

# VOA NEWS

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Hi, I'm VOA's Alexis Strobe with your worldwide news update.

U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson was reelected to the chamber's top job on Friday by a razor-thin margin that highlighted potential fissures among President-elect Donald Trump's Republicans on Capitol Hill. Reuters correspondent Freddie Joyner reports.

"The Honorable Mike Johnson of the state of Louisiana, having received a majority of the votes cast, is duly elected Speaker of the House of Representatives for the 119th Congress."

Two Republican opponents switched their votes to support Johnson after lengthy negotiations.

"Today, my friends, our nation is the envy of the world. Why? Because we have been marked by a spirit and a people who are explicitly that. We are explicitly American."

It's not immediately clear what made Representatives Ralph Norman and Keith Self change their minds. Another six Republicans had initially declined to vote at all before casting ballots for Johnson.

The vote served as an early test for the Republican Party as it tries to advance President-elect Donald Trump's agenda of tax cuts and border enforcement. It also tested Trump's clout on Capitol Hill, where a handful of Republicans have shown a willingness to defy him.

Trump endorsed Johnson on Monday following weeks of uncertainty.

That was Reuters correspondent Freddie Joyner.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken will embark on what is expected to be his final overseas trip in office this weekend, traveling to South Korea, Japan and France.

In South Korea, which is in political turmoil following the impeachment of President Yoon Suk Yeol, and in Japan, Blinken intends to highlight the expansion of U.S. cooperation with both nations as part of the Biden administration's Indo-Pacific strategy.

Blinken will wrap up the trip in Paris in meetings with French officials to discuss Middle East and European security.

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The judge in Donald Trump's hush money case has set a date for sentencing. AP correspondent Lisa Dwyer reports.

In an extraordinary turn, a judge has now set President-elect Donald Trump's sentencing in his hush money case for January 10, a little over a week before he's due to return to the White House. But the judge indicated that Trump would not be jailed.

Judge Juan M. Merchan signaled in a written decision that he'd sentenced the former and future president to what's known as a conditional discharge, in which a case is closed without jail time, a fine or probation.

The development leaves Trump on course to be the first president to take office convicted of felony crimes. Trump was convicted in May of 34 counts of falsifying business records involving an alleged scheme to hide a hush money payment to porn actor Stormy Daniels in 2016.

Trump has maintained that he did nothing wrong.

I'm Lisa Dwyer.

A Finnish court on Friday denied a request for the release of an oil tanker that police suspect had damaged an undersea power line and four telecommunications cables in the Baltic Sea last week.

On December 26, Finland seized the Eagle S, a tanker carrying Russian oil, on suspicion that it damaged the Finnish-Estonian Estlink 2 power line and the communication cables the previous day by dragging its anchor across the seabed.

U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy on Friday said that alcohol consumption increases the risk of at least seven types of cancer and that alcoholic drinks should carry a warning about cancer risks on their label. Reuters correspondent Jillian Kitchener has more.

If the surgeon general's suggestions are adopted, there could be more aggressive tobacco-style regulation for alcohol in the future.

The surgeon general's advisory says that alcohol is responsible for 100,000 U.S. cancer cases and 20,000 cancer deaths each year, more than alcohol-associated car crash deaths.

The decision to update drink labels will ultimately be made by Congress.

That was Reuters correspondent Jillian Kitchener.

National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan will travel to India for a visit focusing on cooperation on strategic technology, including in defense, space and artificial intelligence.

Sullivan's visit on Sunday and Monday will include a speech at the Indian Institute of Technology in New Delhi, where he will stress that the outgoing Biden administration sees the U.S. partnership with India as central to its regional and global priorities.

India and the U.S. launched a technology initiative in 2022 outlining collaboration on semiconductor production and developing artificial intelligence. The accord was critical in sealing a deal to allow U.S.-based General Electric to partner with India's Hindustan Aeronautics to produce jet engines in India.

That wraps up this update, but the world and news never stop. For additional updates, visit our website. I'm Alexis Strobe, VOA News.