

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and South's President Moon Jae-in to meet in Pyongyang in September



Leaders of rival Koreas to meet in Pyongyang in September.

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) – The rival Koreas announced Monday that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and South Korean President Moon Jae-in will meet in Pyongyang sometime in September, while their envoys also discussed Pyongyang's nuclear disarmament efforts and international sanctions.

The push for what would be the leaders' third summit since April comes amid renewed worries surrounding a nuclear standoff between Washington and Pyongyang.

The announcement released after nearly two hours of talks led by the rivals' chiefs for inter-Korean affairs was remarkably thin on details. In a three-sentence joint statement, the two sides did not mention an exact date for the summit and provided no details on how to implement past agreements.

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Ri Son Gwon, the head of the North Korean delegation, told pool reporters at the end of the talks that officials agreed on a specific date for the summit in Pyongyang sometime within September, but he refused to share the date, saying he wanted to "keep reporters wondering."

The South Korean unification minister, Cho Myoung-gyon, told reporters after the meeting that officials still had some work to do before agreeing on when exactly the summit would happen. He said the two sides will again discuss when the leaders would meet but didn't say when.

It wasn't clear why Ri and Cho differed on the issue of the date, and Cho wouldn't answer a specific question about the discrepancy.

The meeting at a North Korea-controlled building in the border village of Panmunjom comes as the international community waits to see if North Korea will begin abandoning its nuclear weapons program, something officials suggested would happen after Kim's summit with President Donald Trump in June in Singapore.

North Korea is thought to have a growing arsenal of nuclear bombs and long-range missiles and to be closing in on the ability to reliably target anywhere on the U.S. mainland. A string of North Korean weapons tests last year, during which Pyongyang claimed to have completed its nuclear arsenal, had many in Asia worried that Washington and Pyongyang were on the brink of war.

Cho, the chief of the South Korean delegation, said the two sides also "talked a lot" about international sanctions meant to punish the North for its development of nuclear weapons, but he didn't elaborate.

Seoul has been preparing for possible economic collaboration with Pyongyang that could go ahead when sanctions are lifted. Pyongyang has urged Washington to ease the economic punishments, but the United States says that can't happen until the North completely denuclearizes.

The South Korean envoy said he urged Pyongyang to accelerate its current

nuclear negotiations with the United States. The North said it was making efforts to disarm, but Cho said there were no new details on those efforts.

Experts say there has been slow progress on those efforts since the Singapore summit.

Pyongyang has urged Washington to reciprocate its goodwill gestures, which include suspending missile and nuclear tests and returning the remains of Americans who fought in the Korean War. Washington, which cancelled an annual joint military exercise with South Korea that had taken place in August in previous years, has refused to ease sanctions until North Korea finally and fully denuclearizes.

Source: <https://www.king5.com/article/news/nation-now/north-korean-leader-kim-jong-un-and-souths-president-moon-jae-in-to-meet-in-pyongyang-in-september/465-124c3a5e-ff74-4cab-b4bb-c0b709074396>

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