

# BBC NEWS

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BBC News with Danielle Jalowiecka.

Ghislaine Maxwell, the convicted accomplice of Jeffrey Epstein, has refused to answer questions before members of the U.S. Congress in Washington. Her lawyers used the closed-door hearing to state there was no wrongdoing by Donald Trump or former President Bill Clinton, who were both named in the recently released Epstein files. Our chief North America correspondent Gary O'Donohue is in Washington.

By pleading "the Fifth," a constitutional right to remain silent, Congress has been deprived of the chance to quiz her on what she knows, and they're furious.

In a statement, Maxwell's lawyers said she was remaining silent because of continuing legal proceedings, but there was one pathway for her to speak openly. Ms. Maxwell is prepared to speak fully and honestly, if granted clemency by President Trump.

Only she can provide the complete account. Some may not like what they hear, but the truth matters.

The British Prime Minister Keir Starmer has told his Labour MPs that he will not resign despite calls from the party's Scottish leader. Concern has grown within Labour over his judgement after appointing Peter Mandelson as Britain's ambassador to Washington in 2024. Lord Mandelson was known to have been a friend of Epstein.

After the meeting, Labour's deputy leader Lucy Powell said there was a lot of support for the prime minister. "This is someone who has spent their lives working to give voice to victims and those who haven't had voice to take on, those predators and those involved in these kind of actions and that is part of what his public service has always been about. So he did get a huge amount of support tonight from the parliamentary Labour Party."

A trial has begun in the United States that could see social media firms held responsible for the harm suffered by children who use their platforms. A California woman says addictive features on Instagram and YouTube led to her addiction from an early age, blaming parent firms Meta and Google for fueling her depression and suicidal thoughts.

Ellen Ruhm from the U.K. lost her 14-year-old son after he died while attempting an online challenge on social media. She wants platforms to fix their features. "It's the first trial of its kind. You know, if we can start proving that social media companies are responsible for their faulty product and their addictive algorithms, then we can start forcing social media companies to change. They're not choosing to change on their own will, so they need to be forced. They need to fix their product."

The tech companies dispute claims that their products deliberately harm children.

The United States says its troops have boarded a Venezuelan-linked oil tanker after tracking it thousands of kilometers from the Caribbean to the Indian Ocean. American officials accused the ship of operating in defiance of a U.S. blockade of sanctioned vessels. Video posted on social media showed soldiers dropping onto the ship's deck from a helicopter.

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The American news presenter Savannah Guthrie has made another appeal for information about her 84-year-old mother who disappeared from her home in Arizona nine days ago. Law enforcement officials believe Nancy Guthrie was kidnapped, but no suspects have been named. Our North America correspondent David Willis reports.

The video posted to social media just a few hours before the ransom deadline shows Savannah Guthrie looking tired and gaunt. Detectives have yet to identify a suspect in this case, and in the video, Ms. Guthrie calls her mother's disappearance a "nightmare" and pleads with people here in Tucson and beyond to report anything they see that might lead to her safe return.

The video makes no mention of a ransom demand received last week, which is reported to amount to \$6 million in bitcoin.

A Canadian mining company says some of its workers who were abducted in Mexico last month have been found dead. Vizsla Silver did not reveal exactly how many of the 10 missing employees had died in Sinaloa state. Four people have been arrested.

Kidnappings by armed groups are common in Mexico, but it's rare for international companies to be targeted.

Pakistan's cricket game against India in the men's T20 World Cup will go ahead on Sunday after the Pakistani government ended its boycott. The match will take place in Sri Lanka, which is co-hosting the tournament with India.

The original decision to call off the game had been made in solidarity with Bangladesh, which had a request to move their matches from India rejected.

In Monday's action at the Winter Olympics, the Japanese snowboarder Kokomo Murase took gold in the women's big air competition. The Dutch athlete Jutta Leerdam won the women's 1000m speed skating, and the Swiss

downhiller Franjo von Allmen got his second gold at the Games, winning the men's combined skiing with his slalom partner Tanguy Nef.

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