VOA NEWS

August 30, 2020

This is VOA news. Reporting by remote, I'm David Byrd.

The Trump administration has ended all election security briefings to Congress just weeks before Americans cast their ballots for president.

The top U.S. intelligence official, National Intelligence Director John Ratcliffe, told lawmakers that they would only be receiving written updates about election security to help ensure the information "is not misunderstood or politicized."

President Trump, meanwhile, said in Texas the decision was made because people on Capitol Hill got information and that information leaked.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is calling the decision "a shocking abdication" of the lawful responsibility to keep Congress informed, and "a betrayal of the public's right to know how foreign powers are trying to subvert" their "democracy."

President Donald Trump spent Saturday looking at damage from Hurricane Laura. AP correspondent Shelley Adler reports.

"I'm here to support the great people of Louisiana."

First stop for President Donald Trump was Lake Charles, Louisiana.

" ... already met some people that have been absolutely devastated, this was a tremendously powerful storm."

His visit to both Louisiana and Texas comes two days after the Category 4 storm slammed the Gulf Coast. Hundreds of thousands still remain without power or water and could be that way for weeks or months.

I'm Shelley Adler.

Norwegian cyclist Alexander Kristoff has won the opening stage of the Tour de France, which had been delayed by several weeks because of the coronavirus outbreak.

Kristoff outsprinted Danish world champion Mads Pedersen in a 156-kilometer ride around Nice.

New rules limit crowd sizes and any team that has more than two members including support staff test positive for the virus will be eliminated from the race.

For more, visit voanews.com. This is VOA news.

About a thousand people gathered in Kenosha, Wisconsin, for a rally against police violence about a week after an officer shot Jacob Blake in the back seven times, leaving the 29-year-old Black man paralyzed.

Blake's family and activists organized the rally as National Guard units stood by with orders to prevent more unrest that erupted in Kenosha earlier in the week in response to the shooting.

The 29-year-old Blake was shot in the back seven times August 23 leaving him partially paralyzed.

The incident turned the predominantly white city of 100,000 into the latest hotspot in a summer of nationwide protests against charges of police brutality and systemic racism.

The Belarus government has cracked down hard on the news media, deporting some foreign journalists reporting in the country and revoking the accreditation of many Belarusian journalists.

Two Moscow-based AP journalists covering the recent protests in Belarus were deported to Russia on Saturday. In addition, the AP's Belarusian journalists were told by the government that their press credentials had been revoked.

The Associated Press said it decries the moves as a "blatant attack on press freedom."

Meanwhile, thousands of Belarusian women marched in downtown Minsk to protest the recent elections that officials said gave President Alexander Lukashenko a sixth term.

Protests in Belarus began after the August 9th vote which demonstrators say was rigged.

Protesters are demanding that Lukashenko resign after 26 years in power.

Berlin police have ordered a protest by people opposed to Germany's pandemic restrictions to disband after participants refused to observe distancing rules. AP's Zaria Shaklee reports.

Thousands of people gathered in a show of defiance against the country's coronavirus prevention measures.

Protesters carried a wide range of grievance and banners proclaiming their opposition to vaccinations, face masks and the German government in general.

Prior to the protest, the Berlin regional government had sought to ban the protests, citing rallies earlier this month where rules intended to stop the virus from being spread weren't respected.

I'm Zaria Shaklee.

An Italian coastguard vessel came to the rescue Saturday of a rescue vessel funded by British street artist Banksy, which had sent out a distress signal with more than 200 migrants aboard.

An Italian coastguard patrol boat was launched from Lampedusa and took on board the migrants most in need of aid, many of them women and children.

Reporting by remote, I'm David Byrd, VOA news.