

# VOA NEWS

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This is VOA News. I'm Joe Ramsey.

The man accused of masterminding the September 11 attacks, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, and two of his accomplices, held (at) the U.S. military prison in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, have agreed to plead guilty, the Pentagon said on Wednesday.

A U.S. official speaking on condition of anonymity said the plea deals almost certainly involved guilty pleas in exchange for taking the death penalty off the table.

The official said the terms of the agreement had not been publicly disclosed but acknowledged a plea for a life sentence was possible.

The United States said on Wednesday it was not involved in the assassination of a Hamas terrorist group leader in an overnight strike in Tehran, the second Iran-backed militant group leader assassinated this week. White House bureau chief Patsy Widakuswara has the story.

Ismail Haniyeh was last seen alive attending the inauguration of Iran's new President Masoud Pezeshkian on July 30. Haniyeh, the political leader of Hamas, an Iranian-backed Palestinian militant group, was killed in an airstrike the following day.

Haniyeh's killing happened a day after Israel carried out a strike in Beirut that killed Fuad Shukr, commander of Hezbollah, an Iran-backed group in Lebanon. Israel holds the group responsible for a deadly attack in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights over the weekend.

With fears of regional escalation rising, Western countries are urging restraint.

Patsy Widakuswara, VOA News, Washington.

Venezuela's President Nicolás Maduro says he has asked the country's government to align Supreme Court to conduct an audit of the presidential election after opposition leaders disputed his claim of victory, drawing swift condemnation by independent observers.

Maduro told reporters on Wednesday the ruling party is also ready to show the totality of electoral tally sheets.

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More than a thousand rescue workers searched for a second day on Wednesday through the debris from multiple landslides that have killed at least 166 people in southern India. Torrential rains triggered torrents of mud and water that swept through tea estates and villages.

A police officer says another 186 people were injured in the landslides that hit hilly areas early on Tuesday, flattening houses, uprooting trees and destroying bridges.

The efforts of the rescuers have been hampered by blocked roads and unstable terrain.

Ukraine has received its first F-16 fighter jets nearly a year after U.S. President Joe Biden authorized sending the U.S.-built warplanes to Ukraine. AP correspondent Sagar Meghani reports.

A U.S. official says Ukraine has received the first F-16 fighter jets it's been seeking for months to boost defenses against Russia. Kyiv had been urging Western allies to send the jets to help it fight off Russian missile attack.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced three weeks ago the F-16s were being transferred to Ukraine.

"Those jets will be flying in the skies of Ukraine this summer."

The U.S. has been training Ukrainian pilots on how to fly the jets, which are specialized in suppressing enemy air defenses.

It's unclear how many F-16s have arrived.

Sagar Meghani, Washington.

U.S. Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump questioned whether his Democratic rival Kamala Harris is Black during a contentious interview at the country's largest annual gathering of Black journalists on Wednesday. Reuters correspondent Freddie Joyner reports.

Trump is echoing far-right in conservative accounts on social media, which have been spreading misinformation, questioning Harris's racial identity.

"I didn't know she was Black until a number of years ago when she happened to turn Black and now she wants to be known as Black."

Harris has long self-identified as both Black and South Asian American. Her mother is Indian and her father is Black, making her the first Black and the first Asian American U.S. vice president to serve the country.

She's faced a barrage of sexist and racist attacks online since launching her White House campaign earlier this month.

Reuters correspondent Freddie Joyner.

Nigerians are planning nationwide protests this week against the country's worst cost of living crisis in a generation. Momentum is soaring on social media for the demonstrations planned for Thursday. However, authorities fear a replay of the deadly 2020 rallies against [pli...] police brutality in the West African nation or a wave of violence similar to the June protest in Kenya, where a tax hike led to chaos in the capital, Nairobi.

I'm Joe Ramsey, VOA ...