

BBC NEWS

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BBC News with Fiona MacDonald.

There have been several explosions across Iran, with the authorities saying at least six people have been killed. They're blaming gas leaks but the blasts have caused widespread anxiety amid fears over a possible military intervention in Iran by the United States. Iran's top security official has said progress has been made towards negotiations with the U.S. Here's Joe Inwood.

I think it's fair to say the Iranians do not want any military action to take place. Obviously they would be the ones who would be on the receiving end of it and I think they obviously are trying to pull diplomatic levers to stop this happening.

We've got the Qatari foreign minister has just arrived in Tehran and they have been engaging in various talks.

As for Donald Trump it's very difficult to know what he's gonna do. He is very unpredictable and certainly Donald Trump has form in saying we're engaged in negotiations and then taking military action. In fact that's what he did to Iran early last year.

The Pakistani military says it's killed more than 90 ethnic Baluchi rebels who launched coordinated attacks across the southwestern Baluchistan province. It said 15 troops and 18 civilians were killed. Anbarasan Ethirajan reports.

The escalation is one of the deadliest days of violence in the province where the government has been battling an ethnic insurgency for decades. Militants armed with the grenades and guns attacked 12 cities and towns targeting police and paramilitary installations, a prison and government buildings.

Analysts say such coordinated attacks by the Baluchi insurgents are rare and staggering and they came a day after the military said it had killed dozens of rebels.

The banned Baluchistan Liberation Army said it carried out the attacks inflicting dozens of casualties among security forces.

Qatar and Egypt have strongly condemned what they called Israel's "repeated violations of the ceasefire" in Gaza after Israeli airstrikes killed more than 30 people. Israel says it struck commanders and infrastructure of Hamas and Islamic Jihad who'd violated the ceasefire.

Power supplies have been restored across Ukraine after much of the country was hit by blackouts on Saturday leaving millions of people without heating and water in freezing conditions. President Zelenskyy blamed the buildup of ice on power lines. Sarah Rainsford reports.

The government calls it a "technical fault," not a cyber attack or a new Russian airstrike on the power grid. Moscow says those are on pause now.

But weeks of its attacks so far have worn down the system here to breaking point and this weekend it'll be minus 20 or lower in Ukraine's capital. Engineers are racing to repair the latest damage, critical infrastructure like hospitals and transport first and then the houses.

But this was a giant shutdown and tonight when it is bitterly cold more than three and a half thousand tower blocks in Kyiv still have no heating.

World news from the BBC.

The British Prime Minister Keir Starmer has suggested that Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor should testify before the U.S. Congress about his links to Jeffrey Epstein. Pictures appearing to show the former prince kneeling over an unidentified woman are among the U.S. Justice Department's latest release of documents related to the late sex offender. Mr. Mountbatten-Windsor has always denied any involvement in Epstein's crimes.

In the United States, a Minnesota judge has rejected a lawsuit by state officials demanding a halt to the Trump administration's immigration enforcement operation in the city of Minneapolis. There have been large protests there after agents shot dead two U.S. citizens. Peter Bowes is in Washington.

The judge said that a previous federal appeals court judgement overturning a similar request for an injunction but on a much more scale. Essentially she said that that had set a legal precedent, and she said that if that injunction went too far, then the one at issue here halting the entire operation certainly would.

So in effect saying that her hands were tied by the likelihood that if she had okayed this that it would have been overturned by an appeals court.

The Venezuelan Foreign Minister Yván Gil says he's held a meeting with the new American envoy to his country less than a month after the capture of Nicolás Maduro by U.S. Special Forces. Laura Dogu arrived in Caracas on Saturday to reopen the embassy after seven years.

Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni has joked she does not look like an angel after a recently restored church fresco in Rome drew widespread attention. Some Italian media have been asking whether she served as inspiration for a cherub in a chapel in the San Lorenzo in Lucina Basilica.

The Italian restorer who worked on the cherub denied he sought to immortalize Ms. Meloni.

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