The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

First Putin-Kim Summit to Take Place on April 25, Kremlin Confirms

April 23, 2019



Ahn Young-joon / AP / TASS

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un will visit Russia's Far East capital of Vladivostok for his first summit with President Vladimir Putin on April 25, the Kremlin confirmed on Tuesday.

The leaders will discuss political and diplomatic efforts to settle the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula, and Kim's visit is key in this process, Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov told reporters.

He said Russia's bilateral trade with North Korea fell by more than 56 percent last year because of sanctions against Pyongyang but Moscow thinks it is important that North Korea and the United States are interested in maintaining their contact.

Related article: North Korea's Kim Jong Un to Meet Putin in Moscow This Month — Kremlin

Kim is scheduled to visit Vladivostok with an entourage of 230 people, Russia's Kommersant

newspaper reported on Tuesday, citing two sources close to the process of planning the visit.

NK News, a group that follows North Korea, showed photos on its website on Monday of preparations underway at Vladivostok's Far Eastern Federal University, likely to host part of the summit, with workers installing North Korean and Russian flags.

Kim's chief aide, Kim Chang Son, was seen in Vladivostok on Sunday according to South Korea's Yonhap news agency, leading to speculation that the Putin-Kim summit will be held in the city around April 24-25.

Kim's sister, propaganda director Kim Yo Jong, had arrived in Vladivostok on Monday and was briefed by the chief aide there, South Korea's The Chosun Ilbo newspaper reported, citing an unidentified source.

Russian engineers had to "urgently dig up" the Vladivostok railway station gates and make them 20 centimeters deeper to accommodate Kim's limousine over the weekend, Kommersant reported. At least two limousines have been spotted on the campus of Vladivostok's Far Eastern Federal University on Russky Island on Monday.

Russky Island waterways will be closed on Wednesday and Thursday in preparation for Kim's visit, the Primorye region's small vessels inspectorate confirmed to Interfax.

The two have never met since Kim came to power after his father Kim Jong Il's death in 2011. The visit is also part of Kim's effort to build foreign support for his economic development plans, analysts said, after the breakdown of a second U.S.-North Korea summit in Vietnam in February meant no relief on sanctions for North Korea.

Russia has for years been involved in efforts to persuade North Korea to give up its nuclear program. It was involved in so-called six party talks — along with the two Koreas, Japan, the United States and China — that were last held in 2009.

South Korea's foreign ministry said it understood the agenda of the Putin-Kim summit would include Russia-North Korea relations, denuclearization and regional cooperation.

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2019/04/23/first-putin-kim-summit-to-take-place-on-april-25-kremlin-confirms-a65347