VOA NEWS

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

President Trump will get another chance to choose a Supreme Court justice.

Associated Press Washington correspondent Sagar Meghani reports.

Hours after the high court went on its summer recess, Justice Anthony Kennedy announced he will not be back in the fall. The 81-year-old says he is stepping down more than 30 years after President Regan nominated him.

Kennedy has been the swing vote in many 5-4 decisions on issues like abortion, guns and gay rights.

His departure will leave the court with four liberal justices and four conservatives, and will give President Trump a chance of cementing conservative control more than a year after he named Neil Gorsuch to fill Antonin Scalia's seat.

Sagar Meghani, Washington.

Kennedy authored major Supreme Court opinions, including a landmark 2015 ruling that legalized gay marriage in the United States.

Russian President Vladimir Putin met Wednesday with President Trump's National Security Advisor John Bolton in Moscow to arrange a meeting between Trump and Putin.

Associated Press correspondent Charles De Ledesma reports.

On meeting Bolton, Putin noted that U.S.-Russian relations are at a low point mostly due, he thinks, to U.S. political infighting.

Putin hopes Bolton's visit would make the first steps toward improving ties.

He added Russia never wanted a confrontation with the U.S., offering to discuss what can be done to "restore full-fledged relations based on equality and mutual respect."

I'm Charles De Ledesma.

The U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis has met with the Chinese defense minister. They are trying to set a positive tone despite tensions over trade and U.S. involvement in the South China Sea.

This is VOA news.

Member countries of the global chemical weapons monitoring group voted in the Hague Wednesday to give the organization expanded authority to assign blame for toxic weapons attacks.

Members of the Organization for the Prohibition for Chemical Weapons voted 84 to 24, easily exceeding the two-thirds majority needed for approval.

The proposal was presented by Britain and was supported by the United States and European Union. It was opposed by 24 countries, including Russia, Syria and their allies.

The U.S. House of Representatives on Wednesday overwhelmingly rejected a sweeping overhaul of the country's immigration policies, ignoring a last-minute appeal from President Trump to approve the legislation.

Zimbabwe's president is blaming a group loyal to former first lady Grace Mugabe for a deadly explosion at one of his campaign rallies.

Correspondent Sebastian Mhofu reports from Harare for VOA.

In a BBC interview Wednesday, President Emmerson Mnangagwa alleged that a group that sought to replace his predecessor, Robert Mugabe, with Grace Mugabe, was behind the [July] June 23 blast.

Mnangagwa came to power last November after Robert Mugabe gave in to military pressure and resigned.

"I think this is a political action by some aggrieved persons by the current democratic dispensation in the country."

Sebastian Mhofu, for VOA news, Harare.

After a week-long standoff, an aid ship carrying 234 migrants docked Wednesday in Malta after seven other European Union countries agreed to share acceptance of the refugees with the tiny island nation.

Malta, along with Italy, Ireland, France, Luxembourg, Belgium, the Netherlands and Portugal reached an agreement to split the refugees amongst them.

Absent from the agreement is Germany. Immigration has become a divisive issue in the country, where a million refugees have entered since 2014.

The ship rescued the refugees off the coast of Libya on Thursday before becoming stranded Friday in the Mediterranean Sea as negotiations over accepting the refugees stalled.

President Salva Kiir and rebel leader Riek Machar in Sudan have signed a peace agreement in Khartoum that requires a cease-fire within 72 hours. It also frees prisoners and forms a provisional government.

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That's the latest world news from VOA.