

BBC NEWS

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Hello, I'm Neil Nunes with the BBC News.

The latest release of files relating to the late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein contains a number of references to President Trump. An email from an investigator at the Department of Justice who inspected the flight logs of Epstein's private jet said Donald Trump had traveled many more times on it than previously had been reported. Sean Dilley is in Washington.

The eight flights he was said to be on were between 1993 and 1996, which is entirely consistent with his account that he did once know Jeffrey Epstein but their friendship broke up in the early 2000s. And as we say, it's not just a health warning and a legal note here, it is absolutely factual to say that there is no evidence that anybody named or photographed in the Epstein files so far that we're aware of has done anything wrong at all.

The United Nations Security Council is discussing the growing tensions between the U.S. and Venezuela. The session was requested by Caracas to discuss what it calls "U.S. aggression."

The U.S. has announced a blockade of oil tankers sailing to and from Venezuela and says it'll sell any oil seized.

Samuel Moncada is Venezuela's ambassador to the U.N. "This alleged naval blockade is essentially a military act aimed at laying siege to the Venezuelan nation, degrading its economic and military apparatus, weakening its social and political cohesion, and causing internal chaos to facilitate aggression by external forces."

The U.S. State Department says it'll deny visas to five people, including a former top European Union official, for what it calls the censorship of Americans. The U.S. says Thierry Breton, the former EU Commissioner for Digital Affairs, is the architect of the bloc's Digital Services Act, which regulates social media platforms. American conservatives argue the legislation is used to suppress free speech, which Brussels denies.

The Libyan army's chief of staff has been killed in a plane crash in Turkey. General Mohammed Ali Ahmed Al-Haddad had been visiting Ankara for talks to strengthen cooperation. Details from Sebastian Usher.

There was a tweet from the Turkish interior minister saying that radio contact had been lost with this business jet which was carrying the Libyan chief of staff, Mohammed Ali Ahmed Al-Haddad, and several other officials that had left Ankara. And he said that about 40 minutes after it had left, on the way back to Tripoli, the Libyan capital, it had requested an emergency landing, but then there was radio silence after that. Some time after that there wasn't any direct confirmation of what had happened, but then the interior minister, Turkish interior minister again, said that wreckage of the flight had been found about 70 kilometers from Ankara.

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The head of Tunisia's most powerful union, which is also one of the last bastion of opposition in the country, has submitted his resignation. Nouredine Taboubi had led the one million-member UGTT during its increasing showdown with Tunisia's president Kais Saied, who has ruled by decree since taking over full executive power four years ago.

Mr. Nur ad-Din's resignation comes just a month before a nationwide strike is planned to protest against Mr. Saied's clampdown on dissent.

Brazil's Supreme Court has permitted the former president, Jair Bolsonaro, to leave prison to undergo a hernia operation on Christmas Day. Mr. Bolsonaro will go for tests on Wednesday before having a surgery at a private clinic. He is having a 27-year sentence for plotting a coup after losing the presidential election three years ago.

Pope Leo has said he feels much sadness that Russia did not agree to a Christmas ceasefire in its war with Ukraine. Speaking to journalists outside his country residence, he appealed for people to be "of good will" to respect Christmas Day at a minimum as a day of peace across the world.

"Truly, one of the things that causes me great sadness is the fact that apparently Russia has rejected the request for a truce. Once again, I make this request to all people of good will, to observe, at least on the feast of the birth of the Savior, a day of peace. Perhaps they will listen to us, and may there be 24 hours of peace throughout the world."

The American homemaking and lifestyle expert Martha Stewart has become a minority owner of the Welsh football club Swansea City. The 84-year-old TV host and author joins her close friend, the rapper Snoop Dogg, and Croatia midfielder Luka Modrić, as high-profile investors in the team, which is currently 19th in the English second tier.

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