

Head of North Korean delegation Jon Jong Su talks with his South Korean counterpart Chun Hae-sung

# Koreas to form combined team, march together in Olympics

Seoul

The two Koreas will field a combined women's ice hockey team and march together under one flag at next month's Winter Olympics in the South, Seoul said on Wednesday, after a new round of talks amid a thaw in cross-border ties.

North and South Korea have been talking since last week - for the first time in more than two years - about the Olympics, offering a respite from a months-long standoff over Pyongyang's pursuit of nuclear and missile programmes, although Japan urged caution over the North's "charm offensive".

The two Koreas will compete as a unified team in the Olympics for the first time, though they have joined forces at other international sports events before.

North Korea will send a delegation of more than 400,

including 230 cheerleaders, 140 artists and 30 Taekwondo players for a demonstration, a joint press statement released by Seoul's unification ministry said, adding the precise number of athletes will be hammered out after discussions with the IOC.

Prior to the Games, the sides will carry out joint training for skiers at the North's Masik Pass resort and a cultural event at the Mount Kumgang resort, for which Seoul officials plan to visit the sites next week.

The delegation is expected to begin arriving in South Korea on Jan. 25, the statement said.

The North will separately send a 150-strong delegation to the Paralympics.

Twenty nations meeting in the Canadian city of Vancouver agreed on Tuesday to consider tougher sanctions to press North

Korea to give up its nuclear weapons and U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson warned the North it could trigger a military response if it did not choose dialogue.

Seoul has proposed a joint ice hockey team, which triggered an angry response from athletes in the South suddenly being told they may have to play alongside total strangers.

"I don't know if it will happen, but a joint team will be a good opportunity for ice hockey to shed its sorrow as a less-preferred sport as many Koreans will take interest," South Korean President Moon Jae-in told players during a visit to a training centre.

The number of petitions to the presidential Blue House's website opposing a unified team climbed to more than 100 this week, with the most popular petition gaining more than 11,000 votes.

## #PollToday



Trump said he will withhold \$65 million in Palestinian aid. Do think world nations will come together to help Palestine with more money as suggested by the US President?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Cant Say



No incursion into UK airspace has ever taken place, and no Russian plane has been forced to land or even change its course. Russian planes carry out the routine flights in international airspace,"

Spokesman,  
Russian Embassy London

## Rest in sight

Myanmar police shoot dead seven protesters



Myanmar police shot dead seven demonstrators, while 12 were injured in troubled Rakhine State, after a local gathering celebrating an ancient Buddhist Arakan kingdom turned violent.

Catalan parliament reconvenes

Catalonia's new parliament elected a pro-secession speaker, thus virtually guaranteeing that the chamber's push for independence for Spain's northeastern region will continue.

Russia scolds Britain for casting it as an aggressor

Russia scolded Britain on Wednesday for casting it as an aggressor and said Prime Minister Theresa May was more interested in public rhetoric than dealing with the real threats facing the West.

Turkey to extend state of emergency

Turkey is set to extend a state of emergency for the sixth time since it was imposed following failed 2016 coup attempt.

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## Netanyahu says India's Gandhi an inspiration



Indian Prime Minister Modi assists Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's wife Sara as Netanyahu looks on

New Delhi

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited the home of Mahatma Gandhi on Wednesday, saying modern India's founding father and promoter of peace was an inspiration for humanity.

Netanyahu is making the first visit by an Israeli prime minister in 15 years and the nationalist government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has rolled out the red carpet, seeing Israel as an ally

in the fight against terrorism.

The two men, accompanied by Netanyahu's wife, Sara, went to Gandhi's ashram on the banks of a river where Netanyahu tried his hand at a spinning wheel, a pastime Gandhi made popular while he was jailed during British colonial rule.

"An inspiring visit to the hearth of one of humanity's great prophets of inspiration - Mahatma Gandhi", Netanyahu and his wife wrote in the guest book.

## China says Iranian oil tanker wreck located



The Sanchi, which was carrying 136,000 tonnes of light crude oil from Iran, ran into a cargo ship off China earlier this month

Beijing

The wreck of an Iranian oil tanker that collided with a cargo ship off China this month has been located, Beijing said Wednesday, but gave no new details about the environmental impact of the disaster.

The Sanchi, which was carrying 136,000 tonnes of light crude oil from Iran, ran into Hong Kong-registered bulk freighter the CF Crystal on January 6, sparking a fire

that Chinese rescue ships struggled to extinguish.

It sank on Sunday after a new and massive fire erupted, sending a cloud of black smoke as high as a kilometre above the East China Sea. The bodies of only three of the 32 crew members -- 30 Iranians and two Bangladeshis -- have been found.

On Monday Chinese ships scrambled to clean-up a massive oil spill.

## UK 'minister for loneliness'

London

Britain appointed a "minister for loneliness" on Wednesday to tackle what Prime Minister Theresa May described as "the sad reality of modern life" affecting millions of people.

Tracey Crouch, a junior minister for sport and civil society, will take on the role as part of a broader strategy to combat loneliness in Britain.

"For far too many people, loneliness is the sad reality of modern life," May said.

The ministerial appointment



follows a recommendation from a committee in memory of Jo Cox, a lawmaker for the opposition Labour party who was murdered by a far-right extremist.

"Jo experienced and

witnessed loneliness throughout her life especially as a new student at Cambridge University and separated from her sister Kim for (the) first time," the Jo Cox Foundation wrote on Twitter.