

VOA NEWS

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This is VOA News. I'm Joe Ramsey.

France's Marine Le Pen's far-right National Rally party won the first round of France's parliamentary election on Sunday, exit polls showed. But the final result will depend on days of horsetrading before next week's runoff.

The National Rally was seen winning around 34 percent of the vote, exit polls showed. That was ahead of leftist and centrist rivals, including President Emmanuel Macron's Together alliance, whose bloc was seen winning about 22 percent.

At least 18 people have been killed after suspected female suicide bombers targeted several locations in northern Nigeria. AP correspondent Karen Chammas reports.

Coordinated attacks took place at a wedding, a funeral and a hospital in the northeastern town of Gwoza. The first suicide bomber detonated an explosive device during a marriage celebration, according to a local authority.

The authority said that just "Minutes later, another blast occurred near the General Hospital." He added that the third attack at a funeral service was by a female bomber disguised as a mourner. Children and pregnant women were among those killed.

Gwoza is in Borno state, which has been heavily impacted by an insurgency launched in 2009 by Boko Haram, an Islamic extremist group.

So far, however, no one has claimed responsibility for the attacks.

I'm Karen Chammas.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Sunday said strikes on Russian border areas, quote, "helped protect lives."

Zelenskyy said during his nightly address, "The sooner the world helps us deal with the Russian combat aircraft launching these bombs, the sooner we can strike - justifiably strike - at Russian military infrastructure and military airfields, and the closer we will be to peace."

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North Korea fired one short-range ballistic missile and another ballistic missile on Monday, South Korean military said. The first short-range ballistic missile was fired to the northeast around 5:05 a.m. Seoul time. Another unknown ballistic missile was detected around 5:15 a.m., South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said.

The South Korean military is fully prepared and closely sharing information with U.S. and Japanese authorities while strengthening surveillance and vigilance in preparation for any further launches, top military officials said in a statement.

Much of the Caribbean (is) on high alert on Sunday as Tropical Storm Beryl strengthened into the first hurricane of the 2024 Atlantic season. Steve Karesh has more.

Forecasters are warning of an "extremely dangerous" Category 4 storm.

John Cangialosi is a hurricane specialist with the National Hurricane Center. He says Beryl is expected to bring life-threatening winds and storm surge when it reaches the Windward Islands early on Monday.

"... and then tracking across basically the entire Caribbean Sea from east to west and staying a very strong storm could be a major hurricane for a while, perhaps weaken a little as it reaches the western Caribbean but expected to remain a hurricane during the next five days as it treks across that region."

Barbados, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Grenada are all under hurricane warnings, while tropical storm warnings or watches are in effect for Martinique, Tobago and Dominica.

Steve Karesh, VOA News.

There are apparently private concerns within the Democratic Party about U.S. President Joe Biden's chances to win reelection after Biden's debate performance. AP correspondent Jackie Quinn reports.

Some members on the Democratic national committee conference called this weekend are telling the Associated Press their leadership is largely ignoring Biden's weak showing Thursday night and feel they're being told to ignore the dire nature of the party's predicament.

Some party strategists and donors are calling for the 81-year-old Biden to step aside. But Georgia Senator Raphael Warnock says Biden should stay in.

"America is better, a whole lot better, than Donald Trump and we've had a primary. It's our job to demonstrate that the world is watching and our children are counting on us to get this right."

He spoke on NBC's "Meet the Press."

I'm Jackie Quinn.

A Taliban delegation on Sunday attended a United Nations-led meeting in Qatar on Afghanistan after organizers said women would be excluded from the gathering.

The two-day meeting is the third U.N.-sponsored gathering on the Afghan crisis in the Qatari capital, Doha. The Taliban were not invited to the first meeting.

I'm Joe Ramsey, V...