

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: Getty Images

Donald Trump urged protesters in **Iran** to “TAKE OVER” state institutions, promising that “HELP IS ON ITS WAY” as [nationwide protests](#) continued. Amnesty International warned of “swift trials and arbitrary executions” of the thousands of Iranians arrested during the unrest. Starlink reportedly made its satellite-internet service free across Iran. Government-imposed internet blackouts have hidden the extent of protests and the authorities’ vengeance.

The Trump administration eased the sale of AI chips to **China**, allowing **Nvidia** to export the H200, its second-most-powerful chip. Applications to sell the H200 and equivalents will now be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, rather than starting from a presumption of denial. Mr Trump seems to think it best to keep China [hooked on Nvidia’s technology](#) rather than force it to develop its own advanced chips.

Greenland’s prime minister said the territory would vote to remain part of Denmark rather than join America if citizens had to choose. The island’s foreign minister will meet J.D. Vance, America’s vice-president, and Marco Rubio, its secretary of state, in Washington, DC on Wednesday. Earlier American senators proposed a bill that

would prohibit their country from [occupying or annexing](#) NATO territories, including Greenland.

America's annual inflation rate was unchanged at 2.7% in December, easing fears that [tariffs](#) would push prices higher again. Core inflation was also unchanged, at 2.6%. The figures reinforced expectations that the Federal Reserve will keep rates on hold at its next meeting. Treasury yields fell on the news.

South Korea's special prosecutor, appointed for politically sensitive cases, sought the death penalty for **Yoon Suk Yeol**, the country's [former president](#). He is accused of leading an insurrection by briefly declaring martial law in December 2024. Prosecutors said the move formed part of a plan to cling to power. Mr Yoon denies wrongdoing, arguing that presidents have the authority to declare martial law.

Boeing booked more orders than **Airbus** for the first time in seven years. The American planemaker said it secured 1,075 orders last year, and delivered 600 commercial aircraft—the most since 2018. Boeing's order books are recovering from cancellations that followed [deadly crashes of its 737 MAX jets](#). On Monday its European rival reported booking 1,000 orders. Boeing still trails Airbus in production.

America's **Supreme Court** signalled that it would uphold state laws blocking **transgender athletes** who are biologically male from competing on female sports teams. Justices heard arguments concerning two cases from transgender women who argue that the bans are unlawful because they violate the 14th Amendment and anti-discrimination law. The court's ruling, expected in June, may set a precedent for decisions on military service and access to single-sex toilets.

Figure of the day: 4,500, the number of reports of suspected cult activity logged in France in 2024, more than double the level

recorded in 2015. [Read the full story.](#)



Photograph: Reuters

Crisis talks on Greenland at the White House

It is hard to imagine a compromise between Donald Trump's desire to [buy or seize](#) Greenland from Denmark and the insistence of Mette Frederiksen, Denmark's prime minister, that he cannot have it. But on Wednesday, the Danish and Greenlandic foreign ministers will travel to Washington, DC to try to work one out. Lars Lokke Rasmussen of Denmark and Vivian Motzfeldt of Greenland are to meet with J.D. Vance, America's vice-president, and Marco Rubio, its secretary of state, at the White House.

In a joint appearance on Tuesday, Ms Frederiksen and Greenland's prime minister reiterated that the island is not for sale. Mr Vance has echoed Mr Trump's claims that Denmark underinvests in the Arctic territory and that Greenland faces threats from Russia and China. But Denmark and its European allies have offered to strengthen its security, and to let America deploy whatever forces it wants. Perhaps Mr Rubio may help facilitate such a [deal](#).



Photograph: AP

Hong Kong's rubber-stamp parliament convenes

Many fresh faces were on view when Hong Kong's Legislative Council (LegCo) convened on Wednesday. The body, which enacts and amends the territory's laws, has a new president—Starry Lee, an experienced pro-Beijing lawmaker—and a crop of young politicians keen to make their mark. (Around a third of the previous council, mostly veteran bigwigs, bowed out at an election in December.)

First on the legislative agenda is the recovery effort from a fire at a public-housing estate in November, which killed 161 people. The authorities swiftly made arrests, but [public anger is still smouldering](#). Another issue is the poor turnout in December's poll—the second-lowest on record—seemingly in protest against the government's handling of the catastrophe. Many Hong Kongers remain sceptical that LegCo is anything more than a rubber stamp; since 2021 participation in the council has been restricted to “patriots” aligned with the Chinese Communist Party. The lawmakers may be new, but the problems they face will linger.



Photograph: Getty Images

Carnage in Iran

The death toll keeps climbing. On Tuesday morning an Iranian human-rights group said that more than 600 people had been killed in the protests sweeping the country. Hours later Reuters quoted an unnamed Iranian official who put the number at 2,000. The internet [remains disabled](#) in Iran, but the stories that have leaked out suggest that the real number of fatalities is higher still.

Donald Trump has urged Iranians to keep protesting: “I have cancelled all meetings with Iranian Officials until the senseless killing of protesters STOPS,” he wrote on Tuesday. “HELP IS ON ITS WAY.” That would seem to rebuff an overture from Abbas Araghchi, the Iranian foreign minister, who last week proposed talks with America. What Mr Trump means by “help” remains unclear, though. He met advisers on Tuesday to discuss [his options](#), both military and non-military, but does not seem to have made a decision.



Photograph: Getty Images

Grok faces a global crackdown

“If X cannot control Grok, we will,” Sir Keir Starmer declared to his ^{MPS} on Monday. Britain’s prime minister has threatened tougher regulation on X (Elon Musk’s social-media platform) for allowing users to share non-consensual **sexualised images** generated by Grok (Mr Musk’s AI chatbot). In recent weeks the bot has created and spread deepfake bikini pics as well as sexualised images of children.

Such content has spurred action across the world. On Monday Malaysia and Indonesia became the first countries to temporarily ban Grok. Meanwhile the European Commission ordered X to retain all documents relating to Grok so the bloc can evaluate its compliance with ^{EU} rules. But the world’s richest man has so far shown little interest in co-operating. “Why is the ^{UK} government so fascist?” he asked over the weekend. The post, on X, received more than 15m views.



Photograph: Alamy

Two football matches to savour

Africa's biennial [football](#) competition, the Africa Cup of Nations, is reaching its climax. The semi-finals take place on Wednesday, and the organisers couldn't have hoped for juicier matches. In the first, seven-time winners Egypt take on Senegal, who have conceded just two goals in five matches so far this tournament. The match will be a face-off between Africa's two most celebrated players, Egypt's Mohamed Salah, of Liverpool, and his former Merseyside teammate, Sadio Mané.

On the other side of the draw, Morocco, this year's host and the favourite to win the tournament, play Nigeria. In 2022 Morocco was the first African country to reach a World Cup semi-final. They have been similarly dazzling during this tournament, with Real Madrid's forward, Brahim Diaz, scoring in every match so far. Nigeria had been unimpressive before AFCON. But their forward line of Victor Osimhen, Ademola Lookman and Akor Adams has sparkled at the tournament. Two [thrilling matches](#) await.

Africa Cup of Nations, 2025-26

Qualified Semi-finalists





Illustration: The Economist

Quiz

We will serve you a new question each weekday. On Friday your challenge is to give us all five answers and tell us the theme. Email your responses (and your home city and country) by 1700 GMT on Friday to [\[email protected\]](#). We'll pick three winners at random and crown them on Saturday.

Wednesday: What form of radiation has a wavelength between 400 and 700 nanometres?

Tuesday: Which religious text begins “Our father, who art in heaven”?

*One of the deep secrets of life is
that all that is really worth doing
is what we do for others.*

Lewis Carroll