VOA NEWS

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This is VOA news. I'm Jim Bertel.

Ukrainian government forces and pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine have started an all-for-all prisoner swap. This will allow all remaining prisoners of the five-year conflict to return home.

The agreement was concluded by Russian leader Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy in Paris in December.

An official in Yemen says a ballistic missile attack ripped through a military parade, killing at least six troops and three children. More than 20 people including civilians were wounded in the blast.

A fresh Taliban attack in Afghanistan has killed 17 pro-government forces even as the insurgent group is reported to be mulling over a brief cease-fire to try to seal a foreign troop withdrawal deal with the United States.

The overnight deadly insurgent attack targeted a security outpost in northeastern Takhar province.

North Korea began a closely-watched ruling meeting led by Kim Jong Un, state media reported Sunday, amid signs Pyongyang is set to announce a firmer stance toward the United States. We get more from VOA's Marissa Melton.

Kim Jong Un is widely expected in the next week to announce his plans for North Korea following the expiration of its self-imposed end-of-year deadline for the United States to offer a better proposal in stalled nuclear talks.

North Korea has boycotted nuclear talks for months and recently threatened to resume long-range missile and nuclear tests. An official said earlier this month that denuclearization is off the negotiating table.

Those threats - mostly made by lower-level officials - are widely seen as an attempt to increase pressure on the United States ahead of North Korea's deadline.

Marissa Melton, VOA news.

And from Washington, you're listening to VOA news.

British counter-terrorism police have arrested a 21-year-old man on suspicion of preparing an extremist act. AP's ??? reports.

The suspect was arrested at a residence in east London.

Police say he's being questioned on suspicion of the "commission, preparation or instigation of acts of terrorism."

The property where he was arrested is being searched by police.

The man has not been charged or identified. Police did not provide any details about the suspect's actions.

???, London.

Turkish military cargo plane landed in the Somali capital on Sunday to evacuate people badly wounded in a truck bombing in the city a day earlier. The attack killed at least 90 people including two Turkish nationals. The plane also brought emergency medical staff and supplies.

The protest in Hong Kong continued Sunday. Reuters' David Doyle reports.

More than 1,000 rallied in a rain-soaked Hong Kong on Sunday as a part of demonstrations marking the end of a tumultuous year.

In a park in the financial district, a protest timeline was laid on the ground for participants to pen their thoughts.

What started with demonstrations against a now-withdrawn extradition bill morphed into a broader pro-democracy movement, with six months of protests that have, at times, been marked by violence.

More protests are planned in the next few days, including a countdown to New Year's Day and a march on January the first that could attract a big crowd.

That's Reuters' David Doyle.

An American astronaut has set a new mark for the longest spaceflight by a female. AP's Shelley Adler has a story.

NASA officials say Christina Koch's broken the 288-day record set by former space station commander Peggy Whitson. The 40-year-old Koch, who is an electrical engineer from Montana, has been in space since March 15. She is expected to spend a total of 328 days on board the space station.

Before breaking the endurance record for a woman in space, Koch set another milestone as part of the first all-female spacewalking team in October.

I'm Shelley Adler.

Lizzo has been named the Associated Press's Entertainer of the Year. The AP's Ed Donahue has a story.

Lizzo has dominated the pop, R&B and rap charts with "Truth Hurts" and "Cuz I Love You." That's all coming six years after she released her first album and she has received praise for her live performances.

Lizzo is a leading contender in the upcoming Grammy Awards. She has eight nominations.

Outside of music, Lizzo has won over fans for promoting body positivity and denouncing fat shaming.

Lizzo was branching out with a role alongside Jennifer Lopez and Cardi B in the movie "Hustlers."

The Entertainer of the Year votes come from the AP entertainment staff.

I'm Ed Donahue.

And from Washington, I'm Jim Bertel, VOA news.