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Inside C5

Southern DAILY

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North Korea agrees to talks after U.S., South Korea postpone military drills

SEOUL (Reuters) - North Korea agreed on Friday to hold official talks with the South next week, the first in more than two years, hours after the United States and South Korea delayed a military exercise amid a standoff over the North's nuclear and missile programs. South Korea said the North had sent its consent for the talks to be held on Tuesday. The last time the two Koreas engaged in official talks was in December 2015. The meeting will take place at the border truce village of Panmunjom where officials from both sides are expected to discuss the Winter Olympics, to be held in the South next month, and other inter-Korean relations, South Korean Unification Ministry spokesman Baik Tae-hyun told reporters. North Korea asked for further negotiations about the meeting to be carried out via documented exchanges, Baik said. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un opened the way for talks with South Korea in a New Year's Day speech in which he called for reduced tensions and flagged the North's possible participation in the Winter Olympics. But Kim remained steadfast on the issue of nuclear weapons, saying the North would mass produce nuclear missiles for operational deployment and again warned he would launch a nuclear strike if his country was threatened. U.S. President Donald Trump and his South Korean counterpart Moon Jae-in announced on Thursday that annual large-scale military drills would now

take place after the Olympics. The North sees these drills as preparations for invasion and just cause for its weapons programs that it conducts in defiance of U.N. Security Council resolutions. South Korea and the United States are technically still at war with North Korea after the 1950-53 Korean conflict ended with a truce, not a peace treaty. Trump had earlier called the proposed inter-Korean talks a "good thing" and that he would send a high-level delegation, including members of his family, to the Olympics, according to South Korea's presidential office. In a tweet, Trump, who hurled fresh insults at the North Korean leader this week, took credit for any dialogue that takes place. "Does anybody really believe that talks and dialogue would be going on between North and South Korea right now if I wasn't firm, strong and willing to commit our total 'might' against the North," Trump tweeted. Ribbons bearing messages wishing for unification between the two Koreas hang on a barbed-wire fence near the militarized zone separating the two Koreas, in Paju, South Korea, December 21, 2017. REUTERS/Kim Hong-Ji North Korea regularly threatens to destroy the United States and its two key Asia allies, Japan and South Korea. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang welcomed North and South Korea "taking positive steps to improve ties", and said the postponement of the military exercises was "without doubt a good thing". China's Commerce Ministry said it



South Korean and U.S. Marines take part in a winter military drill in Pyeongchang

would limit exports of crude oil, refined oil products, steel and other metals to North Korea, in line with tough new sanctions imposed by the United Nations. Japanese Defence Minister Itsunori Onodera sounded a note of caution about the proposed talks. "I think what is important is to maintain a firm defense posture," he told reporters in Tokyo. "North Korea goes through phases

of apparent dialogue and provocation but either way, North Korea is continuing its nuclear and missile development. We have no intention of weakening our warning and surveillance." The ramped-up momentum for inter-Korean dialogue follows a year of missile and nuclear tests by North Korea as well as an exchange of bellicose comments from Trump and Kim, which raised alarm across the world. Earlier this week, Nikki Haley,

the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, said Washington had heard reports that Pyongyang might be preparing to fire another missile. South Korea's defense ministry has said it had yet to see any evidence of an imminent missile launch. Analysts with the website 38 North, which tracks North Korea, reported Pyongyang may be preparing to test a rocket engine at a facility in Sohae, North Pyongan province.

Wall Street shrugs off weak December jobs data, extends gains



Professional bull rider J. B. Mauney rings the opening bell of the New York Stock Exchange in New York

(Reuters) - Wall Street's main indexes extended their new year rally on Friday after weak December U.S. jobs data raised expectations that the Federal Reserve would stick to its policy of gradual interest rate hikes in 2018. The S&P 500 and the Nasdaq were on track for their biggest percentage gains in more than a year on Friday, and the Dow in about a month. U.S. job growth slowed more than expected in December amid a decline in retail employment, but a pick-up in monthly wage gains pointed to labor market strength. Nonfarm payrolls increased by 148,000 jobs last month, the Labor Department said. Economists polled by Reuters had expected a rise of

190,000. Average hourly earnings rose 0.3 percent in December, lifting the annual increase in wages to 2.5 percent from 2.4 percent in November. "The market is shrugging it off because it's not weak enough to detract the Fed from raising rates further. The modest rise in average hourly wage number should give the Fed some breathing room," said Bryce Doty, senior portfolio manager, SIT Fixed Income Advisors LLC, Minneapolis. Traders of U.S. short-term interest-rate futures continued to bet the Fed would raise interest rates just two times this year, heavily pricing in a March rate hike. "It's going to take more than

employment number that is to the weaker side (to bring the market lower)," said Mark Heppenstall, chief investment officer at Penn Mutual Asset Management in Horsham, Pennsylvania. Energy index .SPNY declined 0.56 percent as oil prices pulled away from their 2015 highs on soaring U.S. production. [O/R] Francesca's Holdings (FRAN.O) tanked 20 percent after the women's apparel and accessories maker said it expected up to 17 percent decline in current-quarter same-store sales. Advancing issues outnumbered decliners on the NYSE by 1,435 to 1,377. On the Nasdaq, 1,497 issues rose and 1,380 fell.

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Sept. 18 (UPI) -- More than half of the world's population still does not have access to internet...

Of the 7.6 billion people in the world, 3.58 billion, or 48 percent, are using the internet. But that's a significant jump from 2016...

"Large gaps in connectivity persist, mainly due to the lack of infrastructure, affordability, lack of skills or lack of relevant content..."

However, although Asia has most of the world's offline population, China is the world's largest internet market with more than 700 million people...

United Nations: Majority Of World's Population Lacks Internet Access



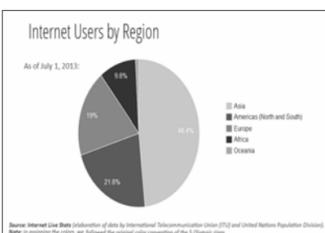
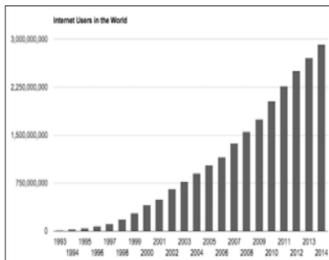
Information, or data, is the new "gold" in the world.

"Disparities in gender access are largest in developing countries, especially in Africa," the report states.

Related

Internet Users Worldwide Today

Around 40% of the world population has an internet connection today. In 1995, it was less than 1%.



The first billion was reached in 2005. The second billion in 2010. The third billion in 2014.

The chart and table below show the number of global internet users per year since 1993:

Definitions

User

An individual who has access to the Internet at home. This indicator does not record use, or frequency of use, but only access.

(there must be no barriers preventing the individual from using the Internet). The hardware equipment may or may not be owned by the household.

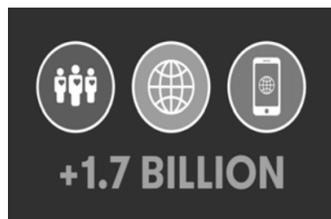
Internet

A world-wide computer network that can be accessed via a computer, mobile telephone, PDA, games machine, digital TV, etc.

Services Digital Network), DSL (Digital Subscriber Line) or ADSL, Cable modem, High speed leased lines, Fiber, Powerline, Satellite broadband network, WiMAX, Fixed CDMA, Mobile broadband network (3G, e.g. UMTS) via a handset or card...

Related

The Incredible Growth Of The Internet Over The Past Five Years



Internet users have grown by 82%, or almost 1.7 billion people, since January 2012. That translates to almost 1 million new users each day, or more than 10 new users every second.



We've only been publishing mobile social media user numbers since January 2015, but users have grown by more than 50% in those two years alone.



A Chinese man talks on his phone outside an internet cafe in Beijing on January 20, 2016. China has the world's largest internet market with more than 700 million people online...

With developing countries are far behind developed nations in internet access, there is additional gender gap that demonstrates inequality when it comes to the internet.

慧妮國際美容機構 advertisement with product images and contact information.

DYNASTY PEARLS & ANTIQUES advertisement featuring pearls and antiques.

劍牌皮膚病霜 advertisement for skin treatments with before/after photos.

Zhen Fan, M.D. advertisement for surgical services in Houston, P.A.

Treemont Retirement Community advertisement with a woman's photo and contact details.

Texas Regional Health & Wellness advertisement for Dr. Sammy Tao's clinic.

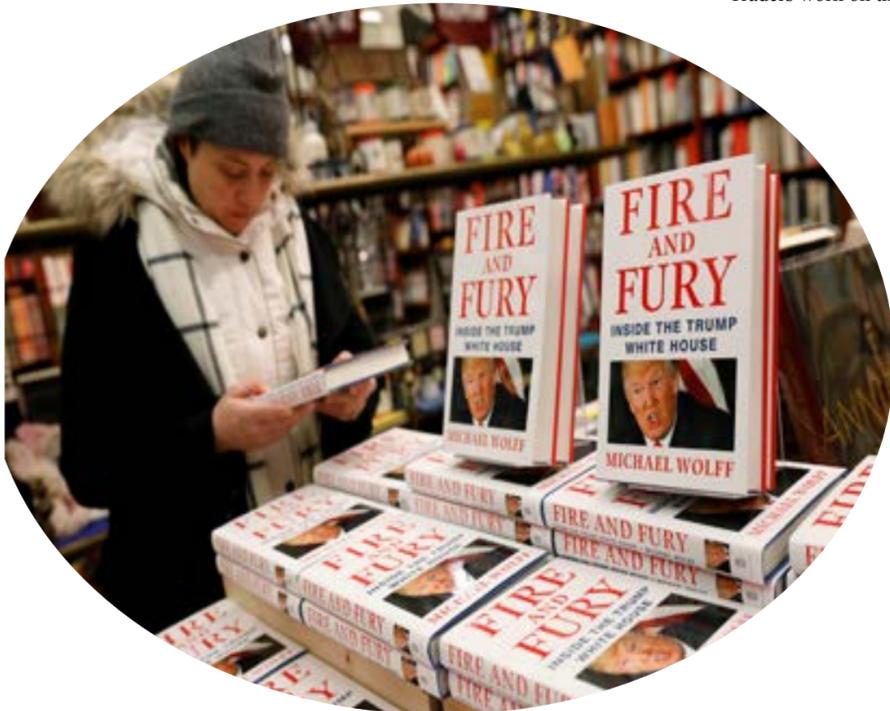
A Snapshot Of The World



Trader Peter Tuchman wears a hat as the Dow Jones Industrial Average rises above 25,000 on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange shortly after the opening bell in New York



Traders work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange shortly after the opening bell in New York



Copies of the book "Fire and Fury: Inside the Trump White House" by author Michael Wolff are seen at the Book Culture book store in New York



Women, dressed in ceremonial kimonos, smile in front of an electronic board displaying the Nikkei average as they pose after the ceremony which kicks off the first day of trading in 2018 at the Tokyo Stock Exchange in Tokyo



A girl participates in a New Year calligraphy contest in Tokyo



Bourse traders drink champagne after the last trading day at Frankfurt's stock exchange in Frankfurt



South Korean President Moon Jae-in meets with South Korean Kim Bok-dong, who was abducted to serve as a "comfort woman" for wartime Japanese soldiers, at a hospital in Seoul



A pedestrian walks through blinding snow across the Brooklyn Bridge during Storm Grayson in New York City



LEOC Co's Chairman, CEO and President Onodera, who runs a chain of sushi restaurants, poses with a 405 kg bluefin tuna



The area where the wall is proposed to be built is a refuge for 19 federally threatened and endangered species and 57 state protected species, including the ocelot and other species. A wall could have a serious, and possibly deadly, impact on these species.

The prospect of a border wall between Mexico and the U.S. is now real. President Trump has requested \$1.6 billion for fiscal year 2018 to build three segments totaling 74 miles.

There's a long debate over whether physical barriers on the border actually curb the illicit flow of people and drugs. The Border Patrol, which is backing Trump's plan, says they're a "vital tool" in their operation.

But what is undeniable is that the 654 miles of walls and fences already on the US-Mexico border have made a mess out of the environment there. They've cut off, isolated, and reduced populations of some of the rarest and most amazing animals in North America.

Now, DHS is eyeing unfenced areas in two Texas wildlife refuges that conservationists consider some of the most ecologically valuable areas on the border — home to armadillos and bobcats.

"We've been dealing with all these negative environmental impacts of fences on the border for more than a decade," says Dan Millis of the Sierra Club Borderlands project.

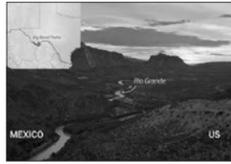
The border region is ecologically rich because a lot of it has been federally protected. The political boundary between the US and

Wall Could Cut Off A Texas Wildlife Refuge And The Habitat Of Big, Beautiful Cats

Trump's Border Wall Could Be An Ecological Disaster

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

Mexico stretches 2,000 miles from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific Ocean. Along the way, there are three mountain chains, the two largest deserts in North America, vast cattle ranches, a handful of cities and their sprawling suburbs, and the Southern section of the mighty Rio Grande river.



large swaths of land have been designated as protected areas. Today there are 25 million acres of protected US public lands within 100 miles of the line. That includes six wildlife refuges, six national parks, tribal lands, wilderness areas, and conservation areas — all of them managed by various federal agencies and tribal governments.

On the Mexican side, meanwhile, sit protected areas like El Pinacate y Gran Desierto de Altar, which abuts the US Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge and parts of the Organ Pipe National Monument and Barry M. Goldwater Range in Arizona.

These protected areas have been established, in part, to protect wildlife and plants that span both countries. In the case of the El Pinacate and Cabeza Prieta, desert species like the Sonoran pronghorn (an antelope relative) have been able to migrate back and forth. But in recent years, that's gotten harder with the construction of long sections of vehicle barriers and fences, as you can see from the map.

"People think of deserts as barren lands and flat sand dunes with nothing there," Sergio Avila, a conservation scientist at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, says. "But deserts are very diverse and rich in life."



Saguaro cacti, or "giant cacti," and ocotillo cactus (in bloom) in the Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument park in the Sonoran Desert. (Photo Uterra / UIG via Getty Images)

The protected areas on the border harbor an incredible array of wildlife and plants

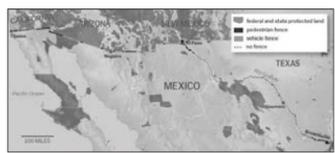
When you trace the border from west to east (as this Story Map project by Krista Schlyer did), you find shrinking pockets of remarkable biological abundance. At the far west is the Tijuana Estuary, a key salt marsh habitat for some 400 species of migrating birds.

At the far east, birds and butterflies stop through the Lower Rio Grande Valley, which is also a permanent home for colorful mammals, reptiles, and amphibians.

"There are tropical animal species in some of these canyons that are not found anywhere else," says Jesse Lasky, a biologist at Penn State who has studied the impact of border fences on border species. "They inhabit these little slices of tropical ecosystem that creep up into the US near the Gulf coast."

Border fences have been terrible for wildlife and plants

Since 1994, the US government has been erecting barriers to keep people and drugs from Mexico and beyond out. By 2010, about one-third of the border had been fenced with materials ranging from barbed wire to steel, bollard to wire mesh, and chain link.



All of this construction has sliced and diced a lot of protected land along the border. And ever since the passage of the Real ID Act of 2005, DHS has had the power to waive

most environmental reviews in the name of national security.

So, unlike most federal infrastructure projects, these fences have received little or no input from the public, land managers, conservation groups, or other agencies. Experts had no chance to assess beforehand what impact the fence might have on wildlife, plants, and rivers.

But what evidence we do have is alarming. For instance, Lasky and his co-authors found that the biggest risk comes when fences bisect the range of a small population of a species with a specialized habitat, leaving the majority of the population on one side and the others adrift.

Cutting off animal populations in this fashion leads to reduced gene flow and inbreeding — leading to a greater risk of extinction. Conservation groups are particularly worried about the Mexican gray wolf; in 2016, there were just 113 in the US and about three dozen south of the border.



Mexican gray wolves are the most endangered wolf in the world. In 2016, there were just 113 in the US and about three dozen south of the border. Don Bartletti / Los Angeles Times via Getty Images

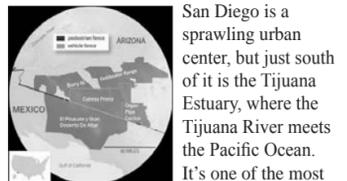
Fences also can restrict animals' access to water sources — particularly problematic in the drought-prone Southwest. And they can make it harder for animals to adapt to climate change.

responding to climate change." The wall structures hurt animals and insects in other ways too. Some sections have lights that attract and zap pollinators, like the monarch butterfly, that migrate across the border.

Trump's proposed wall could have a big impact on still-pristine areas

About two-thirds, or 1,350 miles, of the border remains unfenced. Trump said on July 13 that he intends to build a total 700 to 900 miles of new wall, which will be exceedingly difficult to do.

But it's plausible that Congress will give US Customs and Border Patrol, the division of DHS in charge of border security, at least some of the \$1.6 billion that Trump requested to build three segments totaling 74 miles for fiscal year 2018.



San Diego is a sprawling urban center, but just south of it is the Tijuana Estuary, where the Tijuana River meets the Pacific Ocean. It's one of the most biodiverse areas in the entire state of California, according to Millis of the Sierra Club, and has already been impacted by fences.

Activists in Texas who've been tracking fence construction over the years say they think part of the new levee walls CPB would build if Congress allocates the money for them will bisect the Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge — a collection of dozens of tracts of habitat stretching from Brownsville by the Gulf of Mexico to Rio Grande City, about 100 miles west.

This area is a refuge for 19 federally threatened and endangered species and 57 state protected species, including the ocelot and other species in the illustration below. And a wall could have a serious, in some cases deadly, impact on these species: (Courtesy https://www.vox.com)

Advertisement for ZK's cancer treatment. Features large text '癌 勿忘扶正', '美國ZK 靈芝孢子油抗癌組方', '中國衛生部唯一批准的靈芝孢子油', and 'GMP FOR HEALTH FOOD'. Includes a list of symptoms and a testimonial.

Advertisement for Ocean Palace restaurant. Features the logo 'Lean Palace 珍寶海鮮城', a photo of the restaurant building, and text: '天天茶市 正宗粵菜 港式點心', '二樓大型豪華宴會廳', '大型舞台,可容納百餘席', '精心承辦婚禮/壽宴/社團等各類型宴會', '本海鮮酒樓常備各種生猛游水海鮮', '珊瑚蝦、帶子、彩龍魚、龍躉斑、紅斑魚、象拔蚌', '刀蜆、龍蝦、加州大蟹、阿拉斯加皇帝蟹', '地址:11215 Bellaire Blvd. (位於香港城商場)', '訂座電話:281-988-8898'.

Gulf of Mexico could pump record oil in 2018, Wood Mac says



Oil and gas production could reach an all-time high in the deep waters of the Gulf of Mexico this year as companies cut costs and spend less on exploration.

Deepwater output in the Gulf could climb to 1.9 million barrels of oil equivalent in 2018, a 13 percent increase above last year and 10 percent higher than the last peak in 2009, energy research firm Wood Mackenzie said in a new report this week.

Gulf operators have dramatically cut costs in recent years and are pumping oil and gas more efficiently after adopting new automated drilling technologies, the firm said.

“Although deep-water Gulf of Mexico has taken quite a beating over the last three years, the industry has clawed its way back to being competitive,” said William Turner, a senior research analyst at Wood Mackenzie.

Last April, Wood Mac said the cost of deep-water projects have fallen by a fifth on average since crude prices collapsed in the summer of 2014, because of lower rig prices and moves to redesign projects and pump higher quantities of oil from wells.

But oil and gas exploration around the world will continue on the backburner, which could make the region's current oil-production levels unsustainable in coming years.

Wood Mac believes exploration in the Gulf of Mexico will remain flat this year.

“Increased investments in exploration and development, especially in ultra high-pressure high-temperature technologies and projects, are crucial,” Turner said, “not only to maintaining the current pace of production but also in unlocking the next phase of significant volumes in the region.”



Garth Brooks

RodeoHouston 2018: J Balvin, Kelsea Ballerini, Alessia Cara, OneRepublic

By Joey Guerra

A flurry of debuts, a new stage and a double-duty superstar highlight this year's RodeoHouston lineup.

Six acts will perform for the first time on the rotating stage inside NRG Stadium.

They include reggaeton star J Balvin, whose “Mi Gente” was one of 2017's biggest hits; country blonde Kelsea Ballerini; pop singer Alessia Cara; Fort Worth-grown soul singer Leon Bridges on Black Heritage Day; enduring pop outfit OneRepublic; and norteño group Calibre 50 on Go Tejano Day.

The announcement was made Thursday night inside NRG Center.

Garth Brooks, as previously announced, will open and close the 2018 RodeoHouston season, playing Feb. 27 and March 18. He appeared in person in March on the carnival grounds to reveal the news. Both shows went on sale in December and sold out in 18 minutes.

Brooks previously played RodeoHouston in 1991 and 1993.

Country, of course, dominates the lineup on 13 days. And there are just three women-led acts on the bill: Little Big Town, Ballerini and Cara.

Brad Paisley will take his 12th trip around the stadium. Luke Bryan, who currently holds four spots in the top 20 for paid attendance, returns for his seventh consecutive appearance.

Texas country singer Cody Johnson, a last-minute replacement for Old Dominion in 2017, returns for a second go-round. And so does Chris Stapleton, whose scorching 2017 debut was a season highlight.

Several favorites are back after taking a few years off. Blake Shelton returns for the first time since 2014 for a fifth spin.

Rascal Flatts is back for the first time in seven years for a seventh appearance. Expect quick sellouts for Bryan, Balvin

and Stapleton.

RodeoHouston also will debut a new, star-shaped stage, the first overhaul in more than 30 years. It includes a 48-foot diameter rotating performance area. The previous stage had a 40-foot diameter. Each point of the star can be raised or lowered individually, and it includes a motion-controlled LED backdrop video screen.

Individual tickets are \$18-\$350 and go on sale at 10 a.m. Thursday through ax.com. The virtual waiting room opens at 9:30 a.m. Thursday. There is a six-ticket limit per performance on the first day of sales.

Season tickets already are sold out, likely due to Brooks' two shows this year.

Weekday rodeo performances start at 6:45 p.m. and concerts start around 8:45 p.m. Weekend rodeo performances start at 3:45 p.m. and concerts start around 5:45 p.m.

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