

BBC NEWS

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BBC News, I'm John Shea.

Hamas says it will release an Israeli-American hostage, Edan Alexander, as part of efforts to reach a cease-fire deal in Gaza and allow humanitarian aid into the territory. President Trump said that he was grateful to those involved in the release, including the mediators Qatar and Egypt. Hugo Bachega reports from Jerusalem.

The announcement follows direct talks between Hamas and the U.S. administration in recent days in Qatar and comes ahead of a visit by President Trump to the region, which starts on Tuesday. It's not clear what the U.S. has offered in return.

Hamas said it was ready to negotiate a final deal for the end of the war in Gaza, a condition that has been repeatedly rejected by the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu.

This happens amid multiple reports suggesting growing frustration in the Trump administration with Mr. Netanyahu's position.

President Zelenskyy says he'll be waiting in Istanbul on Thursday to meet Vladimir Putin for talks on the Ukraine war after coming under pressure from Donald Trump to commit to a meeting. Mr. Zelenskyy had initially insisted on a full cease-fire before talks could take place. Here's our security correspondent Frank Gardner.

This is a bitter pill for Ukraine to swallow. One moment there was a united Western consensus demanding that Moscow sign up to a full 30-day cease-fire or face massive new sanctions, but the next, a counter-offer from Vladimir Putin, has caught the eye of President Trump and he's backed it. He's effectively ordered Ukraine's President Zelenskyy to hold direct talks with the Russians in Istanbul on Thursday. No mention of that cease-fire that Ukraine wanted, and yet Mr. Zelenskyy announced he would comply with Mr. Trump's wishes.

China and the United States say they've made progress at talks in Geneva to avert an all-out trade war. The U.S. treasury secretary, Scott Bessent, has described the discussions as "productive and constructive."

China's Vice Premier He Lifeng spoke of important progress.

"The two sides held in-depth exchanges on trade and economic issues of their respective concern. The atmosphere of the meeting was candid, in-depth and constructive. The meeting achieved substantial progress and reached important consensus."

Few other details have been given, but the two sides say they'll issue a joint statement on Monday. The discussions were the first since Washington and Beijing imposed duties of well over 100 per cent on each other's goods, prompting turmoil in financial markets and fears of a global recession.

President Trump says he'll sign an executive order on Monday aimed at sharply reducing the cost for millions of Americans of prescription drugs. He said they should pay the same as the lowest prices that apply in other countries.

The privatized system currently gives drugmakers broad pricing power. Many Americans pay ten times more for drugs than in other countries.

World News from the BBC.

Exit polls from Albania's parliamentary election indicate that the prime minister, Edi Rama, and his Socialist Party are heading for a convincing victory. They're projected to take well over half the seats in Parliament and win an unprecedented fourth term in office.

The Polish prime minister has accused the Russian intelligence services of orchestrating a massive fire that destroyed a shopping center in the capital Warsaw last year.

Donald Tusk said on social media a fire that completely destroyed the Marywilska shopping center last May was caused by arson ordered by Russian special services.

A year-long investigation into the incident concluded that the actions were organized by a specific unnamed person in Russia.

The White House is in discussions with the royal family of Qatar to possibly receive a luxury jumbo jet during President Trump's coming visit to the country for intended use as a replacement for Air Force One. The U.S. channel CBS News said the plane would be donated to Mr. Trump's presidential library at the end of his term. Jake Kwon reports from Washington.

A free plane from Qatar may be an easy decision for President Trump. He has been frustrated after American manufacturer Boeing missed a deadline by years to modernize the presidential planes.

But the exceptionally high value of the gift and the plan to allow Mr. Trump to use it as his personal jet after his term are raising serious questions of foreign influence and ethics.

Reports say the U.S. government had already decided that the move is legal because the plane would belong to the government. But Mr. Trump's critics see it as a bribe as well as a national security risk.

A parade through the Swiss city of Basel has begun a week of events that will culminate in next Saturday's grand final of the Eurovision Song Contest. Thousands of fans lined the streets to see the contestants accompanied by drummers, carnival groups and marching bands.

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