



By: TA | AP Brief

# North Korean and Russian military officials discussed strengthening cooperation



Senior North Korean and Russian military officials discussed strengthening cooperation in their latest talks this week in Pyongyang, North Korean state media said Friday, as the two countries continue to align over Russia's war in Ukraine.

The report came days after South Korea's spy agency, in a closed-door briefing to lawmakers, said it had detected signs of recruitment and training activities in North Korea, possibly in preparation for additional troop deployments to Russia.

North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency said North Korean officials, led by Pak Yong Il, vice director of the Korean People's Army's General Political Bureau, held talks Wednesday with a Russian delegation headed by Vice Defense Minister Viktor Goremykin.

KCNA said the two sides discussed expanding cooperation in line with the "**deepened bilateral relations**" developed under North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The report didn't mention any specific agreements. KCNA also said Goremykin's delegation separately met with North Korean Defense Minister No Kwang Chol on Thursday.

When asked whether North Korean and Russian officials may have discussed additional North Korean troop deployments to Russia, Chang Yoon-jeong, a spokesperson for South Korea's Unification Ministry, said Seoul was closely monitoring the situation but wouldn't make assumptions.

## US South Korea security talks

The North Korean-Russian meetings came days after U.S. Defense Secretary **Pete Hegseth** traveled to South Korea for annual security talks between the allies on Tuesday and praised South Korean plans to raise its military spending in the face of threats by nuclear-armed North Korea and other regional uncertainties.

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 to support Moscow's war against Ukraine.

**Around 5,000 North Korean military construction troops have been moving to Russia in phases since September**

Kim has also agreed to send thousands of **military construction workers** and deminers to Russia's Kursk region.

In its briefing to lawmakers on Tuesday, South Korea's National Intelligence Service said it also believes around 5,000 North Korean military construction troops have been moving to Russia in phases since September for possible deployment in infrastructure restoration projects