

VOA NEWS

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I'm VOA's Joe Ramsey with your worldwide news update.

A strong earthquake on Tuesday killed more than 120 people in Tibet and left many others trapped as dozens of aftershocks shook the region of western China and across the border in Nepal. AP correspondent Charles De Ledesma reports.

A video from ??? in ??? in Nepal shows water running into a street from a pond soon after the quake hit and a woman exclaiming in Nepali, "Oh my, it's still shaking and the pond water is spilling."

The U.S. Geological Survey says the earthquake measured magnitude 7.1 and was relatively shallow. China recorded the magnitude as 6.8.

The epicenter was northeast of Mount Everest, which straddles the China-Nepal border. The area where the India and Eurasia plates clash and cause uplifts in the Himalayan mountains remains seismically active.

I'm Charles De Ledesma.

U.S. President Joe Biden's administration on Tuesday asked a federal appeals court to block a plea agreement for Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and two co-defendants in the September 11, 2001 attacks. It comes days before the accused 9/11 mastermind scheduled guilty plea in an agreement that would spare him the risk of the death penalty.

The appeal comes after the military judge at Guantanamo Bay and a military appeals panel rejected Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin's effort to throw out the plea deal, saying he had no power to do so after the senior Pentagon official for Guantanamo approved it in July.

The Justice Department argued in a brief that the government would be denied a chance for a public trial and the opportunity to, quote, "seek capital punishment against three men charged with a heinous act of mass murder that caused the death of thousands of people and shocked the nation and the world."

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A New York appeals court judge on Tuesday denied President-elect Donald Trump's latest bid to delay the Friday sentencing in his hush money case. AP correspondent Julie Walker reports.

It was the second time in two days that Trump was rejected, though he can still ask other courts to intervene.

On Monday, Manhattan Judge Juan Merchan denied Trump's request to halt proceedings while he appeals the verdict. Trump's lawyers say he won't be in court for Friday's sentencing. Instead, he'll appear by video.

Julie Walker, New York.

Judge Merchan has indicated Trump's sentencing will not include jail time.

The World Health Organization on Tuesday said the risk to humans from H5N1 bird flu remains low the day after the first reported human death in the U.S. Reuters correspondent Jillian Kitchener reports.

The patient who died from the virus in Louisiana was over 65 years old and had been exposed to both backyard chickens and wild birds. That's according to health officials who said the patient also had underlying medical conditions, heightening the risk for serious disease.

"In a way the risk is pretty localized, although it does seem to be growing across the U.S."

Sarah Michaels is an assistant professor in New Orleans who studies infectious diseases. She told Reuters wild birds infected the patient's domestic birds, which then infected the patient.

Nearly 70 people in the U.S., most of whom are farm workers, have contracted bird flu since April. The virus has circulated among poultry flocks and dairy herds, according to the CDC.

Reuters correspondent Jillian Kitchener.

Meta Platforms CEO Mark Zuckerberg said on Tuesday his company will end its U.S. fact-checking program and replace it with a user-driven system similar to community notes on Elon Musk's X platform. Reuters correspondent Alex Cohen has more.

Zuckerberg also said Meta will reduce the curves on discussions around contentious topics, such as immigration and gender identity.

"We've reached a point where it's just too many mistakes and too much censorship. The recent elections also feel like a cultural tipping point towards once again prioritizing speech. So we're going to get back to our roots and focus on reducing mistakes, simplifying our policies and restoring free expression on our platforms."

The move marks a reversal in Meta's policy as Zuckerberg has long championed active content moderation, despite criticism from conservatives over alleged censorship on its platforms.

Reuters correspondent Alex Cohen.

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