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Russia Claims More Advances in Eastern Ukraine

By AFP

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Russian soldiers on the front line in Ukraine. **Alexei Konovalov / TASS**

Russia's armed forces said Wednesday it captured two more villages in eastern Ukraine, the latest gains as Moscow's troops inch closer to the strategically important city of Pokrovsk.

The Russian military has claimed a series of territorial gains in the area since the start of the year, pressing on even as Kyiv mounts its own cross-border offensive into the southwestern Kursk region of russia.

Moscow said its troops "liberated the settlements" of Hostre and Hryhorivka in the Donetsk region. Gostre is a small village located around 30 kilometers (18 miles) west of the city of Donetsk, while Hryhorivka lies close to the hilltop town of Chasiv Yar.

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Meanwhile, Russian military correspondents reported that Ukraine faces a precarious situation in Vuhledar, a former coal-mining town further south in the Donetsk region where heavy fighting is underway.

"It is highly likely that Russian forces now threaten the town from three sides," the U.K.'s defense intelligence unit said Wednesday.

However, the U.S.-based Institute for the Study of War said Tuesday that the possible "capture of Vuhledar is unlikely to afford Russian forces any particular operational edge for further offensive operations."

Ukraine's General Staff did not respond to a request for comment about the situation in the town.

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