

Koreas summit: North Korean media hail 'historic' meeting

24 minutes ago



Media caption

Welcoming Kim Jong-un with pomp and ritual

Friday's summit between the leaders of North and South Korea was a "historic meeting" paving the way for the start of a new era, North Korea's media say.

The North's Kim Jong-un and Moon Jae-in of South Korea agreed to work to rid the peninsula of nuclear weapons.

In a rare move, the official KCNA news agency reported details of the talks and hailed the leaders' commitment to seek "complete denuclearisation".

The summit came just months after warlike rhetoric from the North.

It saw Mr Kim become the first North Korean leader to set foot in South Korea since the end of the Korean War in 1953.

The two men warmly shook hands and then stepped symbolically over the military demarcation line to the North Korean side.

For years, Pyongyang has insisted that it would never give up its nuclear arsenal, which it claims it needs to defend itself against aggression from the US.

Seeing even a small mention of denuclearisation in a public newspaper will be perceived as a breakthrough by South Korean officials, says the BBC's Laura Bicker in Seoul.

Historic summit as it happened

Five key moments from the meeting

Read the Korean declaration in full

What is in the agreement?

The two leaders said they would pursue talks with the US and China to formally end the Korean War, which ended in 1953 with a truce, not total peace.

The commitment to denuclearisation does not explicitly refer to North Korea halting its nuclear activities but rather to the aim of "a nuclear-free Korean peninsula".

The statement talks about this taking place in a phased manner, but does not include further details.

Many analysts remain sceptical about the North's apparent enthusiasm for engagement.

Profile: Kim Jong-un

North Korea crisis in 300 words



Media caption

Kim Jong-un issues his pledge for peace with South Korea

Previous inter-Korean agreements have been abandoned after the North resorted to nuclear and missile tests and the South elected more conservative presidents.

Mr Kim said the two leaders had agreed to work to prevent a repeat of the region's "unfortunate history" in which progress had "fizzled out".

Other points the leaders agreed on in a joint statement were:

- An end to "hostile activities" between the two nations
- Changing the demilitarised zone (DMZ) that divides the country into a "peace zone" by ceasing propaganda broadcasts
- An arms reduction in the region pending the easing of military tension
- To push for four-way talks involving the US and China
- Organising a reunion of families left divided by the war
- Connecting and modernising railways and roads across the border
- Further joint participation in sporting events, including this year's Asian Games

Will the summit lead to peace?

By Dr John Nilsson-Wright, Chatham House and University of Cambridge

Mr Kim's bold decision to stride confidently into nominally hostile territory reflects the young dictator's confidence and acute sense of political theatre and expertly executed timing.



Media caption

The moment Kim Jong-un crossed into South Korea

His clever, seemingly spontaneous gesture to President Moon to reciprocate his step into the South by having him join him for an instance in stepping

back into the North was an inspired way of asserting the equality of the two countries and their leaders. It also, by blurring the boundary between the two countries, hinted at the goal of unification that both Seoul and Pyongyang have long sought to realise.

The rest of the day was full of visual firsts and a set of cleverly choreographed images of the two leaders chatting informally and intimately in the open air - deliberately advancing a powerful new narrative of the two Koreas as agents of their own destiny.

Read full analysis from Dr John Nilsson-Wright

What did China and the US say?

China, North Korea's ally, and the United States both welcomed the outcome of the talks.

President Donald Trump said "good things are happening" but pledged continue to exert maximum pressure on North Korea, as he prepares to meet Mr Kim in the coming weeks.

"We're not going to be played, OK?" he said.

US officials are still deciding where to hold the summit but Mongolia and Singapore are understood to be two countries on the shortlist.

Korea summit sparks cold noodle craze
Diplomacy on the menu: How food can shape politics



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image caption

Mr Kim travelled in a car surrounded by jogging bodyguards

How did we get here?

Few had predicted a development like this, as North Korea continued its nuclear and missile tests and stepped up its rhetoric through 2016 and 2017. The rapprochement began in January when **Mr Kim suggested he was "open to dialogue" with South Korea.**

Did the Winter Olympics repair relations?

North and South set up hotline ahead of summit

The following month the two countries marched under one flag at the opening ceremony of the Winter Olympics, held in the South.



image copyright

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image caption

Many South Koreans were overcome with emotion as they saw the historic moment on TV

Mr Kim announced last week that he was suspending nuclear tests.

Chinese researchers have indicated that North Korea's nuclear test site may be unusable after a rock collapse.

Trump and North Korea's Kim Jong-un to meet 'as soon as possible'

53 minutes ago



Media caption

Chun Eui-yong addresses news conference

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has invited Donald Trump to meet him, an invitation the US leader has said he will accept.

The shock announcement was made by senior South Korean officials in Washington, who passed on a letter from the North Korean leader.

They said Mr Kim had also agreed to halt nuclear and missile tests and was "committed to denuclearisation".

It appears to be a major breakthrough after months of threats and violence.

The South Korean delegation had held unprecedented talks with Mr Kim in Pyongyang earlier this week, part of a diplomatic thaw following the Winter Olympics in South Korea, then travelled to the US to pass on their message.

Mr Trump, who has previously said there is no point in talking to North Korea, said the development was "great progress".

But he said sanctions will remain in place until a firm agreement is reached.

'Refrain from nuclear tests'

South Korean National security adviser Chung Eui-yong, speaking outside the White House after meeting Mr Trump, credited the US president's "maximum pressure policy together" along with international solidarity for reaching this point.

Skip Twitter post by @realDonaldTrump



Donald J. Trump



@realDonaldTrump

Kim Jong Un talked about denuclearization with the South Korean Representatives, not just a freeze. Also, no missile testing by North Korea during this period of time. Great progress being made but sanctions will remain until an agreement is reached. Meeting being planned!

2:08 PM - Mar 9, 2018

End of Twitter post by @realDonaldTrump

"I told President Trump that at our meeting North Korean leader Kim Jong-un said he's committed to denuclearisation," Mr Chung told a news conference.

"Kim pledged that North Korea will refrain from any further nuclear or missile tests."

South Korea statement on Kim-Trump meeting

Are North and South Korea friends again?

Is North Korea just playing the US?

He added: "President Trump appreciated the briefing, and said he would meet Kim Jong-un by May to achieve permanent denuclearisation." North Korea has been isolated on the international stage for decades because of its well-documented human rights abuses and its pursuit of nuclear weapons, in defiance of international laws.



Image copyright

AFF

No sitting US president has ever sat down for talks with a North Korean leader, so such a meeting would be diplomatically seismic. But the BBC's Laura Bicker in Seoul says it is important to note that North Korea has not yet said it will abandon its nuclear weapons, just that it is committed to doing so.

Kim Jong-un has scored a propaganda win, she adds, but Mr Trump will also feel like a winner, with his fiery policies credited for bringing the parties to the table.

He has repeatedly belittled Kim Jong-un, and last year threatened him with "fire and fury the likes of which the world has never seen before" if he continued to threaten the US.

It also remains unclear exactly what North Korea is asking for in return for these talks, says our correspondent.

North Korea offers talks with United States on curbing nuclear programme

BRIAN MURPHY

Last updated 03:24, March 7 2018

It's the first time South Korean delegates have met the North Korean leader since he took office in 2011.

North Korea suggested it was open to talks with the United States that could include steps to curb the North's nuclear programme, a top South Korean envoy said on Tuesday after landmark meetings with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

There was no immediate word from Washington on the prospects for such outreach with the North.

But the offer, apparently endorsed by Kim himself, would mark a significant turnabout after years of nuclear tests and advances in missile technology that apparently puts the US mainland within range.

VINCENT YU/AP

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has endorsed an offer to talk to the United States about reducing nuclear programme.

Previously, the Trump administration has said it would consider talks with North Korea if it conceded to "denuclearisation."

READ MORE: Kim Jong Un's 'openhearted talk' with South Korea

LEE JIN-MAN/AP

South Korean delegation head, National Security Director Chung Eui-yong (right) speaks to the media at the presidential Blue House in Seoul.

Chung Eui-yong, South Korea's presidential national security director, said in Seoul that the North was willing to discuss steps to roll back its nuclear programme if the United States agreed to talks.

The North would also agreed to suspend nuclear and missile tests during the possible talks with the United States, he said.

The announcements came following a groundbreaking meeting Monday between Kim and a 10-member South Korean delegation led by Chung. The South Korean envoys returned Tuesday.

Chung said the two sides agreed to hold a summit at a border village in late April, and set plans to establish a "hotline" between the leaders to try to ease military tensions.

The package of agreements followed openings made during last month's Winter Olympics in PyeongChang. It also comes as North Korea faces a tightening economic vise from international sanctions.

Chung also could play an important role as mediator if momentum builds toward talks.

Chung, who speaks fluent English and is in regular contact with his American counterpart, H.R. McMaster, was specifically chosen to lead the delegation because he would be viewed in Washington as a credible messenger, according to people close to South Korea's presidential Blue House.

Chung plans to travel soon to Washington to brief Trump administration officials about the meeting with Kim.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in has been seeking ways to engage with North Korea, diplomatically or economically, as talk in Washington about military options has grown louder. He has repeatedly said that the United States must not strike North Korea without the approval of South Korea, where half the population lives within North Korean artillery range.

Trump, for his part, has vacillated between threatening to "totally destroy" North Korea and seeming open to dialogue. Trump said Saturday that he "won't rule out direct talks with Kim Jong Un."

While Trump was making his remarks Saturday, North Korea said it would only talk to the United States if it were on an "equal footing," without any preconditions. The United States has insisted that North Korea commit to denuclearization before sitting down to talks.

"It is the consistent and principled position of the DPRK to resolve issues in a diplomatic and peaceful way through dialogue and negotiation," the North's state-run Korean Central News Agency reported Saturday, using a common initialism for North Korea.

- The Washington Post

North Korea reopens hotline to South to discuss Olympics

Less than a minute ago



Image copyright

EPA

Image caption

The hotline in the village of Panmunjom

North Korea has reopened a hotline to South Korea, almost two years after it was disabled on the orders of leader Kim Jong-un.

South Korea confirmed it had received a call from the North at 15:30 local time (06:30 GMT) on Wednesday.

The North Korean leader had earlier said he was open to dialogue with Seoul and to sending a team to the Winter Olympics in the South next month.

The two nations have not held high-level talks since December 2015.

North Korea cut off the communications channel shortly afterwards, refusing to answer calls, according to officials in the South.

A North Korean official announced the hotline's reopening in a televised statement.

He said the two nations would discuss the practical issues around a proposal to send a North Korean delegation to the Winter Games in Pyeongchang in February.

"We will make close contact with South Korea in a sincere and faithful manner," Yonhap news agency quoted the official as saying.

North Korea crisis in 300 words

A history of North Korea at the Olympics

Trump to Kim: My button's bigger than yours

How has the South responded?

The press secretary for South Korea's President Moon Jae-in said the restoration of this communications channel was "very significant".

"It creates an environment where communication will be possible at all times," he said.

Where is the physical line?

According to the South Korean Unification Ministry, there are a total of 33 direct lines that North and South Korea once used to communicate with each other.

This particular phone line, established in 1971, is based in Panmunjom.

The border village, in the heavily guarded demilitarised zone (DMZ), is where the Koreans have historically held talks.



Media caption

Take a tour of Panmunjom

Why have the Olympics become so important?

In a New Year's Day speech, Mr Kim spoke of lowering tensions and of melting "frozen North-South relations".

He said attending the Games would be "a good opportunity to show unity of the people" in North Korea.

A history of North Korea at the Olympics

South Korea had already indicated that the North's participation in the Games would be welcomed.

Seoul offered high-level talks in response, with President Moon Jae-in calling it a "groundbreaking chance" to improve relations.

It is not yet clear whether North Korea will accept that offer, but the opening of the hotline will allow for preliminary discussions to be held.

When did the line stop being used?

North Korea cut off communications on the hotline in 2016, following a row over the Kaesong industrial complex.



Image copyright
REUTERS

Image caption

Kaesong was the last major point of co-operation between the Koreas

The complex was joint economic venture between the two Koreas, but the South suspended the project in response to a nuclear weapons test by the North.

Will nuclear testing be discussed?

North Korea has come under increasing international pressure in the past year over its nuclear weapons programme.

President Moon said the North's continuing tests would be the backdrop to any new discussions about the Olympics.

The initial call was brief as checks are still being carried out on the line, according to South Korean officials.

What role might the US play?

At the same time as offering an apparent olive branch to the South, Mr Kim used his speech to repeat threats against the US, saying a nuclear launch button was always on his table.

US state department spokesman Heather Nauert said that Mr Kim's latest move "may be trying to drive a wedge of some sort between the two nations - between our nation and the Republic of Korea [South Korea]".

Washington has encouraged all countries to isolate North Korea.

The South says it has discussed its latest steps with the US.

Meanwhile, Mr Trump remains outspoken in his tweets. On Tuesday night, **the US president boasted that his nuclear button was "much bigger"** and "more powerful" than the North Korean leader's.

Skip Twitter post by @realDonaldTrump



Donald J. Trump



@realDonaldTrump

North Korean Leader Kim Jong Un just stated that the "Nuclear Button is on his desk at all times." Will someone from his depleted and food starved regime please inform him that I too have a Nuclear Button, but it is a much bigger & more powerful one than his, and my Button works!

1:49 PM - Jan 3, 2018

108,131,108,131 Replies

117,388,117,388 Retweets

278,271,278,271 likes

[Twitter Ads info and privacy](#)

Report

North Korea's Kim Jong-un issues threats and olive branch

34 minutes ago



Image copyright

GETTY IMAGES

Image caption

Residents of South Korea watched the speech from the North's leader

North Korea's leader Kim Jong-un has said a nuclear launch button is "always on my table" and warned the US it will never be able to start a war.

In a televised new year speech, he said the entire US was within range of North Korean nuclear weapons, adding: "This is reality, not a threat."

But he also offered a potential olive branch to South Korea, suggesting he was "open to dialogue".

North Korea may also send a team to the Winter Olympics in Seoul, he said.

What is President Trump's reaction?

When asked by reporters to respond to Mr Kim's latest threats, US President Donald Trump said, "We'll see, we'll see".

He was speaking at the sidelines of New Year's Eve celebrations at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida.

Where is the US-North Korean war of words heading?

Can the world live with a nuclear North Korea?

North Korea has come under increased criticism and sanctions over the past year because of its nuclear weapons programme and repeated testing of conventional missiles.



Media caption

North Korea said in November its latest missile was capable of reaching Washington DC

It claims to have a fully deployable nuclear weapon, though there is still some international scepticism about its true capacity to carry out such an attack.

In his speech, Mr Kim re-emphasised his focus on the weapons programme, but implied the country still has a few stages left to go before achieving its ambitions. North Korea must "mass-produce nuclear warheads and ballistic missiles and speed up their deployment", he said.

Thawing relations with the South?

While his language against the US remained tough, Mr Kim did not employ his typically antagonistic tone when speaking about his neighbours in South Korea.

"The year 2018 is a significant year for both the North and the South, with the North marking the 70th anniversary of its birth and the South hosting the Winter Olympics.

"We should melt the frozen North-South relations, thus adorning this meaningful year as a year to be specially recorded in the history of the nation," he said.

How North Korea could tip the balance

North Korea crisis in 300 words

What we know about the new missile

Youngshik Daniel Bong, a research fellow at Yonsei Institute for North Korean Studies, told the BBC that addressing the South was a marked change from the norm for Mr Kim.

"North Korea usually ignores South Korea, maintaining the position that as a 'nuclear power' it will deal with the US on its own," said Mr Bong. "It appears that by engaging the South, he hopes to create an estrangement between South Korea and the US."

The analyst also said that Mr Kim could be seeking to improve ties to offer some respite from the growing economic pressures from the recent UN sanctions.

Will North Korea now go to the Olympics?

Mr Kim also said he would also consider sending a delegation to the Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea, in February - a gesture which South Korea has previously suggested would be welcome.

"North Korea's participation in the Winter Games will be a good opportunity to show unity of the people and we wish the Games will be a success," he said.

"Officials from the two Koreas may urgently meet to discuss the possibility."



Image copyright
REUTERS

Image caption

Can sports and diplomacy mix on the ice with the presence of North Korea's figure skaters Ryom Tae-Ok and Kim Ju-Sik?

The president of the PyeongChang Games' organising committee, Lee Hee-beom, told South Korea's news agency Yonhap he was delighted to hear of the potential participation.

"[The committee] enthusiastically welcomes it. It's like a New Year's gift," he said.

The only two North Korean athletes who qualified for the Games are figure skaters Ryom Tae-Ok and Kim Ju-Sik.

Although the North has missed the official deadline to confirm their participation, the skaters could still compete with an invitation by the International Olympic Committee.

South Korea's President Moon Jae-in last month suggested delaying an annual joint military drill with US troops until after the Games. The North usually denounces any such exercises as a rehearsal for war.