Taking screenshots

There are occasions when we want to capture what is on our screen in order to share this with other people. Perhaps the most important use is to show something that has gone wrong in order to ask another person for help.
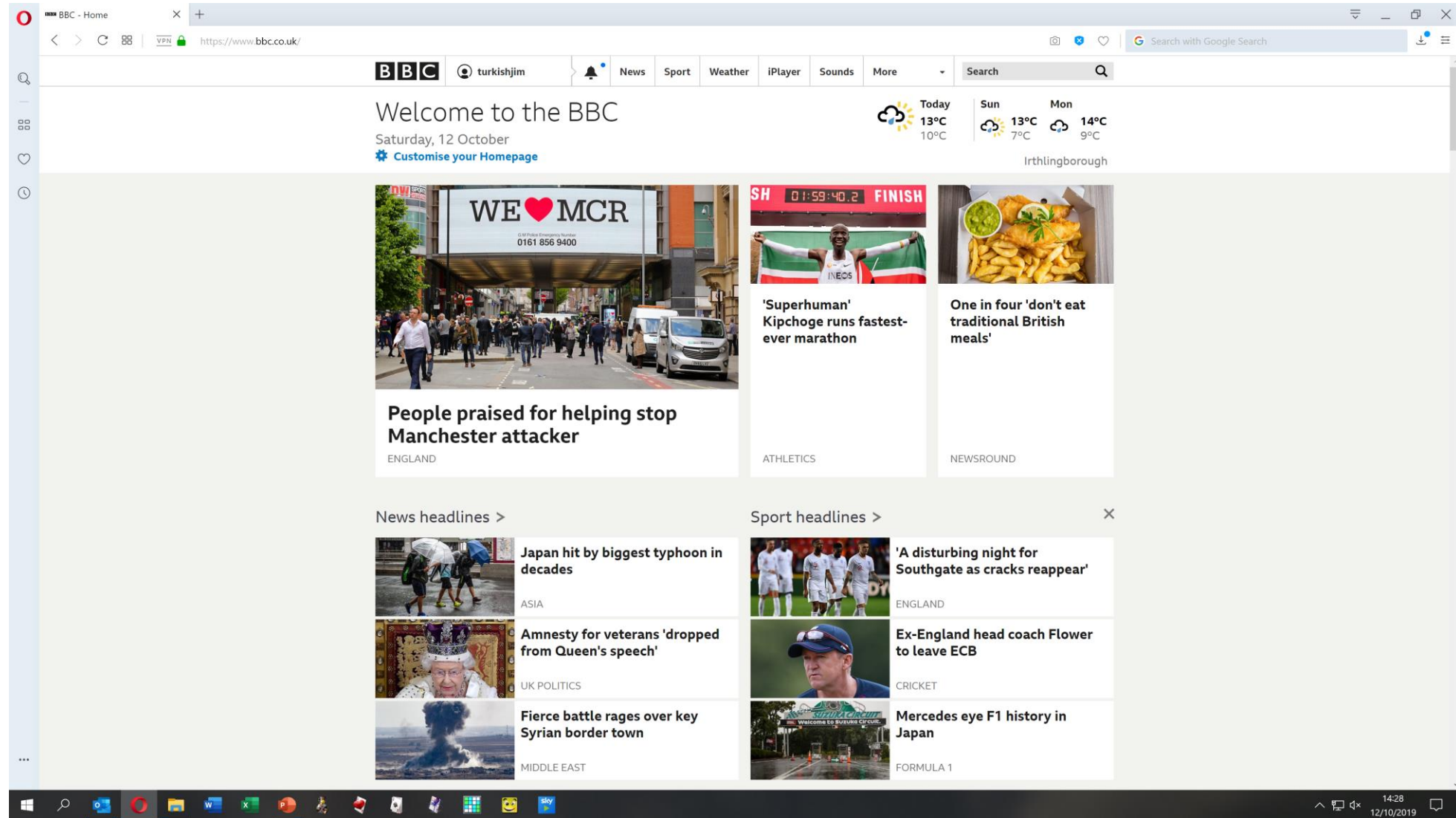
This is where the "Print Screen" button comes into its own, although this is really a misnomer. Pressing the button does not actually print the screen, it copies it.

Normally labelled "*PrtSc*" or "*PrtScr*", the button is (almost invariably) to the right of the F12 key. The layouts of typical desktop (top) and laptop (lower) keyboards are shown on the right.
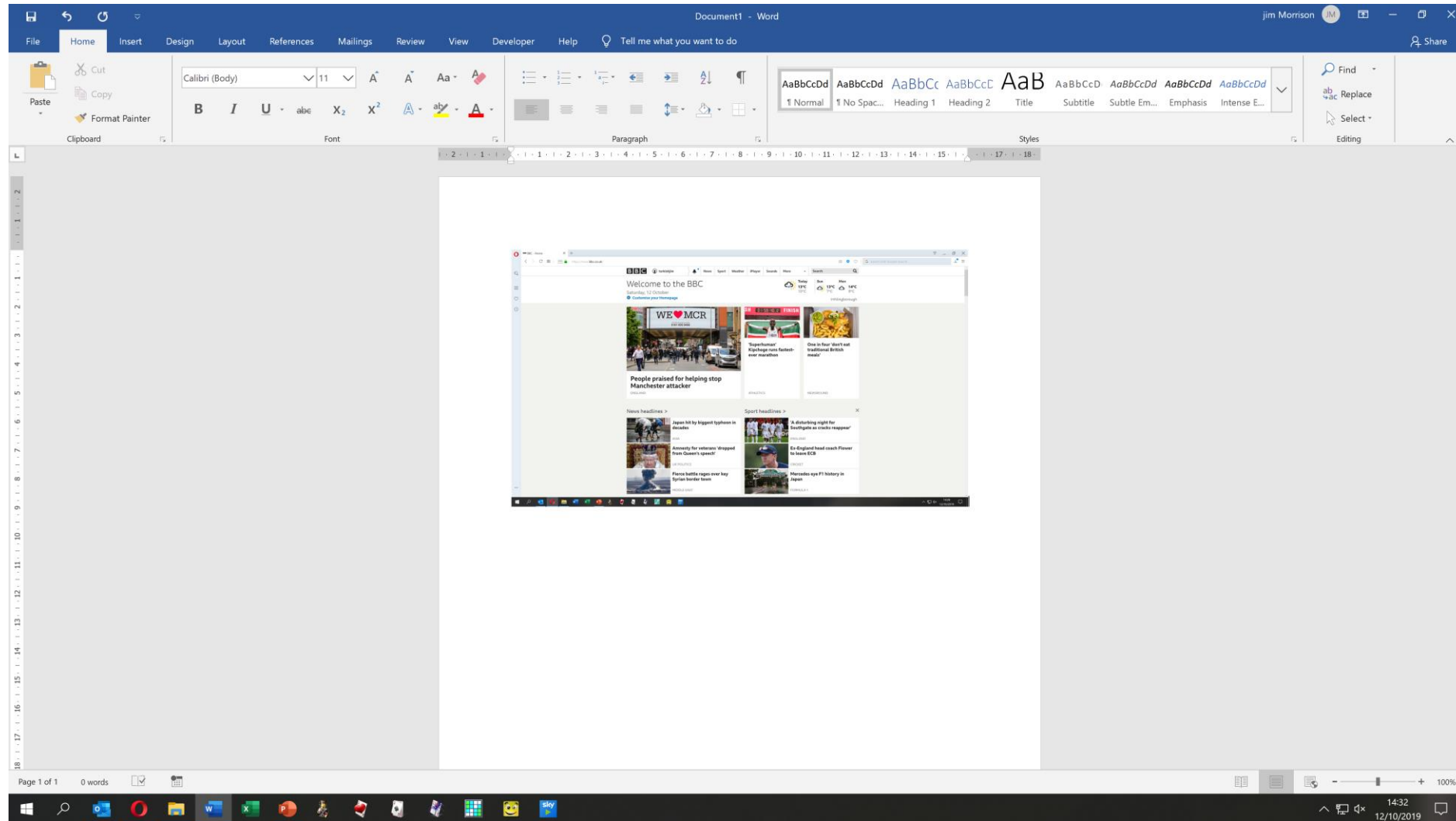
There is one other important difference between desktop and laptop keyboards, which is that on some laptops the PrtSc key is dual function, and will only capture a screenshot if pressed simultaneously with the "Fn" key.
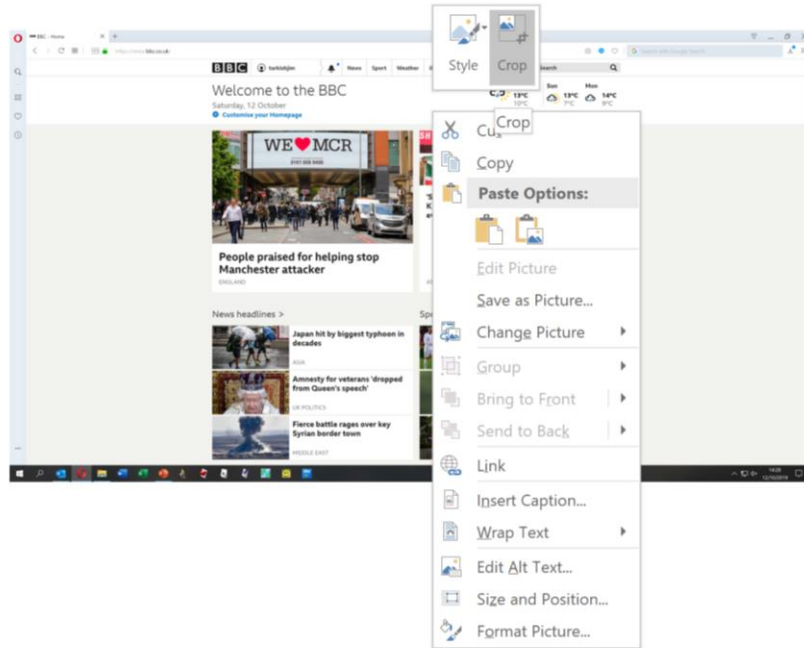
Let us assume that we want to take a screenshot of this BBC homepage, and press "PrtSc" (and Fn if necessary).
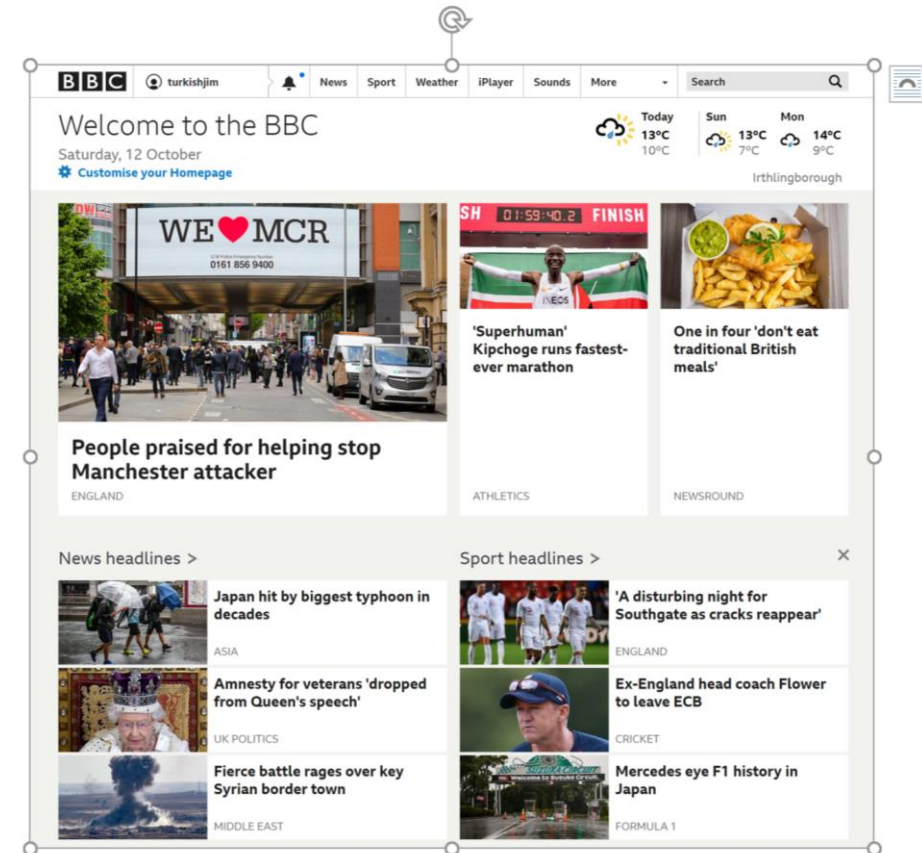
If we now open a blank Word document and click on "Paste" (or press Ctrl & V) the screenshot can be pasted in.
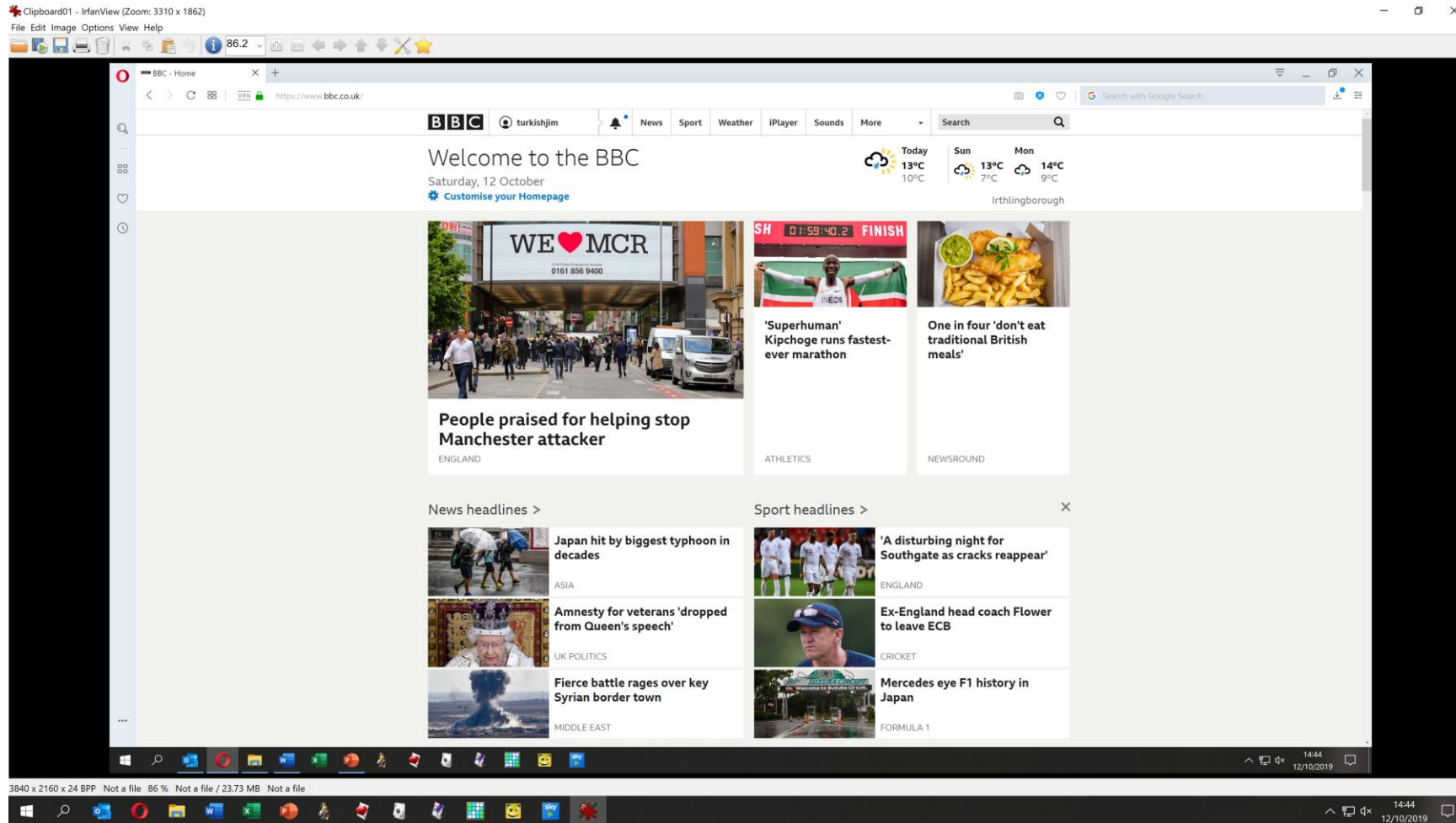
The extraneous area can be cropped out by right-clicking and selecting "Crop", and then the remaining part can be expanded as necessary.
Depending on the shape of the image you want to retain it may also be appropriate to change the page layout to landscape.
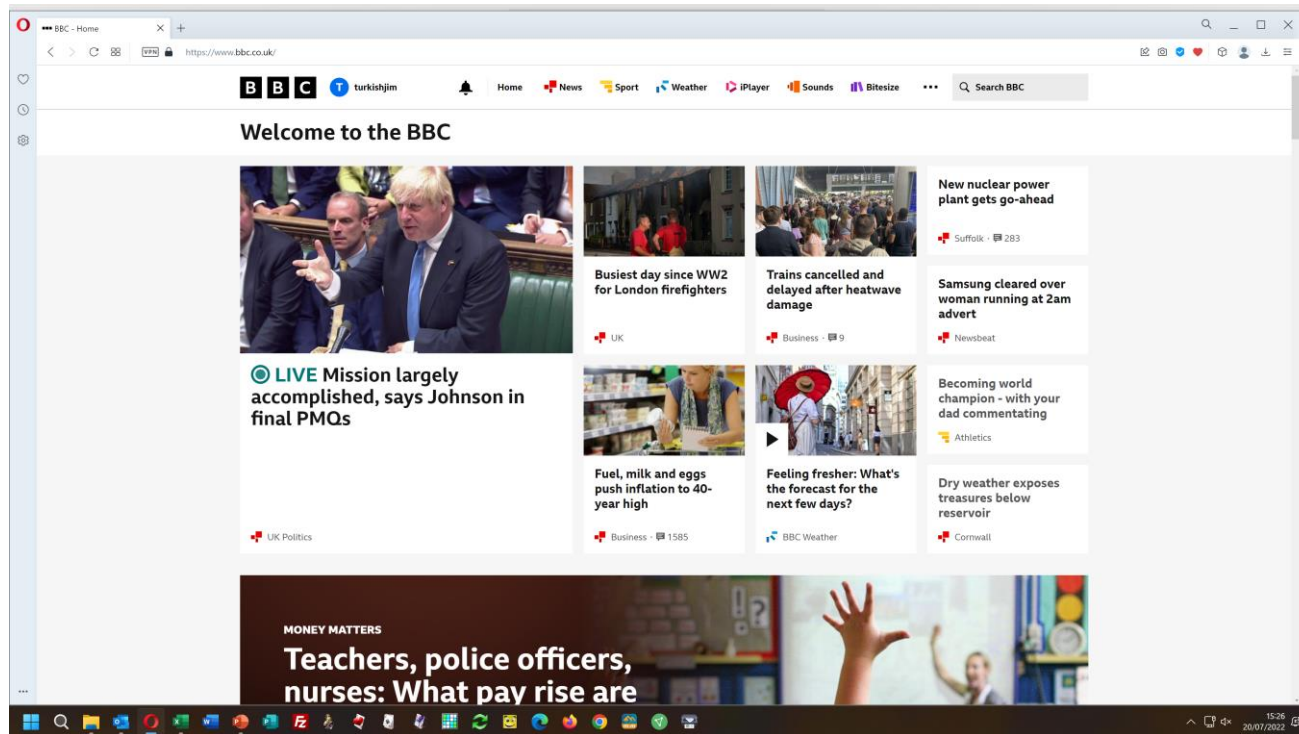
Although pasting into Word has the advantage of allowing notes to be added, it is also possible to paste into other Office programs such as Excel and PowerPoint, into many e-mail programs and virtually all image-editing software. The image below shows the same screenshot pasted into IrfanView, a very good (and free) editing program.

Another way to capture part of the screen is to use the Windows Snipping Tool. This is activated by the keyboard combination Windows key, Shift and S.
When you do this the screen will dim and you can use the mouse to click and drag to isolate an area of the screen which can then be pasted as an image in the same way.

The End