



By: TA | AP Brief

Kim Jong Un and Putin discussed Ukraine ahead of the Alaska summit



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and Russian President Vladimir Putin held a phone call to discuss their deepening ties and war efforts against Ukraine, the countries' state media said Wednesday, ahead of Putin's planned meeting with U.S. President Donald Trump in Alaska.

Putin during the call on Tuesday praised the "bravery, heroism and self-sacrificing spirit" displayed by North Korean troops as they fought with Russian forces to repel a Ukrainian incursion into Russia's Kursk border **region**, North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency said.

Putin also shared with Kim information about his upcoming talks with Trump scheduled to take place Friday in Alaska, according to Russia's TASS news agency, citing the Kremlin. The North Korean reports did not mention the Trump meeting.

Kim told Putin that Pyongyang will fully support "all measures to be taken by the Russian leadership in the future, too," as they discussed advancing ties in "all fields" under a strategic partnership agreement they signed during a summit last year, KCNA said.

Kim has made Moscow the priority of his foreign policy

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Kim has made Moscow the **priority** of his foreign policy as he aims to break out of diplomatic isolation and expand relations with countries confronting Washington.

His government has dismissed Washington and Seoul's stated desires to restart diplomacy aimed at defusing the North's nuclear program, which derailed in 2019 following a collapsed **summit** with Trump during his first term.

According to South Korean assessments, North Korea has sent around 15,000 troops to Russia since last fall and also supplied large quantities of military equipment, including artillery and ballistic missiles, in support of Putin's war efforts against Ukraine.

Kim has also **agreed** to send thousands of military construction workers and deminers to Russia's Kursk region, a deployment South Korean intelligence believes could happen soon.

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