

VOA NEWS

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This is VOA News. I'm Joe Ramsey.

Palestinian health authorities said on Thursday the death toll in Gaza reached a grim milestone as a new round of cease-fire talks was underway in Qatar's capital, Doha, aimed at ending the bloody conflict and securing the release of more than 100 Israeli hostages held captive by Hamas terrorists. Reuters correspondent Zachary Goelman reports.

Gaza's Health Ministry on Thursday said the death toll from 10 months of Israel's military offensive had crossed 40,000. In a statement, the Palestinian Health Ministry said another 40 people had been killed in the past 24 hours in the war-ravaged enclave.

The fighting began when Palestinian fighters rampaged through Israeli communities on October 7, killing more than 1,200 and taking around 250 captives back to Gaza, according to Israeli tallies.

In response, Israel pledged to eradicate the Hamas Islamist group that rules Gaza, and its onslaught has reduced much of the densely populated territory to rubble and rendered most of its 2.3 million residents homeless.

Reuters correspondent Zachary Goelman.

Ukraine on Thursday claimed fresh advances in its offensive into Russia, saying it had seized over 1,100 square kilometers in the biggest attack by a foreign army on Russian soil since World War II.

Russia said it had recaptured a first village from Ukrainian forces in the Kursk border region and announced it was sending, quote, unquote, "additional forces" to the neighboring Belgorod region.

Ukraine said it now controlled dozens of settlements and Sudzha, a town eight kilometers from the border.

Sweden confirmed its first case of the viral infection mpox on Thursday, which is also the first case outside Africa, a day after the WHO declared the disease a global public health emergency for the second time in two years.

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U.S. President Joe Biden said on Thursday he would support a new election in Venezuela after Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva also floated the idea despite rebuffs from [Venezuelan's] Venezuela's ruling party and its opposition, which both claimed victory in the July 28 contest. Reuters correspondent Jillian Kitchener reports.

The U.S. has rejected the claim by Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro that he won a third term after multiple exit polls pointed to an opposition victory. Many Venezuelans also reject Maduro's claim as protests have erupted across the country for what they claim was a resounding victory.

On Thursday, Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva suggested that Maduro could call a new contest, involving international observers, as a potential solution for the political crisis in the country. But so far, Venezuela's ruling party and the opposition have ruled out Biden and Lulu's suggestions.

Reuters correspondent Jillian Kitchener.

A Peruvian gang leader suspected in nearly two dozen killings in his home country has been arrested in New York by U.S. immigration authorities. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement said on Thursday Gianfranco Torres-Navarro was arrested in southern New York state on Wednesday. He's being held at a federal detention facility pending an immigration hearing.

Torres-Navarro is the leader of "Los Killers" who is wanted for 23 killings in Peru.

Five people have been charged with causing American actor Matthew Perry's overdose death, including two doctors. Reuters correspondent Freddie Joyner reports.

Authorities say the defendants were part of a criminal network that distributed ketamine to Perry and others. Two have been arrested.

Ketamine is a short acting anesthetic with hallucinogenic properties, sometimes prescribed to treat depression.

For months, Los Angeles homicide detectives and federal agents have been investigating how Perry obtained the prescription drug. Perry had publicly acknowledged decades of drug and alcohol abuse, including during the years he starred his Chandler Bing on the hit 1990s television sitcom "Friends."

He was found floating face down in his hot tub at his Los Angeles home last October. He died of the acute effects of ketamine, according to an autopsy report.

Reuters correspondent Freddie Joyner.

U.S. investigators have issued new subpoenas to the mayor of New York as part of a corruption inquiry linked to his 2021 election campaign, *The New York Times* reported on Thursday.

The FBI and local prosecutors have been investigating whether a New York construction firm alleged to have ties to the Turkish government used fronts to donate money to Adams's mayoral election campaign that saw him take office in 2022.

I'm Joe Ramsey, V...