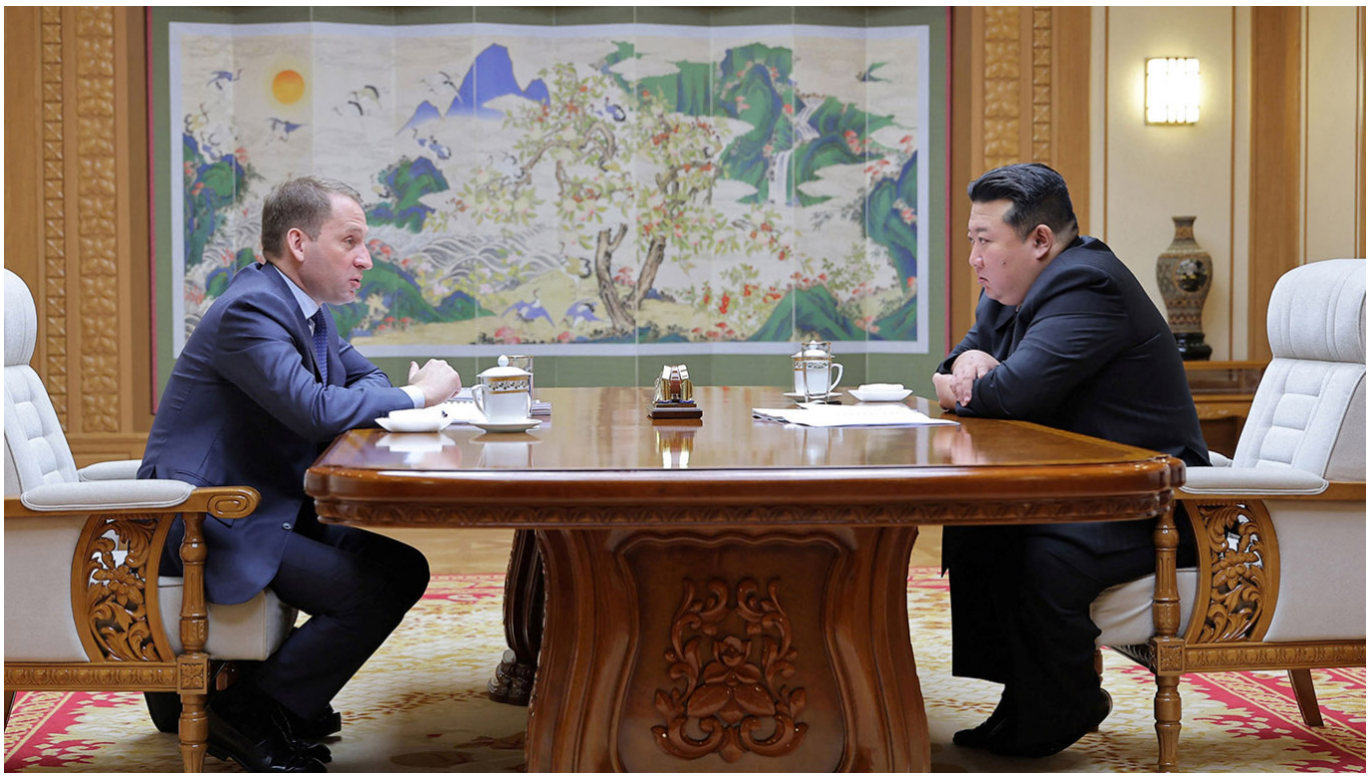
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Kim Jong Un Meets With Russia's Natural Resources Minister in Pyongyang

By AFP

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Kim Jong Un meeting with Russia's Minister of Natural Resources and Ecology Alexander Kozlov. **KCNA / AFP**

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un met with Russia's Minister of Natural Resources and Ecology Alexander Kozlov in Pyongyang, state media reported Tuesday, as visiting Russian delegations continue to highlight deepening ties between the two countries.

Kozlov, who is leading a delegation focused on trade, economy, science and technology, met with Kim on Monday to discuss cooperation in these areas, according to the state-run Korean Central News Agency (KCNA). A separate Russian military academy delegation also arrived in Pyongyang, although KCNA provided no further details on their visit.

The United States and South Korea have accused North Korea of sending over 10,000 soldiers

to aid Russian forces in Ukraine, with experts suggesting Kim seeks advanced technology and battle experience for his own military.

Kim and Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a strategic partnership treaty in June, committing both nations to mutual military assistance and cooperation against Western sanctions. Last week, North Korea ratified a defense pact with Moscow after Russian lawmakers approved the deal.

Kim said his meeting with Kozlov was intended to "further promote" trade and scientific exchange, noting that relations between the two countries have "reached a new strategic level."

In exchange for sending troops, analysts fear Russia may offer technology that could advance North Korea’s nuclear weapons program. Recently, North Korea test-fired ballistic missiles and a new solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missile.

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