

VOA NEWS

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This is VOA News. I'm Alexis Strobe.

In a statement from the White House, President Joe Biden said that he will be announcing more than 500 new sanctions against Russia on Friday. VOA's Rick Pantaleo has more.

To mark Saturday's second anniversary of Russia's unprovoked and brutal attack on Ukraine, its ongoing war of conquest and for the death of Alexei Navalny, the president's statement said that "These sanctions will target individuals connected to Navalny's imprisonment as well as Russia's financial sector, defense industrial base ... and sanctions evaders across multiple continents."

The president's statement also mentioned the imposition of "new export restrictions on nearly 100 entities for providing backdoor support for Russia's war machine." The president also directed his "team to strength and support for civil society, independent media, and for those who fight for democracy around the world."

Rick Pantaleo, VOA News.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says he seeks open-ended control over Gaza after Israel's offensive in the enclave ends. AP correspondent Karen Chammas reports.

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said he's seeking open-ended control over Gaza after Israel's offensive in the enclave ends. Netanyahu presented his long-awaited post-war plan to his security cabinet for approval.

The plan was swiftly rejected by Palestinian leaders and runs counter to Washington's vision for the war-ravaged enclave.

Deep disagreements over Gaza's future have led to increasingly public friction between Israel and the United States, its closest ally. Washington seeks Palestinian governance in both Gaza and the West Bank ahead of the eventual creation of a Palestinian state.

Netanyahu and his right-wing government strongly oppose such an outcome.

I'm Karen Chammas.

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Facing backlash over the IVF ruling, Alabama lawmakers look for a fix. AP correspondent Shelley Adler reports.

Lawmakers began scrambling in the wake of a state Supreme Court ruling that frozen embryos could be considered children under state law.

GOP state Senator Tim Nelson, who is a doctor, told Station WBMA he wants a solution.

"I just have a bill that says that a fertilized egg or embryo has potential life. It's not actual life until it's placed in or adheres to the uterus."

House Minority Leader Anthony Daniels is a Democrat.

"What we're trying to do with this particular law is put the Supreme Court decision - the ruling - on pause. And then putting it on pause, we know we're trying to clearly help folks understand that a fertilized embryo is not a child."

Former President Donald Trump joined the calls for Alabama lawmakers to act Friday, saying he would "strongly support the availability of IVF."

I'm Shelley Adler.

German lawmakers have approved a government plan to liberalize rules on cannabis, paving the way for the country to decriminalize limited amounts of marijuana and allow members of, quote, "cannabis clubs" to buy it for recreational purposes.

Parliament's lower house voted on Friday to back the legislation, a prominent reform project of Chancellor Olaf Scholz's socially liberal governing coalition.

The health minister said the government's aim is to, quote, "fight the black market" and better protect young people. He said current laws in the European Union's most populous nation have failed, with consumption rising and increasing problems with contaminated or overly concentrated cannabis.

U.S. telecom giant AT&T is apologizing for a cellular outage on Thursday that knocked out service to tens of thousands of American customers. AP correspondent Jennifer King reports.

The Dallas-based company says the outage appeared to be the result of human error in coding while it was expanding its network, not a malicious cyberattack.

Outage tracker Downdetector noted that outages began at around 3:30 a.m. Eastern Time Thursday and peaked at around 73,000 reported incidents.

The outage led to some self-congratulation among Americans who maintain landline phones in their offices and households. But according to 2022 estimates from the National Center for Health Statistics, 73 percent of American adults lived in households where there were only wireless phones.

I'm Jennifer King.

The moon count in our solar system just went up by three.

Astronomers have found two previously unknown moons circling Neptune and one around Uranus. [The distance to] The distant tiny moons were spotted using powerful land-based telescopes in Hawaii and Chile, [the discovery] and it was announced Friday by the International Astronomical Union's Minor Planet Center.

The latest tally puts Neptune at 16 known moons and Uranus at 28.

Scientists say the new moon around Uranus is likely the smallest of the planet's moons. One of Neptune's new moons takes around 27 years to complete one lap around the planet.

I'm Alexis Strobe, VOA News.