VOA NEWS

November 8, 2017

From Washington, this is VOA news. I'm Jonathan Jones reporting.

President Trump arrived in Beijing Wednesday. It's his first visit as president to a nation that has been a focus of his drive to secure jobs at home. Trade will top the agenda, but also North Korea. White House officials say the president intends to press China to push the North to abandon its nuclear program. [North Korea is] China is North Korea's closest ally and top trading partner.

In addition to the North Korea nuclear crisis, Trump will also press his Chinese hosts on the country's massive trade surplus with the United States. And in a separate development, negotiators for both countries signed up to 20 deals worth $9 billion.

President Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin will likely meet later this week at the annual Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum. It begins Friday in Danang, Vietnam.

The Kremlin said Trump and Putin may hold a more "extensive" one-on-one meeting at some point, but no specific date has been set.

The Trump administration announced it's implementing changes that will "channel economic activities" away from Cuba's security infrastructure and impose travel and business limitations on Americans who travel there.

Americans planning to visit the island nation will have to travel with organized tour groups operated by American companies.

And, thousands of people gathered in Barcelona Wednesday to demand the release of Catalan leaders and activists.

Pro-independence protesters obstructed major highways, roads and railway lines Wednesday in Spain's Catalonia region as part of a general strike in protest of the detention of expelled Catalan government officials.

This is VOA news.

The war of words between Iran and Saudi Arabia is escalating in the media and on the ground after the weekend launch of a ballistic missile from Yemen which hit near the airport in the Saudi capital, Riyadh. The Saudis accuse Iran of arming Yemen's Houthi rebels, who fired the missile.

More now from Cairo from correspondent Edward Yeranian.

Saudi state TV announced a fresh round of attacks by its coalition forces in Yemen as tensions continued to escalate following the weekend ballistic missile launch by Yemen's Houthi militia group. Saudi military forces say they shot down the missile.

Television reports said Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman believes that Iran's "involvement in arming the Houthi rebels with ballistic missiles is a direct military aggression against Riyadh."

A spokesman for Yemeni military forces loyal to the Saudi-supported government of President Abdrabbu Mansour Hadi, Colonel Taher Hamid, told Saudi media he believes Riyadh has the "right" to respond in the latest missile attack on its soil.

Edward Yeranian, for VOA news, Cairo.

Four Somali-Americans won races for public office in local elections in the northern state of Minnesota on Tuesday.

Democrats and their progressive allies across the United States had much to celebrate on Election Day 2017 in addition to major victories in the Virginia and New Jersey gubernatorial races.

The election Tuesday of two new governors, Ralph Northam in Virginia and Phil Murphy in New Jersey, were capped with the elections of two African-Americans as lieutenant governor, with Justin Fairfax winning a separate race for that post in Virginia, and Sheila Oliver becoming New Jersey's first black, female lieutenant governor as Murphy's running mate.

Vice President Mike Pence and his wife, Karen, are in the small Texas town of Sutherland Springs just outside San Antonio. There Wednesday, they consoled the wounded survivors and families of the victims of the nation's latest mass murder.

Pence (is) to speak at a prayer service for the 26 churchgoers who were shot dead during a Sunday morning service by a gunman with a history of mental health issues. He is also meeting with police and the church neighbor who shot the gunman as he fled.

Among those surviving gun-shot victims that [the Pence] Pence has planned to see are ten church members who remain in critical condition.

There is more on these and other late breaking and developing stories, from around the world, around the clock, at voanews.com and on the VOA news mobile app. I'm Jonathan Jones reporting from the world headquarters of the Voice of America in Washington.

That's the latest world news from VOA.