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North Korean Foreign Minister Calls for Stronger Russia Ties on Moscow Visit

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Russian Foreign Ministry Press Service

North Korea's foreign minister, on a visit to Moscow, said on Tuesday that the situation on the Korean Peninsula and world events showed that his country and Russia needed to forge stronger ties.

Ri Yong Ho spoke before holding talks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on the situation around North Korea's nuclear and missile programme and tensions involving Pyongyang, Seoul and Washington.

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"The current situation on the Korean peninsula and around your country, and the overall international political situation require our two countries to further strengthen friendly cooperation, to increase our strategic communication and coordination of action between our countries," Ri told reporters.

Ri said he hoped they would find concrete ways to create "a new milestone" this year in their relations.

High ranking North Korean officials have been engaged in a flurry of international diplomacy in recent weeks with the possibility of a meeting between U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

The North Korean leader made a surprise visit to China last month for talks with President Xi Jinping in his first known trip outside the North since he assumed power in 2011.

Ri arrived in Moscow on Monday and held talks with Russian Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev about the options for dialogue between Pyongyang and Seoul, TASS news agency reported.

Meanwhile, Russia's foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, said on Tuesday that he had accepted an invitation to visit Pyongyang.

Lavrov added that no decisions had been made on talks between Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

He also said Russia welcomed what he called the gradual normalisation of the situation on the Korean peninsula and supported contact between North Korea and the United States.

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

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