

BBC NEWS

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BBC News with Neil Nunes.

President Trump has said Iran better not be charging fees for ships to pass the Strait of Hormuz as a shaky ceasefire continues ahead of planned peace talks in Pakistan this weekend. In a series of posts, Mr. Trump also denied declaring a premature victory in Iran, saying oil would soon "start flowing with or without the help of Tehran." Earlier, Iran's supreme leader said management of the strait was entering a new phase. Caroline Hawley has more.

Before Israel and the U.S. launched their war on Iran, 130 to 140 ships would pass through the Strait of Hormuz every day. Now it's become for Tehran both a weapon and a source of leverage.

The country's deputy foreign minister, Saeed Khatibzadeh, says tankers and ships need to coordinate with its military. Opening up the shipping lanes was supposed to have been part of the ceasefire, but only a trickle of vessels has passed through the strait since then.

Fresh Israeli attacks have been reported across Lebanon despite international pleas for the ceasefire to cover the embattled country. The strikes follow the killing of more than 300 people by Israeli forces on Wednesday, which drew strong condemnation. Hours earlier, Benjamin Netanyahu called for direct negotiations with Lebanon's government over its conflict with Hezbollah. Hugo Bachega is in Beirut.

The Israelis are saying they're going to start these talks. We still don't know how this process is going to unfold, but the Lebanese are saying that there will be no talks without a ceasefire first. We still don't know how Hezbollah is going to react and also how people in Lebanon are going to react because a lot of people here in Lebanon are against the idea of having relations with Israel, which is another complication in the situation here. There have been reports suggesting that meetings could happen in Washington next week.

The head of the International Monetary Fund says she lowered global growth forecasts because of the war in the Middle East. Kristalina Georgieva said that spiraling energy costs, infrastructure damage and a loss of market confidence were hurting economic health.

Survivors of the late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein have criticized comments by the U.S. First Lady Melania Trump about the disgraced financier. They accused the first lady of shifting responsibility onto survivors under politicized conditions that protect those in power.

It comes after [Miss] Mrs. Trump made a rare public statement denying she had a relationship with Epstein. "I'm not a witness or a name witness in connection with any of Epstein's crimes. My name has never appeared in court documents, depositions, victim statements or FBI interviews surrounding the Epstein matter. I have never had any knowledge of Epstein abuse of his victims."

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Russia and Ukraine say they'll observe a brief ceasefire to coincide with the Orthodox Easter holiday this weekend. President Putin said he had ordered troops to observe a 32-hour pause in fighting from Saturday afternoon. President Zelenskyy responded by saying Ukraine had proposed the ceasefire and would act accordingly. Until now, Russia had rebuffed Ukraine's requests for a ceasefire over the religious holidays.

Ireland has called in its army to help remove vehicles blocking roads and motorways as part of fuel protests taking place across the country. Travel has been disrupted for three days by slow-moving convoys protesting against high fuel prices caused by the U.S. and Israeli war against Iran. Sara Girvin has more.

The Irish Justice Minister Jim O'Callaghan said the military would be deployed to clear vehicles from what he described as critical infrastructure. Protesters have said a package of support announced by the Irish government in March to help people with the rising cost of fuel is not sufficient. But the Irish prime minister, Taoiseach Micheál Martin said the blocking of roads and infrastructure was not a fair form of protest.

A court in Bangladesh has sentenced two former police officers to death for their role in the killing of a student leader that triggered widespread outrage during [protest] student protests in 2024. Abu Syed's killing is seen as the turning point in the mass uprising that forced the former Prime Minister Sheik Hasina from office.

The U.S. rapper and DJ Afrika Bambaataa has died at the age of 68. Born Lance Taylor in New York, he was regarded as a pioneer of hip-hop and was best known for his 1982 hit "Planet Rock." U.S. reports say he died in Philadelphia early on Thursday following complications from cancer.

That's the latest to BBC News.