

# North Korean Leader Invites Moon to Pyongyang



South Korean President Moon Jae-in, right, talks with Kim Yo Jong, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's sister, during a performance of North Korea's Samjiyon Orchestra at National Theater in Seoul, Feb. 11, 2018.

SEOUL (Dispatches) -- North Korea's delegation sent to the Winter Olympics held "frank and candid" talks with South Korean President Moon Jae-in, the North Korean news agency said Sunday.

The delegation, the highest-ranking to visit the South and led by the younger sister of the North's leader Kim Jong Un, concluded its visit on Sunday.

In a rare honor for visiting foreign guests, Moon met Kim's sister, Kim Yo Jong, four times during

the delegation's three-day visit. Moon's chief of staff held a farewell dinner for the delegation before the delegation attended a performance by a North Korean orchestra, the last item on their itinerary before heading home.

"I never thought I would visit (the South) so suddenly and believed much would be strange and different but I saw many things that were similar or the same," said Kim Yo Jong during Sunday's dinner, adding she hoped to meet the "friendly

faces" before her later in Pyongyang. Earlier South Korean Prime Minister Lee Nak-yeon had hosted a lunch for the Pyongyang delegation at a five-star hotel.

On Saturday Kim Yo Jong "courteously" handed over a personal letter from the North Korean leader to Moon and told him of her brother's "intention", North Korea's state news agency KCNA said, without elaborating what that was.

South Korean officials said Moon had been invited to Pyongyang to speak with Kim Jong Un during the talks and lunch that Moon hosted at the presidential Blue House in Seoul on Saturday.

Such a meeting, if it came about, would mark the first inter-Korea summit since 2007.

U.S. Vice President Mike Pence, who has returned to Washington after attending the opening of the Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, stuck to Washington's harsh rhetoric.

He claimed that the United States, South Korea and Japan were in complete agreement on isolating North Korea over its nuclear weapons program.

A White House official said although Moon did not discuss the invitation with Pence, the South Korean president made it very clear that only when North Korea actually starts to take steps to denuclearize would anyone even consider beginning to take the pressure off.

# Thousands Hold Anti-Fascist Demonstration in Italy



Protesters hold anti-fascist rally in the central Italian town of Macerata on Feb. 10, 2018.

MACERATA, Italy (AFP) -- Thousands of anti-fascist demonstrators rallied in the central Italian town of Macerata a week after a far-right gunman shot and wounded six Africans in a racially-motivated attack.

Gathered in the town center on a freezing but sunny afternoon, the protesters turned out following a call by NGOs, anti-fascist organization, unions and several leftwing political groups.

"If there's unemployment, blame the government, not the migrants," they chanted.

With tensions high in this normally sleepy town of 43,000 people, shops were shuttered early and schools closed for the day, an AFP correspondent said.

"The atmosphere is tense in Italy at the moment and in recent years we have allowed the right to flourish. I have always demonstrated but now we need to do so more than ever," Mafalda Quartu said, a retiree from Florence.

The town hit the headlines on February 3 when Luca Traini, 28, allegedly carried out a two-hour shooting attack from his car in which he shot at around a dozen African migrants, wounding five men and a woman.

Speaking to investigators, he reportedly said it was in response to the murder of an 18-year-old Italian girl whose dismembered body was found in several suitcases, with police arresting a Nigerian drug dealer in connection with the case.

The shooting shocked Italy which is due to

hold a general election in just three weeks' time in which far-right parties are expected to make a strong showing.

On the campaign trail, immigration has been the dominant issue.

On Thursday, several dozen activists from the extreme-right Forza Nuova held an anti-immigration rally in the town, sparking clashes after they made a fascist salute at police.

Fearing further unrest, Macerata mayor Romano Carancini had called for all demonstrations to be cancelled but the police on Friday gave the green light for Saturday's rally to go ahead.

Giuliano Denti, a 40-year-old gardener had travelled from Pisa with a group of around 100 anti-fascist demonstrators in order to ensure their voices were heard.

"We have a constitution which is, above all, anti-fascist and I want it to be protected and that the laws against fascist ideology be applied," he said.

Gennaba Diop, a 23-year-old woman of Senegalese descent who was born and raised in Macerata, came with a sign reading "my color is not a crime".

"There is a lot of tension and racism here, people look at you strangely all the time. It's not true that everyone is integrated," she said.

"The other day, people from Forza Nuova told me 'die'. I told them they would not succeed even if they tried."

# Church of England Faces Over 3,000 Sex Abuse Claims



The Church of England's General Synod is its ruling body and sets its laws.

LONDON (Dispatches) -- The Church of England is facing more than 3,000 abuse complaints, the vast majority of which relate to children or vulnerable adults.

Peter Hancock, the lead bishop on safeguarding, was to reveal the full extent of the scandal the Church faces when he was to answer questions from the ruling general synod. Of roughly 3,300 "concerns or allegations" dealt with by the Church in 2016 alone, "the vast majority of which related to children, young people and vulnerable

adults within church communities," he would say.

The revelation comes as the CoFE's general synod, or parliament, meets in Westminster for three days that are set to be dominated by questions around abuse.

A presentation around safeguarding would outline the issues the Church is facing but survivors of abuse were said to be furious the presentation is "stage-managed" by bishops and is not a full debate that would allow more probing issues to be raised.

Victims of clergy sex abuse protested outside Church House before the presentation on Saturday and the Archbishop of Canterbury along with other bishops and members of synod planned to go and join them for two minutes of silent prayer.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, will face questioning by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) next month. The Church is facing three weeks of public hearings into how it dealt with allegations of abuse in the Diocese of Chichester and one CoFE source told Christian Today they expected the hearings to be "very painful".

Welby has said the way the Church has abused people, particularly children, leads him to tears and frequently keeps him awake at night. But victims are warning the time for words is over as they demand fuller compensation.

The archbishop is also under significant pressure from supporters of George Bell, the late Bishop of Chichester, who the CoFE effectively admitted was a pedophile when it announced it had paid £16,800 in compensation and legal fees to a complainant known as "Carol". However a review of the decision by Lord Carlile QC found the Church's process deficient in a number of ways.

# UK to Cut Aid to Charities Following Oxfam Scandal

LONDON (Reuters) -- Britain will cut off aid funding from any organization that does not comply with a new review into charities work overseas, aid minister Penny Mordaunt said on Sunday, describing reports of sexual exploitation in the sector as "utterly despicable".

Oxfam, one of Britain's biggest charities, on Friday condemned the behavior of some former staff in Haiti after a newspaper report said aid workers had paid for sex while on a mission to help those affected by the 2010 earthquake.

Mordaunt said she would write to British charities working overseas demanding they declare any problems

relating to the duty they have to protect their staff and the people they work with from harm and abuse - so-called "safeguarding".

She also wanted charities to ensure any historical concerns have been properly handled, and spell out their policies for handling such cases. She will meet with the charities regulator this week.

"With regard to Oxfam and any other organization that has safeguarding issues, we expect them to cooperate fully with such authorities, and we will cease to fund any organization that does not," Mordaunt said in a statement.

Oxfam neither confirmed nor

denied The Times newspaper report but said its misconduct findings had "related to offences including bullying, harassment, intimidation and failure to protect staff as well as sexual misconduct".

"It is utterly despicable that sexual exploitation and abuse continues to exist in the aid sector," Mordaunt said.

"The horrific behavior by some members of Oxfam staff in Haiti in 2011 is an example of a wider issue on which DFID (Department for International Development) is already taking action, both at home and with the international community via the UN."

# EU Sees 'Nuclear Bomb' of Immigrant Unrest



According to European Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina Cretu, basic needs of immigrants have been neglected in many parts of eastern Europe.

KUALA LUMPUR (Dispatches) -- After decades of spending on infrastructure to develop poorer parts of Europe, the European Union must invest in migrants to avert a "nuclear bomb" of civil unrest, a top EU official said.

Armed with a war chest of 350 billion euros (\$428 billion) to spend by 2020 on its so-called cohesion policy, the European Union is aiming to reduce inequality across the bloc - mainly by pumping money into countries in eastern and southern Europe.

"Social integration will be crucial in the years to come," European Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina Cretu told the Thomson Reuters Foundation this week at the World Urban Forum, the world's largest conference dedicated to cities.

"If we allow ghettos or segregation of migrants, this will become a nuclear bomb in the future," the Romanian politician said at the gathering in Malaysia's capital of Kuala Lumpur.

The EU asylum system came close to collapsing in 2015 as a million refugees and migrants arrived by boat, overwhelming Greece and Italy. Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic refused to take some of the new arrivals.

The dispute ended up in the courts and has

weakened the bloc's unity, spilling over to other policy areas.

European Union interior ministers are now grappling with the politically charged issue of reforming the bloc's asylum system.

Ex-communist states continue to defy pressure from other European capitals to accept refugees travelling across the Mediterranean which would ease the burden on frontline nations such as Greece and wealthy destination countries like Germany.

When residents and migrants clash, "mayors are in the middle", Cretu said, citing the tiny Greek island of Chios, where arrivals of refugees and migrants have risen recently.

The European Union is using a new approach to measure inequality, which should give policy makers a better understanding of which areas are most in need, Cretu said.

"GDP per capita is not very accurate because it doesn't take into account these pockets of poverty unemployment."

While the cohesion policy's biggest achievements to date have been in traditional infrastructure, basic needs have been neglected in many parts of eastern Europe, according to Cretu.

"We have still people who are dying because of the quality of water, because the networks were built 40-50 years ago."



WASHINGTON (AP) -- The White House is trying to stem the fallout from how it handled a senior aide's resignation after allegations of spousal abuse. Several of President Donald Trump's senior advisers fanned out on the Sunday morning talk shows to defend the response and seemingly to soften some of the president's comments. Kellyanne Conway said on CNN's "State of the Union" that she believed the accounts of staff secretary Rob Porter's two ex-wives. That stands in contrast to a Trump tweet the day before in which he lamented that people's lives were being ruined by "a mere allegation." Conway and other aides, including budget director Mick Mulvaney, also said Trump has full confidence in chief of staff John Kelly. Kelly has come under fire for how he handled the Porter matter.

LONDON (Dispatches) -- The British economy will suffer a £252bn hit if Theresa May carries out her threat to leave the European Union with no deal, a new analysis of official forecasts shows. A no-deal Brexit would see GDP plunge by more than a quarter of a trillion pounds over 15 years, according to the study shared with The Independent. Less damaging exit terms, under which Britain would secure a free trade agreement with the rest of the EU, would still result in national output being £131bn lower over the same period. And even a government U-turn - leaving the UK in the EU single market and customs union - would swipe £52bn from economic growth, the calculation says. The Best for Britain Group, which is campaigning to halt Brexit, said its research - based on the Government's own leaked analysis - fully exposed the "Brexit black hole at heart of the economy". "Sadly, now we are seeing the economic analysis becoming project fact and it means that we are facing a massive Brexit blow," said Lord Mark Malloch-Brown, the organization's chairman.

BANGKOK (AP) -- British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson has met Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi to talk about the Southeast Asian nation's Muslim ethnic Rohingya minority and how almost 700,000 of them can be repatriated after fleeing to Bangladesh to escape violence perpetrated largely by Myanmar's military. A statement from Myanmar's Foreign Affairs Ministry said Johnson and Suu Kyi on Sunday discussed repatriation and developments in Rakhine, the western Myanmar state from where the Rohingya have fled. Johnson arrived in Myanmar from Bangladesh, where he visited with Rohingya refugees. Johnson said on Twitter that Sunday's discussion concerned investigating violence in Rakhine and creating the right conditions for repatriation.

MOSCOW (AP) -- Russia has scrubbed the planned launch of an unmanned cargo spacecraft that was to have delivered tons of supplies to the International Space Station. Preparations for the launch of the Progress ship from the Baikonur complex in Kazakhstan appeared to be proceeding smoothly Sunday until less than a minute before the liftoff. Roscosmos, the Russian space agency, said the launch was halted after an automated command, but said the reason for the command was under investigation. It said the launch is rescheduled for Tuesday. The Russian spacecraft carry fuel, food and other supplies to the ISS. This one was to have attempted a new fast route to the station, docking just 3.5 hours after launch after just two Earth orbits. There are six astronauts currently aboard the ISS - two Russians, three Americans and one from Japan.

LILLE, France (AFP) -- A carnival in the northern French port of Dunkirk opened Sunday clouded by a controversy over the use of blackface after criticism from anti-racism campaigners. The weeks-long event, usually attended by tens of thousands of people, sees locals dress up and parade through the streets in costumes, with some choosing to wear black make-up and clothing to resemble African tribal figures. It is under particular scrutiny this year over the "Night of the Blacks", a fundraising tradition dating back 50 years, which is set to take place on March 10 at the city's main conference center. A poster, put up around the port before being flagged by anti-racism campaigners in December, features three men wearing blackface paint and feather head-dresses. The city's local mayor, left-winger Patrick Vergriete, has defended blackface as a "freedom to laugh, to have fun together", saying the outfits are satirical and meant to be caricatures.

PARIS (Reuters) -- French far-right National Front (FN) leader Marine Le Pen said Sunday she planned to propose a new name for her party as part of a drive to turn it into a force ready to govern the country. Le Pen, who lost a presidential election in May 2017 to centrist Emmanuel Macron by 33.9% to 66.1, hopes to revamp her party at a March 10-11 congress. She has already watered down her opposition to the euro and focused more on the FN's traditional anti-immigration and law-and-order issues. "I will propose a name to change that of the National Front ... We are not renouncing anything, we are starting a new chapter in our history," Le Pen said on CNEWS television, without giving any indication of what the new name might be. She said she wants to transform the FN from a political opposition movement into one fit for government by winning over enough French voters to win a majority in the next presidential election, which is scheduled for 2022.