VOA NEWS

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From Washington, this is VOA news. I'm Liz Parker reporting.

Anti Iranian government protests entered a third day and were met with counter protesters in the capital of Tehran.

The protests occurred as Iranian authorities issued another warning Saturday against "illegal gatherings."

Protesters say they are fed up with the country's stagnant economy which includes a 12.4 unemployment rate in rampant inflation.

Meanwhile, U.S. President Donald Trump continues to condemn arrests of peaceful protesters through Twitter. Using excerpts from a speech he delivered to the U.N. General Assembly in September, Trump criticized the Iranian government, charging it has long oppressed the Iranian people.

Thousands have participated in protests across Iran which began Thursday in the city of Mashad.

The Democratic Republic of Congo's government has ordered telecommunications providers to cut Internet and SMS service(s) across the country. This is ahead of planned anti-government demonstrations.

Grassroot(s) activists have called for marches in major cities to demand President Joseph Kabila not change the constitution to stand for a third term and release political prisoners.

Security forces killed dozens of protesters during anti-Kabila protests last year.

The telecommunications minister said services have been cut for state reasons, state security reasons, rather, and to protect Congolese lives.

Hundreds of thousands of law enforcement, military and security officials will be deployed in cities around the world to keep New Year's Eve revelers safe as they gather to welcome 2018. More on this on voanews.com.

This is VOA news.

2017 was a deadly, devastating year for natural disasters. Wildfires, volcanoes, mudslides and hurricanes left town and cities across the world in dire straits.

VOA's Arash Arabasadi has more on the impact to Indonesia and the Philippines.

Volcano eruptions in Indonesia on Bali in November and Sumatra in December forced tens of thousands of people to evacuate and disrupted air travel for a time.

The lava is flowing towards two directions to the south and the southeast and the volcanic ash spewed 4.6 kilometers into the sky.

December in the Philippines, tropical storm Tembin killed at least 120 people, with more than 160 others still missing.

I can't find my servants. My employees, my driver and their families are all missing. My neighbors disappeared, too.

Arash Arabasadi, VOA news.

There is new hope for ailing parts of Australia's Great Barrier Reef - assisted reproductive technology. Researchers have been capturing coral spawn and rearing millions of larvae in large tanks.

Professor Peter Harrison from Southern Cross University has been collecting the coral spawn off Heron Island on Australia's Great Barrier Reef.

"What we are doing is capturing some of that coral spawn, growing millions of larvae, and then putting those larvae back into areas of the reef that do not have many living corals on them at the moment to rapidly increase the rate at which coral recovery can occur."

Harrison says that these are the first experiments using larval restoration technique on the Great Barrier Reef.

The reef arguably Australia's greatest natural treasure.

The world's biggest journalist organization said that at least 81 reporters were killed on the job this year, and that violence and harassment against media staff had skyrocketed.

In its annual report, the International Federation of Journalists [say] says reporters lost their lives in targeted killings, car bomb attacks and crossfire incidents around the world.

The number of deaths [as late] as of late December was the lowest in a decade, down from 93 last year. However, more than 200 journalists remain in jail around the world.

"We have more than 250 journalists in jail, and two thirds of these journalists are in Turkey. And it's for this reason, it's very important to recall to you, to you to reach. Don't forget Turkey because Izmir most important jail, most important prison in the world."

That was Anthony Bellanger of IFJ, who says 160 journalists remain in jail in Turkey.

I'm Liz Parker.

That's the latest world news from VOA.