

BBC NEWS

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World news from the BBC.

Iran's foreign minister says Tehran has not asked for a ceasefire with the United States and Israel. Abbas Araghchi told CBS News his country was ready to defend itself for as long as it takes and denied seeking talks with the Americans. Donald Trump had previously claimed the Iranians wanted to make a deal, but the terms weren't good enough. With the war entering its 17th day, Iranian forces have kept up their retaliatory attacks on U.S. allies across the Middle East. Here's our diplomatic correspondent Paul Adams.

It still has the ability to fire both ballistic missiles and drones at Israel and at targets in the Gulf. Not in the numbers that it was at the beginning, and there's definitely been a very significant drop in the numbers, but in some ways Iran doesn't need a great deal to keep this sort of state of uncertainty going. This is a classic case of asymmetric war where you make the little that you have go a very long way and have a maximum impact.

The health ministry in Lebanon has said that Israeli attacks have killed at least 850 people in two weeks of war between Israel and the Iranian-backed group Hezbollah. It said more than 100 children were among the dead.

Meanwhile, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon said its peacekeepers had been fired on three times on Sunday while conducting patrols in southern Lebanon. It added that no peacekeepers were injured.

The Ugandan opposition leader Bobi Wine has confirmed to the BBC that he and his family have left the country after spending nearly two months in hiding. He said it was clear that what he called the regime wanted to eliminate him. Bobi Wine had disputed January's presidential election, won by the long-time leader Yoiri Museveni.

He had this message for the president. "We are not his enemies, we are just children of the circumstances that he created. We just want to be in a better country, in a free country. We just want to see what he promised us in our lifetime."

Initial results in the first round of France's local elections show the incumbent socialists ahead in Paris, but success for the far-right and far-left elsewhere. More detail from our correspondent in Paris, Hugh Schofield.

In Marseilles, after the first round, the current left-wing mayor is only a whisker ahead of the far-right National Rally candidate. In Nice, an ally of the National Rally enjoys a strong lead over the Macron-supported incumbent.

These are good results for the National Rally, which tends to perform badly at local elections. But the far-left has also put in a strong showing, running neck and neck, with the result of socialists in their traditional bastion of Lille in the north.

In Paris, the left-wing continuity candidate Emmanuel Grégoire has done well, with 37.5 percent against 25 percent for the right-wing challenger, former minister Rachida Dati.

Our correspondent in Paris, Hugh Schofield, reporting.

This is David Harper in London with the latest world news from the BBC.

The U.N.'s World Food Programme says it has begun delivering urgently needed food aid to thousands of families in Afghanistan, displaced in recent weeks by the conflict with neighboring Pakistan. The humanitarian agency also warned that further instability in the region risked pushing millions into hunger.

The latest cross-bordered military clashes erupted last month, with officials in Islamabad accusing Afghanistan of harboring militant groups that carry out attacks in Pakistan, something the Taliban denies.

The Winter Paralympic Games have come to a close in northern Italy, with the extinguishing of the Paralympic Cauldrons during a glittering closing ceremony. Thousands of athletes, fans and dignitaries gathered in the mountain resort of Cortina for the event, which included the formal handover to the next host, the nearby French Alps.

The final medal table saw China finish top, the U.S.A. second and Russia third, following the controversial decision to allow Russian athletes to once again compete under their national flag.

The 98th Academy Awards are underway in Hollywood, with many of the film world's biggest names in attendance. Our North America correspondent David Willis is watching the ceremony in Los Angeles.

Hosting the ceremony for the second year in a row, the comedian Conan O'Brien opened with a parody of the film "Weapons," whose star, 75-year-old Amy Madigan, was called to the stage to collect the first award of the night for Best Supporting Actress.

The award for Best Animated Feature has gone to the Netflix film "K-Pop Demon Hunters," the Best Animated Short Award to the stop motion film "The Girl Who Cried Pearls."

There have been celebrations in Mexico after thousands of people set a new Guinness World Record on Sunday for the world's largest football lesson. The 40-minute session in the capital of Mexico City's famous Zócalo

square saw 9,500 people put through a series of drills and exercises by coaches that included former professional players. The feat was organized as part of the lead-up to this year's Men's Football World Cup.

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