VOA NEWS

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This is VOA news. I'm David Byrd.

The House Judiciary Committee has begun debating articles of impeachment against President Donald Trump, with a vote in the full House expected before the Christmas recess.

Democrats have brought two main charges against Trump - abuse of power and obstruction of Congress.

Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler said Trump had left Congress no choice but to impeach him.

"If the President can first abuse his power and then stonewall all congressional requests for information, Congress cannot fulfill its duty to act as a check and balance against the Executive and the President becomes a dictator."

Ranking Republican Doug Collins said the Democrats are rushing the process and do not have a case against Trump.

"... this is as much about political expediency as anything else, and that should never be in articles of impeachment and anybody who does that is treading on very thin ice."

The panel is expected to vote on the articles within days, with a full House vote by next week. If they are approved, the charges would move to a Senate trial where a Republican majority is not likely to convict the president.

The Justice Department's inspector general spent hours testifying to the Senate Judiciary Committee Wednesday about Russian contacts with president Donald Trump's 2016 campaign.

Michael Horowitz told the panel that while the FBI had a legitimate basis to launch the investigation and was not motivated by political bias in doing so, there were major flaws in how that investigation was conducted.

Committee Chairman Republican Lindsey Graham said the system failed with lawmakers taking the law into their own hands while California Democratic Dianne Feinstein said the FBI investigation was based on facts and not on political bias.

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Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi spoke against allegations of genocide brought by Gambia in a U.N. court on Wednesday. Reuters David Doyle has details.

Since a Burmese military campaign was launched in 2017, the Rohingya testimonies of rape, murder and torture have been overwhelming. But on Wednesday, Myanmar's leader Aung San Suu Kyi rejected accusations of genocide on a case brought by Gambia at the U.N.'s International Court of Justice.

"Yet, it is of the utmost importance that the Court assess the situation obtaining on the ground in Rakhine dispassionately and accurately."

The Nobel Peace Prize laureate, once feted by the West as an icon of democracy, spoke for about 30 minutes, saying that a military-led clearance operation in Rakhine State was a legitimate counterterrorism response to Rohingya militant attacks against dozens of police stations.

Rights groups said Suu Kyii's statement contradicted evidence on the ground and witness accounts.

That's David Doyle of Reuters reporting.

*Time* magazine has selected teen climate activist Greta Thunberg as its Person of the Year. We get details from AP's Mike Hempen.

Greta Thunberg admits she was "a bit surprised" to be honored by *Time* even though she has become the figurehead of a global youth movement pushing for faster action on climate change.

Thunberg will be at home in Sweden for the holidays after attending the U.N. climate conference in Madrid, where she encouraged people to take action.

"You have to do something today because as a democratic citizen, that is your responsibility."

On its website, *Time* credits Thunberg with (quote) "sounding the alarm about humanity's predatory relationship with the only home we have."

At age 16, Thunberg has become *Time*'s youngest Person of the Year.

I'm Mike Hempen.

A powerful bomb-and-gun attack on the largest American military base in Afghanistan early Wednesday killed at least one person and wounded more than 80 others, mostly civilians.

Afghan military authorities said a suicide bomber detonated an explosives-packed vehicle in front of the gate of an unused hospital adjacent to the Bagram Airfield.

The Taliban took responsibility for the attack.

A spokesman for the NATO-led Resolute Support military mission said there were no U.S. or coalition casualties but that the facility was heavily damaged during the bombing.

Wednesday's attack came as peace negotiations between the Trump administration and the Taliban continued in Doha, Qatar, in an effort to find a political settlement to the Afghan war.

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