VOA NEWS

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This is VOA news. I'm David Byrd.

The House Judiciary Committee is poised to take another big step in the impeachment battle against President Donald Trump. AP correspondent Sagar Meghani has more.

The panel's expected to vote today on sending the impeachment articles to the full House. First, it's having a sharply partisan debate over the charges, with Democratic Eric Swalwell refuting Republican claims that the president committed no crimes.

"How about the highest crime that one who holds public office could commit, a crime against our Constitution?"

Republican Louie Gohmert says if such crimes do exist "Well then, why aren't they in this impeachment document?"

The GOP's Jim Jordan tried to delete the first charge against the president, abuse of power. "We have ???10 minute to ask," which the panel rejected after a three-hour debate.

Sagar Meghani, Washington.

Exit polls in Britain indicate that Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservative Party will win a majority of 86 seats in Britain's election, giving him the numbers in Parliament he needs to deliver Brexit on January 31.

The exit polls show Johnson's Conservatives would have 368 seats. That's enough for a comfortable outright majority in the 650-seat Parliament.

Labor was forecast to win 191 seats while the Scottish National Party will take 55 and the Liberal Democrats 13.

Full results are not expected until Friday.

If Boris Johnson's bet on a snap election pays off, he has promised to move swiftly to ratify a Brexit deal that he struck with the European Union so the United Kingdom can leave the EU on January 31. That would be ten months later than initially planned.

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The White House has reached a deal in principle with China on trade but it could be narrower than the so-called "phase-one" deal that President Donald Trump promised in October.

In the current deal, the United States would suspend tariffs expected to go into effect on Sunday on $160 billion worth of Chinese goods. Beijing has promised to buy more U.S. agricultural goods.

Trump has signed off on the deal. A White House announcement is expected before Friday.

Since July, 2018, the Trump administration has imposed import taxes on $360 billion worth of Chinese products. Beijing has retaliated [by taking on] by taxing, that is, $120 billion in U.S. exports, including soybeans and other farm products that are vital to many of President Trump's supporters in rural America.

Myanmar's leader Aung San Suu Kyi on Thursday appealed to the top U.N. court in The Hague not to supplant her country's military justice system by imposing international justice.

In closing comments at the international court in The Hague, Suu Kyi defended the Myanmar military's actions against the Rohingya minority. She requested that the genocide case be dropped.

"Steps that generate suspicions, sow doubts or create resentments between communities who have just begun to build the fragile foundation of trust could undermine reconciliation."

Prosecution lawyers say the military's actions amount to genocide and many of Suu Kyi's critics say she bears some responsibility for the continued persecution of the Muslim minority, three quarters of a million of whom have fled the country.

The Pentagon on Thursday flight-tested a missile that had been banned under a treaty the United States and Russia abandoned last summer. AP's Ed Donahue reports.

The launch was from a static launch stand at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California.

It landed in open ocean in the Pacific. The missile had been banned under a treaty the United States and Russia abandoned last summer.

The Pentagon declined to reveal the maximum rage of the missile tested.

Daryl Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association, said the Pentagon's missile project is a mistake and will unnecessarily race tensions with Russia, China and North Korea.

Ed Donahue, Washington.

Wall Street's main indexes hit record highs Thursday following the news that the United States had reached a deal in principle with China to resolve the trade war. The Dow Jones Industrials were up point seven nine percent. The S&P 500 gained point eight six percent. The NASDAQ Composite added point seven three percent.

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