

Trump son met Kremlin lawyer during campaign



Donald Trump, Jr., son of US President Donald Trump

Washington

US President Donald Trump said Sunday he wanted to work "constructively" with Russia despite confronting Vladimir Putin over alleged election meddling, as reports broke that his eldest son met a Kremlin-linked Russian lawyer during the 2016 campaign.

The New York Times, citing advisers briefed on the meeting, reported that Donald Trump Jr. attended the meeting after being promised "damaging information" about his father's Democratic rival Hillary Clinton -- the

latest revelation to surface in the probe over possible collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia.

Trump's eldest son was reportedly joined by the US president's son-in-law Jared Kushner and then-Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort for the June 2016 meeting in New York with the Kremlin-connected lawyer, the earliest such contact yet reported.

The younger Trump said in a statement to the Times that the lawyer, Natalia Veselnitskaya, "stated that she had information that individuals connected

to Russia were funding the Democratic National Committee and supporting Mrs Clinton."

"It quickly became clear that she had no meaningful information," he said, adding that the lawyer then began discussing the adoption of Russian children by American couples under a program Putin had suspended.

The president's son said he gathered that the adoption issue was "the true agenda all along and that the claims of potentially helpful information were a pretext for the meeting." (AFP)

Malaysia foils bid to smuggle 'bearded dragons'

Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia has foiled an attempt to smuggle dozens of bearded dragon lizards and tortoises into the country from neighbouring Thailand to be sold as pets, authorities said yesterday.

Two Thais and one Malaysian were arrested as they drove an SUV with the animals hidden inside, according to local border security chief Syed Basri Syed Ali.

Authorities found 58 bearded dragons and eight African spurred tortoises.

Both animals are popular pets in Malaysia but it is illegal to bring them into the country without the correct permits.

If found guilty of breaking wildlife protection laws, the



Seized bearded dragon lizards inside a container

trio -- who were arrested Thursday -- could be jailed for up to 10 years, said Syed Basri.

Kanitha Krishnasamy, acting regional director for wildlife trade monitoring network Traffic, said the discovery could

help investigators probing pet smuggling.

"This case could potentially uncover connections to the exotic pet trade that appears to be booming in Malaysia," she said.

#PollToday



After losing Mosul, do you think the fall of IS is near?

Yes No Cant Say



"Russia has maintained its aggressive actions against Ukraine, but NATO and NATO allies stand by Ukraine. Russia must withdraw its soldiers and stop supporting the militants"

Jens Stoltenberg
NATO chief

Rest in sight

Martial arts expert sworn in as Mongolian president



Mongolian businessman and martial arts expert Khaltmaa Battulga was sworn in as president, vowing to pursue relations with countries outside its giant neighbours Russia and China.

Militants force kids, hostages to fight

Children and hostages are being forced to fight alongside pro-Islamic State gunmen waging a seven-week battle for a Philippine city, the country's military said.

Chinese deities end SE Asia luxury tour

A statue of a Chinese goddess pictured flying business class for a Southeast Asian tour has headed home after putting her feet up at a premium airport lounge in Singapore

Afghanistan enacts law to control cyberspace

Afghanistan's President Ashraf Ghani has signed into law a cybercrime bill targeting online crime and militancy by groups such as the Taliban and Islamic State.

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France could close a third of nuclear reactors: minister

Paris

France's new environment minister said yesterday that nearly a third of the country's nuclear reactors could be shut under plans to scale back the amount of electricity produced from atomic power.

In 2015, the previous Socialist-dominated parliament passed a law obliging the government to reduce the proportion of electricity generated from nuclear to 50 percent by 2025 compared with around 75 percent now.

"We can all understand that to reach this target, we're going to have to close a

certain number of reactors," Nicolas Hulot told RTL radio. "It will be perhaps as high as 17 reactors, but we need to look into it."

Hulot, a celebrity environmentalist, was named minister for ecological transition in the first government of 39-year-old centrist President Emmanuel Macron, elected in May.

He presented a Climate Plan last Thursday which included a number of ambitious targets for reducing emissions, such as stopping the sale of petrol and diesel cars by 2040, but it was criticised by some for lacking detail.

Beijing says US apologises for 'Republic of China' gaffe



US President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping (R) pose prior to a meeting on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in Hamburg

Beijing

China said yesterday the United States apologised after Beijing officially protested a White House statement that mistakenly described Xi Jinping as the president of the "Republic of China".

Xi is president of the People's Republic of China, while the Republic of China is the official name for Taiwan, which Beijing claims as a breakaway province awaiting reunification.

The error was made in an official readout of US President Trump's remarks before a bilateral meeting with Xi during last weekend's G20 summit in Hamburg,

Germany.

It recalled Trump's initial wavering on the "One China" policy, which underpins relations between Washington and Beijing by acknowledging there is only one China and Taiwan is part of it.

Ties were also initially stymied by a protocol-busting phone call between the Beijing-sceptic president Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen and Trump following his election victory.

Then last month, the US administration further provoked the ire of Beijing when it approved \$1.3 billion worth of arms sales to the self-ruling island.

Twenty tourists robbed at Paris airport hotel

Paris

Masked men armed with tear gas robbed around 20 tourists who were waiting for shuttle buses outside a Paris airport hotel at the weekend, sources close to the investigation said yesterday.

The black-clad thieves arrived in at least two vehicles at the hotel near Charles de Gaulle airport and

robbed the French, American and Moroccan tourists of their luggage and personal belongings on Saturday, the sources said.

Hotels around the airport as well as the motorway leading to Charles de Gaulle and Le Bourget -- Europe's busiest private jet airport -- are frequently targeted by thieves.