

# BBC NEWS

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BBC News with Danielle Jalowiecka.

The transport ministry in Italy says saboteurs have damaged rail infrastructure as thousands gathered on the first full day of the Milan-Cortina Winter Olympics. Police reported three separate incidents of damage to railway lines, triggering long delays. Here's Joe Inwood with more details.

A small cabin set alight, electric cables severed in Bologna and a rudimentary explosive found nearby. All three incidents were discovered by the Italian authorities within a few hours of each other this morning. Italy's transport minister called them "serious sabotage," most likely designed to disrupt the first full day of the Winter Olympics.

Matteo Salvini compared them to similar attempts to sabotage the French rail network as Paris hosted the Summer Games.

On Thursday, Italian authorities say they foiled a number of cyber attacks, which they blamed on Russia.

Russia is banned from the Games because of its war on Ukraine.

At the Games themselves, five gold medals were won on Saturday. They included a first gold for the host Italy. Francesca Lollobrigida delighted the home crowd with victory in the women's 3,000m speed skating.

In the day's final event, Japan's Kira Kimura won the men's snowboard big air jumping contest. There were also golds for Sweden, Switzerland and Norway.

Voting is underway in a snap parliamentary election in Japan. The prime minister, Sanae Takaichi, called an early vote to capitalize on her current high approval rating. She became Japan's first female prime minister in October. Will Leonardo reports from Tokyo.

Voters are heading to polling stations across Japan amid substantial snowfall, including rarely in the capital, Tokyo.

Sanae Takaichi has called the snap winter election to cement her power in Japan's lower house, where a coalition led by her scandal-battered Liberal Democratic Party has a razor-thin majority.

The arch-conservative has high approval ratings, helped by her personal style of politics, promised to help counter the cost of living and hardline on immigration and China. If opinion polls are correct, she could be on course for a landslide victory today.

The chief executive of The Washington Post, Will Lewis, is stepping down days after overseeing mass layoffs. On Wednesday, the newspaper announced it was cutting a third of its workforce, dramatically scaling back its coverage of sport and foreign news. Rory Gallimore reports.

The Washington Post's official slogan is "Democracy Dies in Darkness." Many of its staff say these sweeping cuts made a mockery of that motto. Much of their anger has been directed towards the paper's billionaire owner, Jeff Bezos, and the man he appointed as its publisher two years ago, Will Lewis.

The Post's leadership said the cuts were painful, but insisted they would bring stability and help reinvent its business model. Mr. Lewis reportedly angered staff even further by not joining the video call announcing the job losses.

In an email to colleagues, he said it was the right time to go. He's been replaced by the paper's chief financial officer.

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A veteran French politician and former minister, Jack Lang, has resigned as head of the prestigious Arab World Institute in Paris over his links to the late American sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. His resignation comes a day after French prosecutors opened an investigation into his and his daughter's financial links with Epstein. Mr. Lang said the accusations against him were "baseless."

Haiti's Transitional Council set up nearly two years ago to try to restore order has handed power to the Prime Minister Alix Didier Fils-Aimé after failing to rein in rampant gang violence. The impoverished nation has been beset by acute food insecurity and a political vacuum for the last five years. David Bamford reports.

The handover ceremony took place at the Ville des Cayes in Port-au-Prince amid tight security under the multinational force sent to Haiti. Armed groups control most of the capital and central regions with more than 6,000 people killed last year alone.

The United States has thrown its support behind Mr. Fils-Aimé. He faces the daunting task of organizing elections in chaotic conditions and with a bitterly divided political establishment. A tentative electoral calendar sets the first round for August and a run-off in December, but few believe those dates will hold.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said the United States wants a peace deal between his country and Russia by June following peace talks in Abu Dhabi earlier this week. But Mr. Zelenskyy has condemned the latest Russian bombing of Ukraine's energy infrastructure.

State media in North Korea say a ruling party congress will take place later this month, the first for five years. Analysts say it may revive the title of president for the current leader Kim Jong Un. The only North Korean head of state to be called president was the founding leader Kim Il Sung.

And that's the latest BBC World News.