VOA NEWS

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From Washington, this is VOA news. I'm David Byrd reporting.

U.S. President Donald Trump has confirmed a summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un will go ahead on June 12 in Singapore.

Trump met with North Korean envoy Kim Yong Chol for nearly two hours Friday. Kim gave Trump a letter from the North Korean leader, and afterwards the president told reported he thinks the summit will be the beginning of a process.

"And I told him today, 'Take your time, we can go fast, we can go slowly,' but I think they'd like to see something happen. And if we can work that out, that will be good. But the process will begin on June 12 in Singapore."

The announcement came just one week after President Trump had canceled the proposed summit.

The president said that the U.S. policy toward North Korea will remain the same, but he did not want to use the term "maximum pressure" any more because of the ongoing negotiations.

President Trump responded to criticism from the EU, Canada and Mexico over new tariffs on steel and aluminum products. The president said that the U.S. trade deficit with Europe was unfair and he wanted fair trade.

"But if you take the European Union and you see the kind of tariff they charge, and then we don't, that's called 'not fair trade.' I want fair trade. I like free trade, but I want fair trade. At a minimum, I want fair trade."

The president also said that he might prefer to end the North American Free Trade Agreement, which is under negotiation between the United States, Canada and Mexico in favor of two bilateral agreements with those two countries.

The new levies include a 25 percent tariff increase on steel and 10 percent on aluminum products.

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Some changes at the top of two European governments on Friday.

As Sabina Castelfranco reports from Rome, Italy has a new prime minister after three months of political deadlock following inconclusive elections in March.

Italy's new prime minister has been dubbed "Mr. Nobody." Fifty-three-year old law professor Giuseppe Conte took the oath of office along with his 18 ministers, five of them women.

The new government coalition consists of the anti-establishment 5-Star Movement and the right-wing League party. The two parties have a solid majority in both houses of parliament. Conte's government will now seek confidence votes there early next week in order to be fully empowered.

Sabina Castelfranco, for VOA news, Rome.

Meanwhile, in Spain Socialist leader Pedro Sanchez is taking over the premiership in that country after Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy lost a parliamentary confidence vote on Friday.

The World Health Organization has expanded its Ebola vaccination campaign in the Democratic Republic of Congo to include high risk people in three areas.

As Lisa Schlein reports, the latest WHO figures show 37 confirmed cases and 13 probable ones in the DRC.

Since the start of the Ebola vaccination campaign in May, the World Health Organization says 682 people have been vaccinated, among them nearly 500 in Mbandaka, a city of more than one million people.

The campaign recently was expanded to include Bikoro, where Ebola was first discovered on May 8 and the Iboko health zone, which is the most remote of the three areas. Those immunized include health workers, responders and other people at high risk of falling ill from the fatal disease.

WHO officials say the vaccine, which has not been formally approved, appears to be providing protection and giving rise to hope that it can help stop the spread of the Ebola virus.

Lisa Schlein, for VOA news, Geneva.

The U.S. economy added an unexpected 223,000 jobs in May while unemployment dropped to its lowest rate nearly in 20 years.

The Labor Department reports the unemployment rate dropped to 3.8 percent. The last time it was that low was 2000.

Wall Street responded positively, with all three major indices rising sharply. European stocks were also higher in Friday's trading. But Asian stocks ended the day mixed.

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