

VOA NEWS

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This is VOA News. I'm Joe Ramsey.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says Israel must remain in a strip of land between the Gaza Strip and the Egyptian border to prevent Hamas from rearming as the White House says Israel must withdraw at least partially from the area. Linda Gradstein reports from Jerusalem.

The Israeli army published a picture Wednesday of the opening of the tunnel in Gaza, where the bodies of six Israeli hostages were found after they had been executed by Hamas on Saturday.

The deaths of the six, including American-Israeli Hersch Goldberg-Polin, has sparked mass demonstrations in Israel by hundreds of thousands of Israelis who want Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to agree to a cease-fire deal with Hamas that would free the remaining 101 hostages.

Three of the six hostages killed by Hamas were said to have been released in the first phase of the deal, meaning they were killed days before they could have been freed.

Linda Gradstein, Jerusalem.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Wednesday Ukraine needed new energy as he ordered a major government reshuffle at a crucial juncture in the war against Russia. A total of six ministers, including Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba, submitted their resignation and parliament accepted their resignations of four.

U.N. nuclear agency chief Rafael Grossi visited the Russian-occupied Zaporizhia nuclear power plant in southeast Ukraine on Wednesday.

"We have a very fragile situation here because of the military operations."

Grossi is director of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and his team inspected one of the cooling towers of the plant that caught fire last month and Grossi said the fire was not caused by combustion at the base of the tower.

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The U.S. state of Georgia's Bureau of Investigation said on Wednesday four people were killed and nine injured at a high school outside the city of Atlanta. AP correspondent Haya Panjwani reports.

A suspect was arrested (in a chaotic scene) in which officers swarmed the campus and students rushed for shelter in the football stadium.

At a news conference, Barrow County Sheriff Jud Smith declined to give additional details about those injured in the shooting.

"We're in the process of reunifying the students with their parents. Obviously, that's chaotic. But we wanna be respectful of them and their privacy as well."

Helicopter video from WSB TV showed dozens of law enforcement and emergency officials surrounding Apalachee High School in Barrow County, northeast of Atlanta.

I'm Haya Panjwani.

A public inquiry released on Wednesday into the devastating 2017 London Grenfell Tower blaze that killed 72 people blamed the disaster on failings by the government, (the) construction industry and most of all the firms involved in fitting the exterior with flammable cladding.

The fire ripped through the 23-story social housing block in one of London's richest areas during the early hours of June 14, 2017.

It was Britain's deadliest blaze in a residential building since World War II.

A former aide to two New York governors, Linda Sun, is out on bail on Wednesday, a day after being charged with being an agent of the Chinese government. AP Correspondent Julie Walker reports.

[A suspect was arrested.]

Until last year, Sun was an aide to New York Governor Kathy Hochul.

"... the second we discovered some levels of misconduct, we fired her, we alerted the authorities ..."

That was Hochul on WNYC.

Sun had also worked for Governor Andrew Cuomo.

She's accused of blocking Taiwan government representatives from accessing New York officials, changing the governor's messaging about issues important to China and other things.

Sun's husband Chris Hu charged with laundering the millions she got, spending it on luxury cars and homes. Both pleaded not guilty.

Julie Walker, New York.

Mexico's lower house of Congress approved an overhaul of the country's judiciary early on Wednesday that would usher in a new era of election for judges in a vote cheered by the ruling party but seen as a dangerous experiment by the opposition.

The overwhelming vote of approval by lawmakers paves the way for the constitutional reform to go to the Senate, where debate is expected to begin next Wednesday while the ruling coalition is also expected to approve the proposal in the upper chamber. The vote there could be closer.

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