

Kim climbed mountain in smart shoes: media



Kim casually strolls at the summit of Mount Paektu alongside other North Korean officials

Seoul

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has "climbed" a 2,744m mountain, state media claimed – apparently while wearing smart black leather shoes.

The third-generation dictator scaled Mount Paektu "going through thick snow", it was said.

Kim reportedly ordered that a monument to the peak and nearby education compound should be "spruced up", and that a new hotel and several rest stops should be built.

Mount Paektu has a sacred role in Korean folklore and has been used to lend gravitas to the Kim family's propaganda across the generations.

According to the Rodong Sinmun, the official state newspaper, Kim "said that

he had often climbed Mount Paektu but this is the first time to have in mid-winter such nice weather, rare to be seen even in spring".

It continued: "His eyes reflected the strong beams of the gifted great person seeing in the majestic spirit of Mount Paektu the appearance of a powerful socialist nation which dynamically advances full of vigour without vacillation at any raving dirty wind on the planet."

North Korea's state media also claimed two years ago that Kim had climbed the mountain.

But images released on Saturday by the state-run KCNA news agency showed Kim walking in formal attire and shiny, black leather brogues. He did not appear

to be carrying any specialised equipment.

Kim is not the only leader to use photographs to demonstrate his physical prowess.

Russia's President Vladimir Putin – in robust shape for a man of 65 – has been pictured shirtless while on horseback, swimming and fishing.

His strongman persona has also been burnished with photographs of him kayaking, practising judo and playing ice hockey.

The images from Mount Paektu stand in contrast to those released of Theresa May's own walking holiday in July, when the Prime Minister was shown alongside her husband Philip using walking poles and wearing practical clothes in the Swiss Alps. (*independent.co.uk*)

Starving polar bear exposes climate crisis



Videograb shows the dying polar bear desperately searching for food

Toronto

Video footage captured in Canada's Arctic has offered a devastating look at the impact climate change is having on polar bears in the region, showing an emaciated bear clinging to life as it scrounged for food on iceless land.

The scene was recorded by the conservation group Sea

Legacy during a late summer expedition in Baffin Island. "My entire Sea Legacy team was pushing through their tears and emotions while documenting this dying polar bear," photographer Paul Nicklen wrote on social media after publishing the footage this week.

The video shows the bear struggling to walk as it searches

for food. The bear eventually comes across a trashcan used by Inuit fishermen, rummaging through it with little luck.

The bear, which was not old, probably died within hours of being captured on video, said Nicklen. "This is what starvation looks like. The muscles atrophy. No energy. It's a slow, painful death." (*theguardian*)

#PollToday



If climate change is not brought under control, a number of species will be wiped off earth soon. Do you agree?

Yes No Cant Say



"A moment of panic or carelessness, a misconstrued comment or bruised ego, could easily lead us unavoidably to the destruction of entire cities. A calculated military escalation could lead to the indiscriminate mass murder of civilians."

Beatrice Fihn
International Campaign to
Abolish Nuclear Weapons'
Executive Director

Rest in sight

3 held over attempted arson on synagogue



Three people were arrested after an attempted arson attack at a synagogue in the Swedish city of Gothenburg.

Duterte wants martial law extension

Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte will ask Congress to extend martial law in the volatile southern island of Mindanao to quell an insurgency.

Nepal's Oli, most likely next PM

Former Nepali prime minister K.P. Oli looked set for a return to power after winning his seat in parliament and his Communist UML party and Maoist allies on course to win a majority.

Pope prays for nuclear disarmament

Pope Francis called on world leaders to work in favour of nuclear disarmament to protect human rights, particularly those of weaker and underprivileged people.

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Indian soldier kills four colleagues in Chhattisgarh

New Delhi

An Indian paramilitary soldier has shot dead four of his colleagues and critically injured another at a camp in central India, local media report.

The soldier, a member of the paramilitary Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), apparently opened fire after an argument.

The incident is said to have occurred at about 17:15 local time (11:45 GMT) at the Basuguda camp in the Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh state.

Police said the man has been detained.

A spokesperson for the CRPF said the officer, 35-year-old Sanath Kumar,

opened fire with an AK-47 assault rifle "following a scuffle with other personnel".

Kumar is being questioned and an investigation into Saturday's incident is under way.

A senior state police officer, Sundar Raj, told ANI news agency that investigators were trying to determine "what happened, why he did it, and under what circumstances".

The central paramilitary force is deployed in the region for anti-Maoist operations.

The mineral-rich state of Chhattisgarh has witnessed an armed conflict for more than three decades. (*BBC*)

Soviet crew asked US jets to barrel-roll



An F4D Phantom fighter of the U.S. Air Force escorting a Tu-95 Bear strategic bomber above the Arctic Ocean

Washington

An aviation blog has posted a photo of a US AF F-4 jet flying upside down as it intercepts a Soviet Tu-95 strategic bomber. The story behind it is one of how mid-air encounters now deemed "unsafe" were once regarded as professionals having a bit of fun.

The picture was published by the popular military aviation blog The Aviationist on December 4 as an illustration of how the definition of recklessness has changed since the Cold War. Manoeuvres like barrel rolls or aggressive turns during interception

missions are now usually branded by the Pentagon as "unprofessional" or "unsafe" if performed by Russian or Chinese pilots responding to American aircraft.

But a few decades ago such stunts were quite routine and not perceived as anything dangerous. Military aviation blogger David Cenciotti cited a US spy plane veteran pilot calling such episodes "ho-hum."

He added that American pilots actually behaved in the same manner, as evidenced by the photo with the 'Phantom' flying upside down alongside the 'Bear.' (*RT*)

Aftershocks of NKorea nuclear test moved Earth's crust

Washington

Two minor tremors were detected on Saturday from near North Korea's nuclear test site and were probably aftershocks from the country's massive nuclear test in early September, a U.S. Geological Survey official said.

The aftershocks, of magnitude 2.9 and 2.4, were detected at 0613 and 0640 GMT (1:13 a.m. and 1:40 a.m. EST) respectively, said the USGS and

Lassina Zerbo, executive secretary of the Vienna-based Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization.

A tweet from Zerbo said analysts had confirmed that the activity was "tectonic" in origin.

The USGS official said the tremors had been in the vicinity of the Punggye-ri nuclear test site, where North Korea conducted its sixth and largest underground nuclear test on Sept. 3. (*Reuters*)