

BBC NEWS

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BBC News with Gurvinder Gill.

Ukraine and Russia have agreed to swap a thousand prisoners of war each as part of a deal that includes a three-day truce which has begun. Russia had called for a temporary ceasefire during annual commemorations to mark the defeat of Nazi Germany during the Second World War. From Kyiv, Jonathan Beale reports.

Russia and Ukraine had already both independently declared their own ceasefires which neither side had agreed to observe. President Putin's time to coincide with Moscow's May the 9th Victory Day parade but the intervention of President Trump appears to have achieved a deal. He said a three-day ceasefire starting on May the 9th would include the suspension of all attacks and the swap of a thousand prisoners from both sides.

President Zelenskyy has now issued a decree which he said would allow Russia's victory parade in Red Square to go ahead.

Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer has suffered a major blow in the biggest electoral test since taking power two years ago. His governing Labour Party has lost large numbers of local council seats in England and has been forced from power in Wales. The biggest electoral winner has been the right-wing populist party Reform U.K. as Aruna Iyengar explains.

Reform which is relatively a new party in British politics led by Nigel Farage gained over 1,400 local council seats and if you look at the Labour Party which is the governing party at the moment, the party that's in power, they lost around 1,300 seats. So people are saying well that's a reflection on the possible unpopularity of the Labour government and people seem to be turning to these new insurgent parties.

The Syrian government has announced the arrest of two high-profile senior military officers from the era of the ousted President Bashar al-Assad. It said they would stand trial once investigations were completed. Youssef Taha has more details.

The Interior Ministry said Khardal Ahmad Dioub, the former head of Air Force Intelligence in Daraa, the birthplace of the Syrian uprising in 2011. It's accused him of involvement in a chemical attack on the Damascus suburb of Eastern Ghouta in 2013. That was one of the worst atrocities of the civil war. It's believed to have killed more than 1,400 people including children.

It's also accused him of involvement in assassinating civilians. The ministry said that Second Brigadier Sahl Fajr Hassan was also arrested, accusing him of angst over oppression against Syrians during the civil war.

The United States has confirmed that it will facilitate two days of intensive talks between Lebanon and Israel on Thursday and Friday next week. It says the two sides will engage in detailed discussions aimed at advancing a comprehensive peace and security agreement. Israel suggested that military officials will join the talks for the first time.

World news from the BBC.

A Colombian press freedom organization says a journalist who had been missing for days has been found dead in a region controlled by rebels and drug traffickers in northwestern Colombia. Mateo Pérez Rueda, who covered stories on crime, security, politics and corruption, was last seen on Tuesday in the rural municipality of Briceño. He traveled there to report on violence ahead of elections later this month.

Laura Fernández has been sworn in as president of Costa Rica at the National Stadium in the capital San José. The 39-year-old right-wing leader has promised to continue the political movement of her predecessor, Rodrigo Chavez.

Mexico's President Claudia Sheinbaum has entered a row caused by the country's education ministry announcing plans to end the school year early due to the Football World Cup and high summer temperatures. Ms. Sheinbaum said the ministry's decision wasn't final. Will Grant reports.

The announcement by the Public Education Ministry of ending the school year a full month early was greeted by howls of disapproval by angry parents, with one group calling it a grave mistake. Under the decision, classes would end on the 5th of June rather than in early July as planned.

Facing at least four additional weeks of school holidays poses real logistical difficulties to millions of families and it has left parents worried about how to juggle the extra childcare alongside work and other commitments.

A special concert's been held at London's Royal Albert Hall to mark the 100th birthday of the British naturalist and broadcaster David Attenborough. It featured music from some of his best known natural history programs.

There was a message from King Charles and many others paid tribute to, including the Hollywood stars, Kate Blanchett and Leonardo DiCaprio, who thanked him for working to preserve what he called "our very precious planet."

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