

News

World News Briefs

Smiling Kim Arrives By Train in Russia For His Putin Summit

VLADIVOSTOK, Russia (AP) — A smiling and upbeat Kim Jong Un arrived Wednesday in far-eastern Russia aboard an armored train for a much-anticipated summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin that comes amid deadlocked global diplomacy over the North Korean leader’s nuclear program.

Both leaders have high hopes for their first one-on-one meeting: Kim for a win after his failed second summit with U.S. President Donald Trump and Putin for a chance to raise Moscow’s clout in the region and gain more leverage with Washington.

Speaking to Russia’s state-owned Rossiya-24, Kim said he was hoping for a “successful and useful” visit and would like to discuss with Putin the “settlement of the situation in the Korean Peninsula” as well as bilateral ties with Russia.

It was Kim’s first visit to Russia as North Korean leader; his late father, Kim Jong Il, visited Russia in 2011. The North Korean leader evoked his father’s “great love for Russia” and said that he intends to strengthen ties between the two countries.

“I have heard a lot about your country and have long dreamt of visiting it,” Kim was quoted as saying at his first stop, Russia’s Khasan train station, near the bor-



In this image from video released by Primorsky Regional Administration Press Service, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un waves from his train as he leaves Khasan train station in Primorye region, Russia, Wednesday, April 24, 2019. Kim arrived in Russia by train on Wednesday, a day before his much-anticipated summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin that comes amid deadlocked diplomacy on his nuclear program.

der with North Korea. “It’s been seven years since I took the helm, and I’ve only just managed to visit.”

Sri Lanka Shakes Up Top Security Posts After Deadly Bombings

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP) — Sri Lanka’s president shook up the country’s top security establishment after officials failed to act on intelligence reports warning of possible attacks before the Easter bombings that killed over 350 people, his office said Wednesday.

The capital of Colombo, meanwhile, remained rattled by reports that police were continuing to conduct controlled detonations of suspicious items three days after the attacks on churches and luxury hotels, and the U.S. ambassador said that Washington believes “the terrorist plotting is ongoing.”

During a televised speech to the nation Tuesday night, President Maithripala Sirisena said he would change the head of the defense forces within 24 hours, and on Wednesday he asked

for the resignations of the defense secretary and national police chief in a dramatic internal shake-up. He did not say who would replace them.

Sirisena said he had been kept in the dark on the intelligence about the planned attacks and vowed to “take stern action” against officials who failed to share it.

Government leaders have acknowledged that some intelligence units were aware of possible attacks weeks before the bombings that struck three churches and three luxury hotels. The death toll rose Wednesday to 359, with 500 people wounded. Police spokesman Ruwan Gunasekara also said 18 suspects were arrested overnight, raising the total detained to 58.

In Mexico, Migrants Turn to ‘The Beast’ After Highway Raids

IXTEPEC, Mexico (AP) — The train known as “The Beast” is once again rumbling through the night loaded with people headed toward the U.S. border after a raid on a migrant caravan threatened to end the practice of massive highway marches through Mexico

A long freight train loaded with about 300 to 400 migrants pulled out of the southern city of Ixtepec on Tuesday. They sat atop rattling boxcars and clung precariously to ladders alongside the clanking couplings. Most were young men, along with a few dozen woman and children. Mothers clambered up the railings clutching their infants. Migrants displayed a Honduran flag from atop the train.

The train known in Spanish as “La Bestia,” which runs from the southern border state of Chiapas into neighboring Oaxaca and north into Gulf coast state Veracruz, carried migrants north for decades, despite its notorious dangers: People died or lost limbs falling from the train. Mexican authorities started raiding the trains to pull migrants off in mid-2014 and the number of Central Americans aboard the train fell to a smattering.

But about a week ago, a longtime migrant rights activist, the Rev. Alejandro Solalinde, noticed a change: Large numbers of migrants started getting off the train in Ixtepec, the Oaxaca town where his Brothers on the Road shelter is located.

Many had waited weeks for Mexican visas that never materialized, and simply decided to head north without papers. Others were part of a 3,000-person migrant caravan that was broken up in a raid Monday by federal police and immigration agents on a highway east of Ixtepec.

US Measles Cases Hit Highest Mark in 25 Years

NEW YORK (AP) — Measles in the U.S. has climbed to its highest level in 25 years, closing in on 700 cases this year in a resurgence largely attributed to misinformation that is turning parents against vaccines.

“This is alarming,” said Dr. William Schaffner, a Vanderbilt University vaccine expert. Not only is measles dangerous in itself, but its return could mean other vaccine-preventable diseases seemingly consigned to the past may be coming back as well, he said.

Officials in hard-hit New York City on Wednesday reported 61 new cases since late last week, in what would make this the nation’s worst year for measles since 1994, with eight months still to go. Other states are reporting more cases, too.

The official nationwide count will not be released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention until Monday. CDC officials said they are reviewing the latest reports.

Roughly three-quarters of this year’s illnesses in the U.S. have been in New York state, mainly in two ultra-Orthodox Jewish communities in Brooklyn and suburban Rockland County. Most of those cases have been in unvaccinated people.

Trump Forms Battle Plan for Post-Mueller Probes: Just Say No

WASHINGTON (AP) — Just say no.

As House Democrats ramp up their post-Mueller investigations into President Donald Trump, his strategy for responding is simple: Resist on every legal front. The administration is straining to hold off congressional investigators, including their efforts to obtain the president’s tax returns, his business’ financial records and testimony from former senior aides.

“We’re fighting all the subpoenas,” Trump declared on Wednesday. And if House members go all the way

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