VOA NEWS

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VOA news. I'm Tommy McNeil.

More than a dozen people have been killed and many injured in election-related violence in Bangladesh.

Reuters Emily Wither tells us as polls closed Sunday and the counting began, the country's election commission said it was investigating allegations of vote rigging across the country.

Deadly clashes in the Muslim majority country broke out between supporters of the ruling Awami League and its opponents alleging vote manipulation.

At least six candidates fighting against the ruling party withdrew from the contest while the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party said one of its candidates was stabbed while moving around in his constituency.

The BNP boycotted the last election in 2014, claiming it wouldn't be free and fair.

That's Reuters Emily Wither reporting.

The partial U.S. government shutdown is in its ninth day with no end in sight as U.S. President Donald Trump continues to stress the need for his proposed U.S.-Mexico border wall.

A budget standoff remains between Mr. Trump, who wants $5 billion in wall funding, and Democratic lawmakers, who back a modest increase in overall border security funding but resolutely oppose the wall.

On CBS's Face the Nation, a Democratic senator said that Mr. Trump has been unpredictable on border security.

"Mr. president wants to continue to take campaign promise that he made, which was to have Mexico pay for a wall, and say, 'No the rules have changed. Now, we're still going to build a wall but we're going to have the American taxpayer pay for it. We're going to use the American taxpayer like an A.T.M. machine.' That's not the right direction ...." :Senator Jon Tester.

But on the same program, Republican Senator Richard Shelby said it's time to end the shutdown.

"It's not a question of who wins or loses. Nobody's gonna win this kind of game. Nobody wins in a shutdown. We all lose and we kind of look silly."

Mr. Trump has declined to comment on whether he might accept less than $5 billion for the wall funding.

This is VOA news.

The Democratic Republic of Congo voted Sunday in a contentious, chaotic national election that has been repeatedly delayed and marred with glitches and allegations of rigging. While voting day, too, was marred by chaos, confusion and anger, millions of Congolese citizens voted in what may be the most important poll in the nation's independent history.

VOA's Anita Powell reports from Johannesburg.

The two top presidential contenders, ruling party candidate Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary and opposition favorite Martin Fayulu, voted in Kinshasa in the morning.

Fayulu, a former oil executive and political newcomer, is predicted to win, according to a recent political opinion poll conducted by several respected Congolese and international think tanks. However, the groups noted in their report that this result is only expected if the poll is free and fair, which many observers and critics of the regime expect it not to be. Worryingly, the report also noted that the majority of voters say they will not accept the results if the ruling coalition candidate, Shadary, wins.

Also making an appearance at the polls was longtime President Joseph Kabila, whose reluctance to organize polls when his mandate ended in 2016 led to him staying in power two years beyond his term.

That's VOA's Anita Powell reporting.

U.S.-led coalition airstrikes against Islamic State have killed over 1,000 civilians in Iraq and Syria since 2014.

In a monthly civilian casualty report, the coalition detailed confirmed deaths of more than 1,100 civilians in airstrikes conducted since the beginning of Operation Inherent Resolve. That's between the years - August 2014 and November 2018.

One hundred eighty-four reports of other unintended civilian casualties are still being evaluated.

Afghanistan's electoral authorities say next year's presidential elections will now be held on July 20, a three-month delay.

The head of the Independent Election Commission said Sunday the delay would give his institution more time to fix technical issues and overcome related challenges "to better prepare for the election."

The unity government of incumbent President Ashraf Ghani, who intends to seek a second five-year term, has welcomed that delay though it had previously insisted the polls would be held on time.

Sunday's announcement comes as IEC officials are struggling to tally votes cast in October's parliamentary elections mired in controversy then.

Venezuela's government is willing to help investigate a plot to assassinate Colombian President Iván Duque in which three Venezuelan nationals arrested in Colombia may be suspects.

The alleged assassination attempt comes amid tense relations between the two neighboring South American countries.

I'm tommy McNeil, VOA news.