

BBC NEWS

March 23, 2025

BBC News with Sue Montgomery.

The detained mayor of Istanbul has dismissed allegations against him as immoral and baseless in a statement released by his office as he appeared in a Turkish court.

Ekrem İmamoğlu had early been questioned over claims of corruption and abetting a terrorist group.

The deputy chairman of Turkey's largest opposition party, the CHP, has told the BBC it will stand by its decision to nominate him as its candidate in the next presidential election.

The opposition leader's arrest has led to massive protests in many cities, which President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan condemned.

"They attempted to provoke our nation over this corruption operation. They have been doing everything they can for four days to disturb the peace of the nation and polarize our people. They're trying every way to create an atmosphere of tension and chaos in our cities, especially in Istanbul."

Israel's opposition leader, Yair Lapid, has called for a general strike if Benjamin Netanyahu's government insists on sacking the internal security chief. The Supreme Court has suspended the dismissal. Charles Haviland reports.

Mr. Lapid told the crowd that if the government disobeyed the top court and dismissed the Shin Bet leader, it would become a government outside of the law. The prime minister insists Ronen Bar must go and is also moving to get rid of the attorney general.

Street demonstrators opposing such moves say they seek to preserve democracy. Some of those in Tel Aviv also called for an end to bloodshed in Gaza, urging the freeing of hostages or holding photos of Palestinian children killed by this week's Israeli airstrikes. A man in Gaza City said the latest strikes killed seven members of his family.

Lebanese state media say eight people have been killed in two waves of Israeli airstrikes against targets in the south and east of the country. Israel said it had targeted rocket launch sites and a command post of the Iranian-backed militant group Hezbollah.

The Taliban authorities in Afghanistan say the United States is lifting its bounty on three of their leaders. There's been no comment yet from Washington. ??? reports.

During the Taliban's war against the NATO-led international forces, Sirajuddin Haqqani was a dreaded figure. He coordinated and participated in several attacks, including suicide bombings. Hundreds of U.S. troops and Afghan civilians were killed.

The U.S. had declared him a global terrorist and announced a \$10 million bounty. After the Islamist group seized power in Kabul in August 2021, he became their acting interior minister.

The Trump administration has been seeking to secure the release of U.S. citizens held in Afghanistan.

World News from the BBC.

Venezuela's president, Nicolás Maduro, says his country has agreed to resume accepting flights deporting its nationals from the United States from Sunday. A senior Venezuelan official said this was to protect the migrants' human rights.

Caracas had stopped accepting them a month ago in response to President Trump's accusation that Venezuela was reneging on a deal.

Diplomatic tensions have risen since Mr. Trump deported Venezuelan migrants to a prison in El Salvador.

Ecuador says a new leak has been found in a fuel pipeline in the Amazon region. The energy ministry called it an act of sabotage.

Officials are working to contain the spill with floating barriers in the Coca River. It comes days after another spill left hundreds of thousands of people without clean drinking water. It's not clear how large the new spill in the eastern province of Napo is.

The Vatican says Pope Francis will be discharged from hospital on Sunday after five weeks of treatment. He's been suffering from a severe respiratory infection. Here's Bethany Bell.

The Gemelli Hospital in Rome said that the pope had had very serious crises during the time he was in hospital to what they call "life-threatening episodes," but that he'd never been intubated and he'd always remained alert and oriented.

Now they say he's in a stable clinical condition, but he needs to have two months at least, they say, of convalescence and with drug therapy and rest.

The Czech prime minister, Petr Fiala, said his country will do everything it can to help the American broadcaster Radio Free Europe continue fulfilling what he called its important role.

The future of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, which is based in Prague, has been thrown into doubt by the Trump administration's decision to cut its funding.

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