VOA NEWS

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From Washington, this is VOA news. I'm Christopher Cruise reporting.

President Trump said Tuesday his planned summit with North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un might not take place next month. He told reporters at the White House that North Korea has some decisions to make.

"North Korea has a chance to be a great country. And it can't be a great country under the circumstances that they are living right now. But North Korea has a chance really to be a great country. And I think they should seize the opportunity and we'll soon find out whether or not they want to do that."

Trump said of Kim "I think he's absolutely serious" about the planned talks.

He spoke with reporters in the Oval Office for about 35 minutes alongside South Korean President Moon Jae-in.

North Korea has said it might call off the meeting because of a demand by the United States for unilateral denuclearization.

Trump said if Kim agrees to denuclearization, "I will guarantee his safety," and "his country will be rich."

The president said Tuesday "there is no deal" yet to lift the seven-year ban on the sale of American-made components to the giant Chinese telecommunications company ZTE. He did say, however, that a settlement might come out of ongoing trade talks between representatives of the world's two biggest economies.

Trump told reporters at the White House he would support a $1.3 billion fine against the company for violating the U.S. ban on trading with Iran and North Korea.

And now briefly, a man suspected of trading wild bursts of gunfire with officers during a long standoff in the Florida Panhandle was found dead Tuesday in a gasoline-soaked apartment after an armored vehicle approached.

This is VOA news.

A large explosion Tuesday at a market in southern Kandahar province in Afghanistan killed 16 and injured 38. Afghan security forces were among those killed in the attack.

The explosion happened as a bomb disposal team was at the scene trying to defuse the explosives.

American lawmakers on Tuesday applauded heightened economic and diplomatic pressure on Venezuela after a much-criticized presidential election there, but they openly admitted that no easy solutions exist for the country's deepening crisis.

VOA Senate correspondent Michael Bowman reports from Capitol Hill.

On Monday, President Donald Trump signed an executive order restricting U.S.-Venezuelan oil transactions and making it harder for Venezuelan officials to profit from selling off the country's assets.

Democratic Senator Tim Kaine said further sanctions are appropriate but must be applied with care.

"You don't want to hurt people. The overuse of sanctions gives a dictator who's mismanaging a country the ability to say, 'You're suffering because of Uncle Sam,' whereas in reality they're suffering because Maduro has run his country into the ground."

Michael Bowman, VOA news, the Capitol.

A mass Ebola vaccination campaign is under way now in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Correspondent Lisa Schlein reports for VOA from WHO headquarters in Geneva.

More than 7,500 doses of the Ebola vaccine have been shipped to the Democratic Republic of Congo. WHO spokesman Tarik Jasarevic tells VOA he expects the campaign to accelerate and ultimately reach thousands of people.

Jasarevic says a lot of work has to be done before this complex operation can hit its stride. For example, he says transporting the vaccines and storing them in freezers in affected areas is a major challenge.

Lisa Schlein, for VOA news, Geneva.

The Ebola vaccine is not licensed, but a major trial in 2015 in Guinea showed it gave a high rate of protection against the disease.

And the U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo promised Tuesday to bring home an American hostage in Iran.

He said “the entire United States government” is working “diligently” and is utilizing “every avenue” and “mechanism.”

He said in response to a question from the Voice of America, "We are working diligently along every avenue that we can develop to get these folks to return back home, back their families."

Families of several American hostages worried that the U.S. decision to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal will make it harder to get their loved ones home safely.

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That's the latest world news from VOA.