VOA NEWS

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

President Trump has canceled his planned meeting with North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un.

"Based on the recent statement of North Korea I have decided to terminate the planned summit in Singapore on June 12."

At the White House, Trump said, "I believe this is a tremendous setback for North Korea and, indeed, a setback for the world."

Surprisingly, North Korea's reaction has been both subdued and conciliatory. In a statement, it said, "We had set in high regards President Trump's efforts to create a historic U.S.-North Korea summit. We tell the United States once more that we are open to resolving problems at any time in any way."

Republican and Democratic leaders have been given classified briefings on the investigation into Russia's involvement in the 2016 presidential campaign.

Associated Press correspondent Mike Gracia reports.

Two highly unusual briefings for Democratic and Republican lawmakers were held on Capitol Hill to address President Donald Trump's allegations that his campaign was illegally spied on by the FBI.

The second meeting came about after Democrats complained that the initial briefing was only offered to two Republican House members, Intelligence Committee Chairman Devin Nunes and Oversight and Government Reform Chairman Trey Gowdy.

After the second briefing, Representative Adam Schiff, the ranking Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, told reporters "Nothing we heard today has changed our view."

What the lawmakers were told was not divulged.

Mike Gracia, Washington.

China and Japan are reacting negatively to the news that President Trump is considering placing new tariffs of as much as 25 percent on imported automobiles.

China said Thursday abusing national security clauses undermines the multilateral trade system.

This is VOA news.

An international team of investigators says it has identified the Russian military brigade responsible for launching a missile that brought down a Malaysia Airlines passenger plane over Ukraine in 2014, killing all 298 on board.

Jennifer Hurst is an Australian Federal Police commander and a member of the team. "Pieces of debris and parts found on the crash site were visually compared with reference material, consisting of various BUK missiles available to the JIT."

Russia has repeatedly denied any involvement in the downing of the airliner.

Deadly flooding in East Africa. Correspondent Rael Ombuor reports.

Heavy rains have left hundreds of people dead and hundreds of thousands more displaced across various parts of East Africa. Kenya, Somalia and Rwanda are the worst hit. The flooding comes as the region tries to recover from a severe drought in 2017 that threatened millions of people.

The death toll from the flooding has surpassed 400, with many thousands more forced to flee their homes to escape rising waters.

Emergency appeals have been launched by the affected governments and NGOs for humanitarian assistance.

Rael Ombuor, VOA news, Nairobi.

A suicide bomber detonated an explosive vest at a park in Baghdad Thursday, killing at least seven people.

The Iraqi military says the attack happened in the predominantly Shiite Shula district.

The president of Italy, Sergio Mattarella, has asked little-known lawyer and academic Giuseppe Conte to try to form a new government.

Correspondent Sabina Castelfranco reports for VOA from Rome.

Giuseppe Conte, a law professor with no political experience, was meeting Thursday with all the groups in parliament to discuss his plans.

Conte's name was put forward by Luigi Di Maio, leader of the 5-Star Movement, which obtained the largest number of votes in the March general elections, and by Matteo Salvini, head of the second-largest party, the League. The two parties have formed a coalition that will enable their government to have a majority in both houses of parliament.

Sabina Castelfranco, for VOA news, Rome.

Former movie producer Harvey Weinstein is expected to be arrested Friday in New York as a result of a sexual misconduct investigation by police.

The driver of a New Jersey school bus that collided with a dump truck this week, killing a student and a teacher, has been charged in their deaths.

And Major League Baseball has suspended Chicago White Sox catcher Welington Castillo 80 games for a positive drug test.

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That's the latest world news from VOA.