

BBC NEWS

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

Zohran Mamdani has been inaugurated as the new Democratic mayor of New York City. The public ceremony was held on the steps of City Hall. In his address, Mr. Mamdani, who is the city's first Muslim and South Asian mayor, promised to unite people and restore trust. Pratiksha Ghildial has this report.

In a speech nodding to the city's diverse communities, Mr. Mamdani promised to be a mayor for all New Yorkers even those who did not vote for him. Mr. Mamdani catapulted to the top of New York politics through a campaign focused on affordability, including free public services like buses and childcare.

Experts say his plan will require billions of dollars in public funds and it's far from clear where the state lawmakers will cooperate.

Washington has aired China to cease its pressure on Taiwan after Beijing carried out two days of large-scale military maneuvers around the island aimed at practicing a blockade. The State Department said the exercises had increased tensions in the region unnecessarily.

A vigil has been held in the Swiss ski resort of Crans-Montana after dozens of people were killed in a fire at a bar while celebrating New Year. The Swiss authorities say about 40 people are known to have died and at least 115 were injured. Sarah Rainsford has more details.

As the fire took hold, at first the music didn't stop. Then there was panic. The flames tore through the bar in moments. Those who made it out then watched in horror. Now dozens are dead and dozens more critically injured. Even Swiss officials say they're shaken by the scale of this tragedy.

Initially, there were reports of explosions, but police are now sure this was an accident, not an attack. The investigation, the forensics work, has only just begun, though.

Colombia's armed forces say they have neutralized the main leader of the Tren de Aragua criminal gang. Mosquera Serrano, also known as Giovanni Vicente and the old man, is accused of directing the gang's global drug trafficking and financial operations. More from our global affairs reporter Mimi Swaby.

Tren de Aragua was originally formed in 2014 in a Venezuelan prison and has since branched out and become a multinational criminal organization. And it really has strong roots now across Latin America as well as the U.S., with some gang members recently being captured as well in Spain.

Now the Trump administration is increasing its pressure on the gang. It is designated as a foreign terrorist organization and Donald Trump says it's enabling a huge amount of drugs into the country and is the cause of serious violent crime.

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The Ukrainian military has said that it only strikes military and other legitimate Russian targets. The statement came in response to an accusation by Moscow that Ukrainian forces carried out a drone attack that killed at least 24 people in Russian-occupied Kherson in southern Ukraine.

The Democratic Republic of Congo says more than 1,500 civilians were killed during a fresh offensive by Rwandan-backed M23 rebels in South Kivu province last month. The government said the figure was a provisional toll from an operation launched by the M23 days after the DRC and Rwanda signed a peace deal. Richard Kagoe has this report.

The Congolese government says M23 fighters used bombs and the so-called kamikaze drones during the latest offensive in the east of the country. Kinshasa also accuses Rwanda of deploying its forces in South Kivu, allegedly to advance further along the strategic Kalima axis in the southeastern mining province of Tanganyika.

The M23 has now withdrawn from the key city of Uvira, which it seized in December, forcing tens of thousands of civilians to flee into neighboring Burundi. But there are reports that some M23 officers remained in Uvira.

The authorities in Gambia say that at least seven people have died and many more are feared missing after a boat carrying up to 200 people capsized off the coast. More than 90 of those on board have been rescued, with many seriously injured. The route is regularly taken by West Africans trying to reach Spain via the Canary Islands.

The former Brazilian president, Jair Bolsonaro, has been discharged from hospital and returned to prison to resume a 27-year sentence for plotting a coup. Mr. Bolsonaro had been recovering from surgery for a hernia and several procedures to treat recurring hiccups.

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