of peace talks between the U.S. and Taliban is "critical," said Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen on Sunday, the second day of talks with Washington's peace envoy

Zalmay Khalilzad in Qatar, where the militant group maintains a political office.

Mr. Shaheen told that both sides are looking for "tangible results" as they try to hammer out the fine print of agreements that will see the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan.

ter Afghan forces launched air strikes.

"Many Taliban fighters were killed in the air strike," said Mr. Naemi.

Villagers flee province

In the northern province of Takhar, over 600 villagers fled as Taliban fighters seized large areas of the province during heavy fighting in recent days, government officials said.

The pace of talks between

the U.S. and Taliban has sped up as Afghanistan heads for presidential elections on September 28.

Qatar's government, which is mediating the peace process between the United States and the Taliban, on Sunday said the two sides discussed the withdrawal of foreign troops, preventing militants from using Afghanistan to harm the U.S. or other countries and a comprehensive ceasefire.

Sirisena's death penalty move faces legal hurdle

Petitions filed against his decision

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's President Maithripala Sirisena is facing fresh legal challenges in his attempt to end a 43-year moratorium on capital punishment and start executing drug convicts, officials said on Sunday.

Two petitions were filed in the Court of Appeal on Friday seeking an order quashing any move by Mr. Sirisena to resume executions. "The Court of Appeal will have a preliminary hearing next week. In the meantime, the prisons commissioner has given an assurance to court that there will

be no hangings," said a court official.

On Wednesday, Mr. Sirisena said he has completed formalities to resume hangings by signing the death warrants of four condemned drug convicts.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, who has been at loggerheads with Mr. Sirisena on many issues, weighed in on the matter, signalling his party's opposition to capital punishment.

"The death penalty is against the policies of our party," he said at a rally on Sunday. "As a civilised country, we can't bring back the death penalty," he said.

Facebook page of student missing in N. Korea mysteriously reappears

Alek Sigley's page was removed again on Sunday afternoon

REUTERS
SYDNEY

The Facebook page of an Australian man missing in North Korea reappeared, then disappeared again, on Saturday, hours before Prime Minister Scott Morrison said Australia is still trying to find out what has happened to him.

Alek Sigley, one of only a handful of Western students in the country, has been missing for several days. His family had taken down his social media accounts to prevent unnecessary speculation online. Mr. Sigley's Facebook page reappeared



Australian student Alek Sigley. • AP

Twitter and Facebook profiles are from Monday, June 24, and his family has not heard from him since Tuesday. Speaking from the G20 Summit in Osaka, Japan, Prime Minister Morrison said he had spoken to Mr. Sigley's family and said Australia was still trying to find out what happened to him.

When asked if President Donald Trump's visit to the Korean demilitarised zone presented an opportunity for the Americans to make representations, Mr. Morrison said he would not allow the issue to be taken up with other agendas.

ELSEWHERE



Tusk wants to give EU post to centre-left bloc

BRUSSELS
European Council president Donald Tusk has proposed giving the post of EU chief executive to Europe's centre-left political bloc in the European Commission's new five-year term, according to a German EU parliamentary adviser present at talks on Sunday. • AFP

Bahrain court restores citizenship of 92 Shias

DUBAI
A Bahraini appeals court overturned a decision to strip the citizenship of 92 Shias jailed for plotting to form an Iran-linked "terror" group, a judicial source said on Sunday. The 92 were among 138 sentenced to prison terms and the revocation of their citizenship after being convicted of trying to build a version of Hezbollah. • AFP

Doctor transferred after criticising Mortaza

Bangladesh captain is also an MP

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
DHAKA

A top Bangladesh paediatric doctor said on Sunday that he had been transferred to a remote rural clinic after criticising the country's cricket captain.

Rezaul Karim, a child cancer specialist, was posted to Rangamati weeks after criticising skipper Mashrafe Mortaza, who is also a Member of Parliament, on Facebook. "I have been transferred to Rangamati Medical College which doesn't have any cancer treatment facilities. This seems to me an unnatural process," he said.

Mohsin Uddin, a deputy secretary of the country's Health Ministry who signed the transfer order, said it was "only an administrative decision", and rejected any suggestion that it was a punishment.

A social media row started after Mr. Mortaza visited a state-run hospital and became infuriated when he



Mashrafe Mortaza, Bangladesh's captain. • AFP

found several doctors absent. A video of Mr. Mortaza criticising one senior doctor by telephone went viral on social media. Mr. Karim said he was one of six doctors served notice by the country's Health Ministry after writing a Facebook post criticising Mr. Mortaza for "taking pleasure in bowling Bangladeshi doctors".

Two months later he was ordered to remote Rangamati, where a low-intensity tribal insurgency has simmered for decades. Mr. Karim's sudden transfer from a cancer facility in Chittagong has also grabbed headlines in local media.

Trump wants dialogue with Russia: official

REUTERS
MOSCOW

U.S. President Donald Trump suggested stepping up a dialogue with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin when the two met in Osaka, Japan, Interfax news agency quoted Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov as saying on Sunday.

Mr. Trump and Mr. Putin met for an hour and a half on Friday on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Japan for the first time since their initial formal meeting in Helsinki a year ago. "The American President quite distinctly showed his intention to step up the dialogue. As for Putin, he has long been talking of his desire to go along the path of normalisation of relations," Mr. Peskov said, according to Interfax.

Mr. Peskov also said that Mr. Trump appeared to be unhappy with the scale of trade turnover between the two countries.

Harris racially targeted by right-wing critic

Democratic rivals voice their support for Senator after her identity is questioned

DERRICK BRYSON TAYLOR

Days after Donald Trump Jr. shared, and then deleted, a tweet questioning Sen. Kamala Harris' race, several of her rival Democratic presidential candidates lent her their support on Saturday.

Mr. Trump Jr., President Donald Trump's eldest son, on Thursday shared a tweet from Ali Alexander, a right-wing personality, that falsely claimed that Ms. Harris's racial identity did not qualify her to speak about the anguish that black Americans face. "Kamala Harris is implying she is descended from American Black Slaves," Mr. Alexander wrote. "She's not. She comes from Jamaican



Sen. Kamala Harris. • REUTERS

Slave Owners. That's fine. She's not an American Black. Period." Mr. Trump Jr. shared the message, asking, "Is this true? Wow."

By Saturday, several Democratic hopefuls had begun to publicly support Ms. Harris, who is the biracial

child of a Jamaican father and an Indian mother. Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont wrote: "Donald Trump Jr. is a racist too. Shocker."

"The presidential competitive field is stronger because Kamala Harris has been powerfully voicing her Black American experience," Mayor Pete Buttigieg of South Bend, Indiana, wrote on Twitter. He said that Ms. Harris's first-generation story embodied the American dream and that it was time to end "birther-style attacks."

Disgusting, says Biden

Former Vice President Joe Biden, whom Ms. Harris had challenged during the debate, said the same forces

that used "birtherism" to question President Barack Obama's American citizenship and race were now being used against Ms. Harris.

"It's disgusting and we have to call it out when we see it," Mr. Biden wrote on Twitter. "Racism has no place in America." Sen. Elizabeth Warren, who labelled the attacks "racist and ugly," challenged technology companies to stop "these vile lies dead in their tracks." After Mr. Trump Jr. deleted the tweet, his spokesman claimed it was a misunderstanding. Ms. Harris has faced attacks on her race before and has sometimes pushed back at attempts to label her. • NY TIMES