

VOA NEWS

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

U.S. President Donald Trump said Thursday that he's confident Russian President Vladimir Putin will not push to restart the war in Ukraine if a truce is reached. AP correspondent Sagar Meghani reports.

In the Oval Office, "I think he'll keep his word."

The president says he's known Putin for a long time and does not believe Putin will go back on his word.

"... history must be on the side of the peacemaker, not the invader."

The president spoke alongside British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, the second European leader to visit the White House this week amid concerns on the continent about the president perhaps conceding too much to Putin in an aggressive push to end the war.

Sagar Meghani, Washington.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy visits the White House on Friday. Zelenskyy and Trump are expected to sign off on a contentious agreement that would give the U.S. access to Ukraine's critical minerals.

Egypt says negotiations between Israel and Hamas on the next phase of the Gaza cease-fire have begun in Cairo.

Egypt's State Information Service said officials from Israel, Qatar and the U.S. on Thursday started "intensive discussions" on the second phase of the cease-fire.

An Israeli official had said earlier in the day that Israel's military will not withdraw from a strategic corridor in the Gaza Strip.

The pullout was part of the cease-fire and Israel's refusal could spark a crisis with Hamas and key mediator Egypt at a sensitive moment for a fragile truce.

The Israeli official spoke hours after Hamas released the remains of four hostages in exchange for over 600 Palestinian prisoners, the last planned exchange of the cease-fire's first phase which ends this weekend.

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Top officials from the U.S. and several other member states skipped a group of 20 major economies' finance ministers meeting in South Africa this week, raising questions about the group's continued relevance. Kate Bartlett reports from Johannesburg.

The two-day meeting in Cape Town ended without a communiqué, with current G20 leader South Africa saying there was not sufficient consensus to issue one.

In his opening remarks at the event, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa referred to the fractured geopolitical climate and stressed the importance of international cooperation.

"At this time of global uncertainty and escalating tension, it is now more important than ever that the members of the G20 should work together."

But it appeared the world's largest economies were not able to find common ground on a number of issues.

The finance ministers meeting was beset with similar problems faced by last week's G20 foreign ministers meeting in Johannesburg, which laid bare the discord in current geopolitics.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent skipped the event amid a spat with host country South Africa and after the U.S. criticized the themes around climate change and solidarity, equality and sustainability.

Kate Bartlett, VOA News, Johannesburg.

President Trump said on Thursday that his proposed 25 percent tariffs on Mexican and Canadian goods will go into effect on March 4 and threaten an extra 10 percent duty on Chinese imports over what he said were drugs pouring into the U.S. from those countries. Reuters correspondent Alex Cohen has more.

Canadian and Mexican officials were due to meet with Trump administration counterparts in Washington on Thursday and Friday to try to first stall the tariffs, which could deal a serious blow to a highly integrated North American economy.

Trump's comments on the matter during his first cabinet meeting on Wednesday seem to suggest that he may push the deadline back for about one month until April 4.

Reuters correspondent Alex Cohen.

A search warrant shows that Oscar-winning actor Gene Hackman, his wife and one of their dogs had been dead for some time before being discovered. AP correspondent Donna Warder reports.

A maintenance worker entered the couple's Santa Fe, New Mexico, home Wednesday and found their bodies. They say one of their dogs, a German shepherd, was found dead in the bathroom closet, but two other dogs, one inside the home and one outside, were found alive and well.

A sheriff's detective says the couple didn't have any wounds and that there were no signs of a carbon monoxide leak or carbon monoxide poisoning.

I'm Donna Warder.

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.