

BBC NEWS

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Hello, I'm Jason Kay with the BBC News.

Palestinian officials in Gaza say about 200,000 people have so far returned to the north of the territory since a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas took effect earlier on Friday. Many of those returning say they've been shocked by the scale of destruction. Some residents had found absolutely flattened neighborhoods following the partial withdrawal of Israeli troops.

President Trump has expressed confidence that the ceasefire will hold. "They're all tired of fighting and this really gives the whole Middle East, this is beyond Gaza. Gaza is very important but this is beyond Gaza. This is peace in the Middle East and it is a beautiful thing. You know, it's a term that you and I have been hearing since we were very young, right? And now we have a chance of really having that."

The U.N. has said that more aid has started getting into Gaza but not yet at the scale needed.

Hamas now has less than 72 hours to release all the remaining Israeli hostages dead and alive.

President Trump has said he'll impose additional 100 percent import tariffs on Chinese goods by next month and "impose Export Controls on any and all critical software." He said this was a response to China placing new restrictions on exports of crucial rare earth minerals. David Willis reports.

Rare earth minerals are crucial to the manufacturing of everything from smartphones to electric vehicles. China dominates global production of the material.

News of a revived trade war between the world's two largest economies sent U.S. stock markets tumbling. A tit for tat trade war between the two nations earlier this year eased after Mr. Trump put off the imposition of punitive tariffs on Chinese imports until next month.

Cryptocurrencies fell sharply on the news of Mr. Trump's China tariff plans. The best known Bitcoin fell by more than 10 percent at one point but it later recovered some ground. Other cryptocurrencies such as Ethereum also registered big losses.

The French President Emmanuel Macron has reappointed Sébastien Lecornu as prime minister just four days after he resigned from the role. The president's office said that Mr. Lecornu had again been tasked with forming a new government. Hugh Schofield has more.

Sébastien Lecornu describes himself as a "soldier monk" and it's clear that only supreme loyalty to President Macron could have brought him back to what is going to be a supremely difficult mission. He needs urgently first to form a government because Monday is the deadline by which next year's budget needs to be tabled.

But conditions are harder now than they were last weekend when his first cabinet fell apart within hours. Now there's barely any pretense of unity among the center-right bloc on which President Macron has depended for support.

And outside that bloc, the other parties, a majority overall in parliament, are already gunning to bring the new government down.

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The United States Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth has said his department is establishing a new counter-narcotics Joint Task Force to operate in its southern command area of responsibility. SOUTHCOM covers most of Latin America and the Caribbean. Mr. Hegseth said that the task force would, as he put it, "crush the cartels, stop the poison and keep America safe." Ione Wells has more.

For the last couple of weeks, the U.S. has been targeting vessels in the Caribbean Sea in international waters off the coast of Venezuela, which the U.S. has repeatedly alleged are drug trafficking vessels.

The U.S. has defined itself, according to a leaked memo that we know was sent to Congress, as being in this non-international armed conflict with drug cartels, essentially a justification for enabling wartime powers, things like being able to take out armed combatants or enemy fighters, even if they aren't posing a direct violent threat.

The White House says it's begun another round of layoffs targeting federal workers as the government shutdown over the failure to reach a new spending plan continues for a tenth day.

It's unclear how many workers will be affected by Donald Trump's threat to cull the government workforce during the stalemate between Republicans and Democrats.

The former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has thanked North Korea for sending troops to help Russia in its full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Mr. Medvedev is in Pyongyang, where he's been attending celebrations marking the 80th anniversary of the founding of the ruling party.

Western officials said they believe that North Korea sent Russia 11,000 troops.

Norwegian officials, who awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, are investigating suspicions that their decision was leaked in advance to people placing bets online.

In the hours before the announcement, large amounts of money started being placed on the eventual winner, the Venezuelan opposition leader María Corina Machado. Three users won tens of thousands of dollars.

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