

North Korea's Kim, Russia's Putin Reaffirm Ties on Korean Liberation Day

By [Reuters](#)

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North Korean leader Kim Jong Un reaffirmed the deepening of ties with Russia in a message to President Vladimir Putin as Pyongyang marked the anniversary of independence from Japan's colonial rule, KCNA state news agency said on Sunday.

Kim was replying to a message of congratulations from Putin marking Saturday's 81st anniversary of Tokyo's surrender in World War Two. The Russian leader said the bond was forged as Soviet soldiers fought against Japan and that cooperation would continue "in all the sectors."

The North Korean leader expressed hope for the future of ties that had "carried forward the history of common struggle for justice and precious traditions of friendship."

Pyongyang and Moscow have grown closer since the reclusive state began deploying troops

and weapons to support Russia's war against Ukraine in what has been Pyongyang's most significant involvement in a war since the 1950s.

The Russian ship Pallada arrived at Wonsan port for a goodwill visit on Saturday tied to the liberation anniversary, and was greeted by North Korean provincial officials and Russian embassy staff, KCNA said.

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Also on Saturday, South Korean President Lee Jae Myung called for talks with the rival North aimed at peaceful coexistence, telling Seoul's Liberation Day ceremony that the two Koreas need safeguards to prevent conflict and should work to replace their armistice with a "peace regime."

Lee urged dialogue to formally end the 1950-1953 Korean War, which ended in a ceasefire but no peace treaty, and said the talks could explore ways to curb Pyongyang's nuclear programme.

Pyongyang has rejected Lee's overtures and criticized U.S.-South Korean military exercises as provocations.

On Thursday, Putin drew Tokyo's condemnation with a visit to an island off Hokkaido, claimed by Japan, that Moscow seized in the days after Japan's 1945 surrender.

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