

# BBC NEWS

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BBC News with Moira Alderson.

Qatar's state-owned petroleum company has said an Iranian ballistic missile attack on its main gas complex at Ras Laffan has caused extensive damage. Qatar was one of several Gulf states attacked by Iran after its largest gas field, South Pars, was hit in an attack reportedly by Israel, sending the price of oil surging. Michelle Fleury is in New York.

We've seen oil topping \$107 a barrel for Brent crude. American oil is closer to around \$97 a barrel. You're seeing this sharp jump because the situation appears to be worsening with this kind of new shift to kind of economic targets like production that escalates things. This I think was the fear that you would start to see the conflict kind of radiate out into a kind of broader economic war.

Top intelligence officials in the United States have told a Senate committee that Iran's leadership has been weakened during nearly three weeks of war but remains largely intact. The director of national intelligence, Tulsi Gabbard, was pressed over apparently contradictory assessments from the administration about whether or not Iran had posed an imminent threat to the U.S. She said that judgement was the pejorative of President Trump.

In Turkey, thousands of demonstrators gathered outside Istanbul City Hall on Wednesday night to mark one year since the arrest of the city's mayor, Ekrem İmamoğlu, a key rival of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Tom Bailey reports.

Supporters waving opposition banners and Turkish flags gathered in their thousands, chanting messages of support for the detained mayor amid a large police presence. Mr. İmamoğlu, who had been widely viewed as a serious challenger to President Erdoğan in the country's next presidential election, is currently on trial facing numerous charges including corruption. He denies them all. His arrest triggered Turkey's largest street protests in more than a decade.

Israel says it's destroyed two bridges crossing the Litani River in Lebanon, which it says were being used by Hezbollah to transport fighters and weapons. Wyre Davies is in the capital Beirut, where populated areas have been bombed.

Just four blocks from our city center hotel, this was the five o'clock wake up call. Israel is no longer just targeting those areas of Beirut regarded as Hezbollah strongholds, now going after its infrastructure and financial institutions. But the building it demolished this morning was also home to civilians. Few here want another

conflict. And those Israelis trying to damage remain defiant, with Hezbollah supporters raising flags atop the rubble of the destroyed building.

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The Venezuelan interim president, Delcy Rodríguez, has announced the sacking of her defense minister, Vladimir Padrino López. He was a close ally of ousted leader Nicolás Maduro and led the military for almost a decade.

Ms. Rodríguez, who's backed by the Trump administration, thanked Mr. López for his dedication, loyalty and defense of his country.

The Mexican authorities say the leader of Ecuador's Los Lobos criminal group has been arrested at Mexico City International Airport. The security minister said the suspect, known by the alias "Lobo Menor," was linked to drug trafficking, extortion and homicide. Ecuador's interior minister identified him as Angel Esteban Aguilar.

In the United States, annual celebrations that have been held to mark the birthday of the late labor leader Cesar Chavez are being cancelled after allegations that he raped and sexually assaulted girls and women. Chavez was a popular Mexican-American labor rights campaigner. The BBC's Regan Morris reports from Los Angeles.

Cesar Chavez is accused of raping and sexually assaulting girls and women in the 1960s and 1970s during the peak of his power. One woman says he began molesting her when she was just 13.

Dolores Huerta, who co-founded the United Farm Workers union with Chavez, says he raped her 60 years ago, but that she kept quiet, believing the truth would hurt the farm workers movement, which she'd spent her life fighting for.

Chavez died in 1993, but his March 31 birthday is celebrated across the U.S., especially on the West Coast where schools and streets are named in his honor.

An Iranian engineer who'd once been accused of being a water terrorist and a spy by the government in Tehran has been awarded the prestigious Stockholm Water Prize. Professor Kaveh Madani moved back to Iran in 2017 to become the country's key environmental diplomat, but was then accused of spying for the West and was forced into exile.

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