VOA NEWS

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

U.S. President Donald Trump saying Saturday he hopes the newly arranged talks between North and South Korea will go "beyond the Olympics."

"I hope it works out. I very much want to see it work out between the two countries. I'd like to see them getting involved in the Olympics and maybe things go from there. So, I'm behind that 100%."

Friday, North Korea accepted South Korea's offer of high-level talks on the upcoming Olympic Games.

Representatives from the countries will meet in a border village and will also discuss improving overall ties. This upcoming Tuesday.

President Trump said during Saturday's news conference that he is willing to engage in phone talks with North Korea's leader, Kim Jong Un.

"If something can happen and something can come out of those talks, that would be a great thing for all of humanity."

President Trump appears to be ratcheting up the pressure on Pakistan in a late night tweet Friday the president suggested he would be in favor of cutting all aid to Islamabad.

His administration announced Thursday it is suspending well over one billion dollars in military funding to Pakistan over the government's refusal to take more decisive action against terrorism.

Pakistan's military Friday dismissed the U.S. action as meaningless, saying it would serve only to undermine security cooperation and regional peace efforts.

Russia's Supreme Court has upheld a ruling barring opposition leader Alexei Navalny from running in the March presidential election.

The high court upheld the Central Election Commission's decision banning Navalny from running because of his conviction on criminal charges.

Navalny and his followers say those charges were politically motivated.

More on this story on voanews.com.

This is VOA news.

Thousands of pro-government supporters held rallies Saturday across Iran for the fourth consecutive day. This comes one day after Iran's foreign minister said a United Nations meeting was a "blunder" by President Trump's administration.

State television showed demonstrators in many cities wielding Iranian flags and chanting slogans against the U.S., Israel and Britain.

Saturday's rallies were staged one day after the United Nations Security Council held an emergency meeting to discuss the protests at the request of the U.S. The U.S. was criticized at the meeting for requesting the session.

And a magnitude 5.1 earthquake hit western Iran on Saturday, injuring eight people, according to early reports on state television. Two of those injured had to go to the hospital.

President Trump reiterated Saturday he will not support a law that protects 800,000 immigrants from deportation unless it includes certain measures. The president said he wants funding for a border wall between the U.S. and Mexico to eliminate the visa lottery program and extended-family-based immigration process.

"We all want DACA to happen, but we also want great security for our country. So important. We want to stop the drugs from flowing in. Very important."

DACA, or the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, expires in March.

The president rescinded DACA which allows certain immigrants to legally live and work in the U.S.

Coptic Christians in Cairo celebrated Christmas on Saturday by attending Christmas mass amid tight security.

Tens of thousands of soldiers and police were deployed across Egypt to protect minority Christians and their churches on the eve of Orthodox Christmas.

The latest deadly attack against Christians was just over a week ago when a militant opened fire outside a suburban Cairo church, killing at least nine people.

A local affiliate of the extremist Islamic State group has claimed responsibility for most attacks on Christians.

Malaysia has agreed to allow a U.S. firm to resume the search for Malaysia Airlines Flight 370. That [airline] airplane disappeared in March 2014.

Malaysian Transport Minister Liow Tiong Lai said Saturday that Ocean Infinity, a seabed exploration company, is doing the search on a "no find, no fee" basis. That means the company will not be paid if it does not find the plane.

The Boeing 777 vanished during a flight from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing with 239 people on board.

I'm Liz Parker in Washington.

That's the latest world news from VOA.