

BBC NEWS

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Hello, I'm Moira Alderson with the BBC news.

Ireland, Spain, the Netherlands and Slovenia say they'll boycott next year's Eurovision Song Contest in protest at Israel's participation. They announced their decision after the European Broadcasting Union decided not to hold a vote on whether Israel should be excluded over its military action in Gaza. Today's meeting in Geneva could signal a shift in how the contest is run as our music correspondent Mark Savage explains.

If you look at what the Spanish delegation said going into this meeting today, it feels like the rift is very, very deep and very wide. They said they had lost faith in the management of the Eurovision Song Contest, that today's meeting should never have been necessary in the first place. And they look at examples like Russia being kicked out of the contest after it invaded Ukraine and are asking why that hasn't happened in this case.

U.S. military commanders have briefed lawmakers on a double strike on a suspected drug boat in the Caribbean that killed 11 people. Republicans said they were satisfied with what they heard, but Democrats said they were horrified by a video showing survivors in distress being killed. This report from Peter Bowes.

During the briefing, senior members of Congress heard from U.S. Navy Admiral Frank Bradley, who said he, not the U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, had ordered the second strike on the boat. He also said he never received an order to "kill them all."

The initial attack in September left two survivors, but they died as a result of the subsequent strike. After viewing unedited video of the incident, the Democratic congressman Jim Hines said the attack on the shipwrecked sailors was one of the most troubling things he'd ever seen.

The leaders of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo have signed a peace agreement in Washington to end the long-running conflict in the DRC. President Trump hosted Paul Kagame and Felix Tshisekedi in a ceremony at the newly renamed Donald J. Trump U.S. Institute of Peace. Mr. Trump called it a great day for Africa.

The signing comes despite fighting continuing between Congolese government forces and Rwandan-backed M23 rebels.

The Irish public broadcaster RTE News says unauthorized drones were detected in the skies over Dublin on Monday night when Ukraine's president flew in. Sara Girvin reports.

Volodymyr Zelenskyy arrived in Dublin on Monday night for his first official visit to the Republic of Ireland. It's understood that drones were spotted over Irish waters around the time his plane was landing.

Senior Irish politicians were reportedly briefed on what had happened and it's understood there is no police investigation into the matter. It's not known where the drones came from, who was operating them or where they are now.

A new fly zone was in effect in Dublin at the time for Mr. Zelenskyy's visit.

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Pakistan's powerful army commander has officially taken over as the country's first chief of defense forces, consolidating control across all military branches. Field Marshal Asim Munir has seen his power increase steadily since becoming army chief three years ago.

Parliament granted him legal immunity last month. Critics see his ascendancy as a power grab.

A prominent Palestinian militia leader in Gaza who opposed Hamas has been killed. Yasser Abu Shabab was a Bedouin tribal chief who led a group operating in Israeli-controlled territory near the southern city of Rafah. Hamas had accused him of collaborating with Israel.

His tribe, which has disavowed him, said he'd been killed at the hands of the Palestinian resistance. Other sources inside Gaza said his death was the result of an internal power struggle.

Donald Trump has hired a new architect for the construction of the \$300 million White House ballroom after reported disagreements with the project's original designer. Andrew Ochieng has the details.

U.S. media say James McCrery had expressed concern about the size of the project and the ballroom overshadowing the main White House building. There have also been reports that President Trump feared Mr. McCrery's boutique firm would not be able to meet deadlines.

It is unclear whether he chose to step aside voluntarily, but now he will continue working on the project as a consultant.

In a statement, the White House seems to suggest the move was not a replacement of architects, but a transition into what it called the next stage of the development.

Scientists say a volcanic eruption around the year 1345 may have set off events that unleashed Europe's deadliest pandemic, the Black Death. Clues preserved in tree rings suggest the eruption triggered a climate shock, lowering temperatures, causing poor harvests and the threat of starvation.

To avert famine, scientists say Italian city states imported grains from around the Black Sea not realizing it contained plague-carrying fleas.

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