

# BBC NEWS

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BBC News with Sue Montgomery.

The Israeli-American hostage, Edan Alexander, has been reunited with his family in Israel hours after being released from 19 months of captivity by Hamas. Television pictures show him smiling as he embraces his parents and siblings at a military base. This report from Lucy Williamson.

Kidnapped as a soldier, released as an American, returned to his mother as a son. Edan Alexander, released from Hamas captivity today and handed over in private. No crowds, no live cameras, no public display.

Mr. Trump's administration has shown it will act privately without coordination with Israel when it comes to American interests.

The release of Edan Alexander is evidence of that and of a new kind of American leverage and power.

There are renewed international calls for a cease-fire in Gaza in the wake of the latest hostage release. The International Committee of the Red Cross described the humanitarian crisis as "catastrophic." A famine alert system has been raised to its highest level, more than two months after Israel began blocking all aid deliveries to Gaza. Our diplomatic correspondent Caroline Hawley reports.

Nearly half a million people, one in five of the population, now faces catastrophic hunger, according to the U.N.-backed network which monitors global food crises. There's been a significant deterioration, it says, since its last assessment in October.

The World Food Programme and the U.N. Children's Fund are both calling for urgent action. The director of WFP says families are starving while the food they need, including life-saving nutrition treatments, is sitting at the border.

The Qatar-based broadcaster, Al Jazeera, says it's resuming work in the Palestinian territories after a four-month ban was lifted. The Palestinian Authority, which governs the Israeli-occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem, had accused Al Jazeera of incitement. Al Jazeera remains banned from broadcasting from Israel.

U.S. markets have surged to their highest level in several months in response to major tariff cuts agreed by China and the United States. Early on Monday, the two sides announced an easing of a trade war that's caused global economic turmoil. Here's Theo Leggett.

For investors, there's clearly a warm sense of relief. The escalating trade war had seen both Washington and Beijing ramp up import taxes to levels that were wreaking havoc on commerce between the world's two largest economies.

The U.S. treasury secretary, Scott Bessent, said this situation was something neither side actually wanted.

The agreement reduces the tariff on most U.S. imports from China from 145 percent to 30 percent. Goods going the other way will face a levy of 10 percent rather than 125 percent.

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Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, said Moscow has still not responded to his call for Vladimir Putin to meet him for direct talks in Turkey on Thursday.

In his nightly address, he said Russian shelling and assaults on Ukraine had continued. He accused President Putin of remaining strangely silent on the proposed talks.

Dozens of white South Africans have arrived in the United States where the government is to grant them refugee status. President Trump has claimed the white farmers were escaping persecution which the South African government denies. From Washington, Nomia Iqbal.

Among those arriving were young couples, older people and families. We were told they were from rural South Africa and they worked mainly in farming. President Trump says they're being targeted by their government and having land taken away. South Africa denies this.

Processing for refugees usually takes months, even years. Human Rights Watch said thousands of people, mainly Black and Afghan refugees who meet the high threshold of fleeing persecution, have been denied refuge in the U.S. It described this move as a "cruel racial twist."

Australia's re-elected prime minister, Anthony Albanese, has been sworn in for a second term. His center-left Labor Party defied the odds in a snap election earlier this month, winning a surprise majority.

Key issues included the cost of living and a struggling health care system. But concerns about Donald Trump's erratic U.S. presidency are thought to have played an important part, with voters seeking greater certainty.

The family of Uruguay's left-wing former president, "Pepe" Mujica, says his health has worsened and is now receiving palliative care.

Mr. Mujica, who's 89, was praised for living a simple life while in office and giving away most of his salary. He retired to a simple rural property outside Montevideo at the end of his term.

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