VOA NEWS

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This is VOA news. I'm David Byrd.

Election day in Afghanistan was met with delays, widespread communication failures and some militant attacks.

But as Reuters Matthew Larotonda reports, some voters said democracy far outweighed the risk.

The capital was one of at least four cities hit by explosions including a polling center. All of the attacks were small scale because of a strong and very public security presence but there were multiple casualties including at least one death.

Of almost 5,000 polling centers, some 400 were also closed because they were inside Taliban territory and the election commission reported that it couldn't establish communications with about 900 centers although it gave no details to where or why. As a result, a low overall turnout is expected.

Twelve candidates are vying for the presidency in this vote but it's likely to come down to incumbent President Ashraf Ghani or his former deputy Abdullah Abdullah.

Preliminary results won't be released until at least mid-October.

Hong Kong police sprayed water cannon to disperse protesters outside the Legislative Council building Saturday.

Reuters Emer McCarthy reports.

Police fired water cannon and pepper spray at protesters in Hong Kong on Saturday night as demonstrators threw rocks and blocked a key road next to a rally near the local headquarters of China's People's Liberation Army.

Protesters also shone razors at a helicopter road ahead as the demonstrations which started as peaceful early Saturday then turned violent.

Saturday marked five years since its student-led umbrella protests which gripped Hong Kong for 79 days.

That's Emer McCarthy of Reuters reporting.

For more, be sure to visit our website voanews.com. This is VOA news.

Zimbabwe's former president, Robert Mugabe, was buried Saturday at a low-key event in his rural village. As Columbus Mavhunga reports, the site was chosen after the 95-year-old former leader's family refused to have him buried at the national shrine in Harare because he had been "ridiculed."

A Roman Catholic mass was held Saturday afternoon at the home of former Zimbabwean leader Robert Mugabe about 100 kilometers northwest of Harare before his burial. Only family members were allowed to witness the actual burial, which took place at his home just before sunset.

Mugabe died in Singapore after a long illness, which his successor, President Emmerson Mnangagwa, later said was cancer.

After his nearly 40 years in power, Mugabe was ousted by the army in 2017 and replaced by his ally of over 50 years, President Mnangagwa.

Columbus Mavhunga, for VOA news, Zvimba, Zimbabwe.

Syria says it is reserving the right to take action if the United States and Turkey don't withdraw their forces from Syria immediately.

AP's Julie Walker reports.

Addressing the U.N. General Assembly through a translator, Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Moallem says the U.S. and Turkey maintain an illegal military presence in northern Syria and must leave.

"Should they refuse, we have the right to take any and all countermeasures authorized under international law."

Syria's civil war has been going on for eight years. While most of the country has returned to government control, the oil-rich northeast is held by U.S.-backed Kurdish groups and rebel still hold part of the northwest

I'm Julie Walker.

A British-flagged oil tanker seized by Iran has been seen outside Dubai's Port Rashid.

AP's Sarah Bassett has details.

The tanker's Swedish-based owner, Stena Bulk, says the crew will disembark in Dubai for medical checks and to spend some time with their families.

Britain responded to Iran's release of the ship by accusing Tehran of trying to disrupt freedom of navigation.

The ship's seizure came after British authorities in Gibraltar seized an Iranian oil supertanker on suspicion it was breaking EU sanctions by taking oil to Syria. Gibraltar later released the tanker after Iran promised it would not go to Syria.

That ship later sat off the Syrian coast, angering Britain.

I'm Sarah Bassett.

And a U.S. judge on Friday blocked new Trump administration rules that would enable the government to keep immigrant children in detention facilities with their parents indefinitely.

The Trump administration issued the new rules with the hope of detaining immigrant children in facilities with their parents as part of a broader crackdown on asylum seekers arriving on the southwest border.

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