

N. Korea's Kim to Meet with Putin in Russia, Kremlin Confirms

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Kim Jong Un and Vladimir Putin in 2019. **Valery Sharifulin / TASS**

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un will visit Russia "in the coming days" after receiving an invite from Russian President Vladimir Putin, the Kremlin [confirmed](#) Monday.

Speculation had been mounting that Kim, who rarely leaves his country and had not traveled since the coronavirus pandemic, would meet Putin to discuss potential arms deals.

"At the invitation of Russian President Vladimir Putin, Kim Jong Un, Chairman of State Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, will pay an official visit to the Russian Federation in the coming days," the Kremlin said.

South Korean and Russian media had [reported](#) earlier Monday that Kim had likely departed for the Russian Pacific port of Vladivostok, where he is expected to meet Putin.

"[South Korea's] intelligence authorities believe the train presumed to be carrying Kim Jong Un is moving to Vladivostok," a South Korean government official told the Yonhap news

agency.

Russian officials expect Kim in Vladivostok “in the near future,” Russia’s news agency Interfax [reported](#) Monday, citing two anonymous government sources.

“We’ve been preparing for Kim Jong Un’s visit for a while,” one of the sources told Interfax.

The United States last month [accused](#) Moscow of pursuing “active” talks to buy [artillery shells](#) and other munitions from Pyongyang for its protracted war in Ukraine.

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The New York Times [reported](#) earlier that Kim’s talks with Putin could take place at Russia’s Eastern Economic Forum, which kicked off over the weekend and ends this Wednesday. The Russian leader is expected to attend the annual forum on Tuesday.

Kim plans to visit the Russian Navy’s Pacific Fleet, according to NYT, which cited anonymous American and allied officials.

Reuters correspondents [witnessed](#) a higher police presence in Vladivostok, but no North Korean flags as is customary in preparations for high-level foreign visitors.

In July, Russia’s Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu traveled to North Korea, where he toured an arms exhibit that included Pyongyang’s banned ballistic missiles.

Russia, a historical ally of Pyongyang, has been a crucial backer of the isolated country for decades and their ties go back to the founding of North Korea 75 years ago.

At the same time, Kim has been steadfast in his support for Moscow’s 18-month invasion of Ukraine.

In July 2023, Putin hailed Pyongyang’s “firm support for special military operations against Ukraine.”

AFP contributed reporting.

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