VOA NEWS

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VOA news. I'm Christopher Cruise reporting.

Interpol's General Assembly voted Wednesday to make South Korea's Kim Jong Yang its new president.

Associated Press correspondent Charles De Ledesma reports.

Kim's Interpol election win can be seen as a victory for the White House and its European partners who'd lobbied against Alexander Prokopchuk's attempt to be named the next president of the policing organization.

The longtime veteran of Russia's security services had been strongly opposed by many nations. They had expressed concern that if Prokopchuk had been elected, it would lead to further Kremlin abuses of Interpol's "red notices" system to go after political opponents and fugitive dissidents.

The international aid group, Save the Children, said Wednesday that an estimated 85,000 children under age 5 may have died of hunger and disease since the outbreak of Yemen's civil war in 2015.

The group said, "For every child killed by bombs and bullets, dozens are starving to death and it's entirely preventable."

U.N. diplomat Martin Griffiths is in Yemen to prepare for peace talks after fresh fighting erupted in the key port city of Hodeida.

Griffiths was scheduled to meet with Iran-aligned Houthi officials in the Yemeni capital, Sana'a, in an attempt to persuade them and the Saudi-backed Yemeni government to begin negotiations in Sweden by year's end.

The peace process collapsed in Switzerland in September when Houthi rebels failed to appear.

Afghanistan observed a national day of mourning on Wednesday a day after dozens of people died in a terror attack in the capital, Kabul. More than 50 people were killed, more than 80 injured, when a suicide bomber blew himself up in a banquet hall where Islamic religious scholars had gathered in the capital.

This is VOA news.

Rain is falling in California helping in the fight against wildfires.

Associated Press correspondent Rita Foley reports.

Teams have been sifting through wildfire, ash and debris searching for bodies in and around Paradise, California.

More than 80 people are known dead in the northern California wildfire, hundreds more unaccounted for.

The rain will complicate the search for the dead.

CAL FIRE says some people may never be found.

The rain may help crews still battling the fires throughout the state. But the National Weather Service says they also cause mudslides and rockslides.

The Trump administration is allowing troops stationed at the U.S.-Mexico border to engage in some law enforcement activities and, if necessary, use lethal force.

The order allows military personnel to perform activities that the secretary of defense "determines are reasonably necessary to protect border agents, including a show or use of force."

Mexico is helping the thousands of Central American migrants who have arrived in the border cities of Tijuana and Mexicali. Mexico's incoming immigration chief rejecting President Trump's claims that the migrants are seeking to invade the United States.

Cameroon's military says it has freed nine students who were kidnapped this week from a school in one of the country's restive English-speaking regions. It's the third time students have been abducted from schools in the Anglophone regions this month.

Correspondent Moki Edwin Kindzeka reports for VOA from the capital, Yaoundé.

The military killed several gunmen Wednesday in an operation that freed nine kidnapped students and their teacher. Armed men responsible for the abduction are on the run. The teacher was wounded in the rescue.

Gunmen kidnapped the students and their teacher Tuesday evening from Lords Bilingual School in Kumba, a city in Cameroon's southwest region.

The kidnapping comes three weeks after gunmen kidnapped and then released 79 students and three staff from a school in the neighboring northwest region.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Wednesday that abortion rates among American women of all ages fell to a decade low in 2015. Both opponents and supporters of abortion rights attributed in part the reason to individual states' efforts to restrict women's access to the procedure.

The CDC said that the most recent year for which data are available, 2015, showed the abortion rate was close to 12 abortions per 1,000 women aged 15 to 44.

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