

BBC NEWS

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Hello, I'm Eileen McHugh with the BBC News.

Reports from Syria say the Israeli military have launched a series of strikes near the capital, Damascus, and in northern regions. It follows an attack on Friday morning close to the presidential palace in Damascus. David Bamford reports.

Syrian state media have reported explosions north of Damascus and in the countryside close to the city of Hama. Local media say there are also attacks on the Takiyah on Syria's northwest coast and in Idlib region.

These are the latest in a series of Israeli raids reportedly aimed at weakening the military capabilities of Syria's Islamist government that seized power in December.

The U.N. secretary-general earlier condemned an Israeli airstrike close to the presidential palace in Damascus at dawn on Friday. Israel says it was protecting the Druze minority who've been under attack from Sunni Islamist gunmen.

Israel has announced a new wave of demolitions in the occupied West Bank as part of its operations against Palestinian armed groups. The latest maps issued by Israeli authorities identify more than 100 buildings in Tulkarem and Nur Shams refugee camps.

The Israeli media say that the country's security cabinet has approved the call-up of tens of thousands of reservist troops to expand military operations in Gaza. The full Israeli cabinet is expected to meet on Sunday to discuss approving the plan. Here's Mike Thompson.

The Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, had warned that the military's operations in Gaza would be stepped up if hostages weren't released soon. These reports suggest that could happen soon.

Under the reported plan, several reserve brigades would be mobilized and an infantry division deployed, though it's said to stop short of a full-scale maneuver. The development is likely to further heighten concern for civilians in Gaza following Israel's two-month-long aid blockade, which the U.N. says has left the Strip on the verge of collapse.

The U.S. vice president, J.D. Vance, has accused the German authorities of rebuilding the Berlin Wall by designating the far-right AfD party as an extremist group. It's the latest intervention by the Trump administration in German affairs. Warren Bull reports.

J.D. Vance said the AfD was the most representative party in eastern Germany and that bureaucrats were trying to destroy it. He said the West had torn down the Berlin Wall together, but it had been rebuilt not by the Russians, but by the German establishment.

His comments follow those by the U.S. Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, who said giving Germany's spy agency new powers to surveil the opposition was "tyranny in disguise."

The German Foreign Office gave a blunt reply that the country had learnt from history that right-wing extremism needed to be stopped.

World News from the BBC.

A court in Tunisia has sentenced former Prime Minister Ali Larayedh to 34 years in prison on terrorism charges. Mr. Larayedh's lawyer said he was accused of forming a terrorist group and helping Tunisians travel to join Islamist fighters in Iraq and Syria. He denied the charges and said the case was politically motivated.

Mr. Larayedh was leader of the Islamist party Ennahda, which briefly governed Tunisia following a popular uprising in 2011 that launched the Arab Spring across the region.

Voters are going to the polls in Australia to choose their next government. It follows a hard-fought campaign during which living costs, climate concerns and the impact of Donald Trump's trade tariffs have featured strongly.

The incumbent, Labour Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, faces a challenge from the Liberal-National Coalition led by Peter Dutton.

Brazil's social security, Minister Carlos Lupi, has resigned nine days after police unveiled a major corruption scandal which defrauded pensioners of \$1.1 billion. Mr. Lupi denied any wrongdoing. Here's Leonardo Rocha.

The investigation found evidence that over the last decade, the Social Security Department made unauthorized deductions from the regular payments to millions of pensioners. The money was paid to several associations and unions, which share the earnings with corrupt government officials.

Police said the scheme targeted some of the poorest areas of the country where pensioners were unlikely to notice the fraud or complain.

This is the biggest corruption scandal to hit the government of President Lula da Silva since he returned to power in January, 2023.

Scientists have taken a step towards creating a universal anti-venom for snakebite with help from a man who's allowed himself to be bitten hundreds of times. Tim Friede exposed himself to escalating doses of venom from 16 deadly species.

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