The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter

Photograph: Getty Images

America's State Department said that Donald Trump's special envoy, **Steve Witkoff**, and the president's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, were continuing talks with Ukrainian officials in Miami on a framework for a deal to end the war between Russia and Ukraine. It said the two had "constructive discussions" with a Ukrainian negotiator, Rustem Umerov, on Thursday and Friday. Another major Russian drone and missile attack on Friday night struck Ukrainian power facilities.

Pete Hegseth, **America's** defence secretary, declared that the Monroe Doctrine, a 19th-century policy by which America laid claim to influence over the Western hemisphere, is "stronger than ever". He also promised to "restore US military dominance". Mr Hegseth was speaking in California; his speech followed the Trump administration's release of its national-security strategy.

America's **Supreme Court** said it would rule on the legality of Mr Trump's attempt to end **birthright citizenship**, a contentious part of the president's anti-immigration agenda. In January he signed an executive order seeking to block children born to undocumented immigrants or temporary visitors in America from being entitled to

[citizenship](#). Lower federal courts temporarily blocked the order, citing the 14th Amendment.

A doctors' group in **Sudan** said that a drone attack by the Rapid Support Forces, a paramilitary group, had killed 50 people, including 33 children, at a kindergarten in the southern town of Kalogi. The Sudan Doctors' Network said paramedics were targeted in a second strike. Hundreds of civilians have been killed in the area as fighting shifted from [Darfur](#) after the rsf took over the city of el-Fasher from the Sudanese Armed Forces.

Officials in **Afghanistan** said five people had been killed in a clash with **Pakistan** along the two countries' border. Each side blamed the other for provoking the fighting. In October Qatar and Turkey mediated a ceasefire after [earlier skirmishes](#). Relations have soured since the Taliban returned to power in 2021. Pakistan accuses Afghanistan of sheltering hostile armed groups.

At least 11 people were killed in a shooting at an illegal bar in **South Africa**. Fourteen others were wounded during the attack early on Saturday in Saulsville township, west of Pretoria, the capital. The motive for the killings is still unknown. It is the latest in a series of mass shootings in the crime-ridden country.

Four people were arrested after apple crumble and custard were smeared on a display case containing Britain's crown jewels at the **Tower of London**. A previously unknown group, Take Back Power, claimed responsibility. On X the group declared that "Democracy has crumbled", demanded a permanent citizens' assembly—a "House of the People to tax the rich"—and solicited donations.

Word of the week: Mega-merger. Large corporate deals, already worth $700bn in 2025. [Read the full story](#).

Photograph: Getty Images

Diplomacy in Doha

A year ago, the Doha Forum was the hottest ticket in Middle Eastern diplomacy. The annual conference in Qatar's capital coincided with the fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria. Officials from Russia, Iran and Turkey met on the sidelines to discuss the president's ignominious exit.

This weekend, with Assad's successor, Ahmed al-Sharaa, in attendance, the focus is on looking ahead. Nawaf Salam, Lebanon's prime minister, will sit for an interview on Sunday. It comes as many Lebanese worry about renewed conflict between Israel and Hizbullah, a Shia militant group. Earlier this week Lebanon sent a retired diplomat to negotiate with an Israeli envoy, the first direct talks in decades between the two countries. The negotiations may forestall another war. But Hizbullah refuses to relinquish its most advanced weapons, and the Lebanese army is incapable of seizing them. The reprieve may be only temporary.

Photograph: Getty Images

A fire, then fury in Hong Kong

Hong Kong began holding elections to its Legislative Council on Sunday. It is just the second such vote since the central government in Beijing ruled that only "patriots"—ie, cheerleaders for China's Communist Party—could stand. The restricted ballot is a reaction to widespread pro-democracy protests in 2019. Freedom-hungry Hong Kongers are therefore forced to register their discontent in other ways. In the first election under the new system, in December 2021, turnout was just 30%, a record low.

Lawmakers have spent months trying to coax residents to the ballot box. But turnout will again probably be paltry. The city is reeling from a devastating fire in a high-rise housing complex that killed at least 159 people and left 2,100 homeless. Many locals are furious at the government's response. A low turnout will displease the authorities in Hong Kong and Beijing, who crave a veneer of legitimacy. Instead it may show the depth of anger over the blaze.

The Kennedy Centre honours…Donald Trump

The Kennedy Centre Honours gala, which recognises contributions to American culture, is a prestigious affair. Those feted in the past include Tennessee Williams, Ella Fitzgerald, Leonard Bernstein and, more recently Lin-Manuel Miranda, the creator of "Hamilton". It is usually an apolitical event. Sunday's gala will be different.

The master of ceremonies is President Donald Trump. Earlier this year he took over the centre, saying it was too "wokey", and sacked half the board. The president apparently personally vetted this year's honourees, who include Sylvester Stallone, of "Rocky" and "Rambo" fame. On Mr Trump's watch, shows such as the Gay Men's Chorus have been cancelled. The venue's ticket sales have reportedly plummeted. On Friday the centre staged the FIFA World Cup draw, an event more fitting for Las Vegas. More shocking, the president recently half-joked that he will change the name of the institution—created as a cultural monument to a slain president—to the Trump-Kennedy Centre.

Photograph: Getty Images

A thrilling finish to the grand prix season

After 23 grands prix over nine months, the 2025 Formula 1 drivers' championship has come down to the final race in Abu Dhabi on Sunday. Only a month ago Lando Norris, a British driver for the McLaren team, appeared to have one hand on the trophy. But Max Verstappen, winner of the last four championships, has performed sensationally in the second half of the season in his Red Bull car.

There are, therefore, several permutations, complicated further by the fact that Mr Norris's Australian team-mate, Oscar Piastri, also has a slim chance of winning. If Mr Norris finishes third or better, or just ahead of his rivals, he will secure the title. Mr Verstappen needs to win and for Mr Norris to finish fourth or worse. And Mr Piastri needs to win and hope Mr Norris comes no higher than sixth. After Mr Verstappen's years of dominance, an unexpected three-way tussle provides a thrilling finish to the season.

A love triangle for eternity

Love triangles make for enticing stories. Literature is full of them: Helen, Menelaus and Paris in Greek mythology; Catherine, Heathcliff and Edgar in "Wuthering Heights"; Anna, Alexei and Vronsky in "Anna Karenina". Depending on the circumstances, the situation can be humorous, tragic or poignant.

Lately screenwriters, too, seem to have fallen for love triangles, in films such as "Materialists", a romantic comedy about a matchmaker, and "The Summer I Turned Pretty", a popular teen drama. In "Eternity", just released in cinemas, Joan (played by Elizabeth Olsen) dies and reaches "the junction" between life and the afterlife. There are two men waiting for her: Joan has a week to choose whether to spend eternity with her first husband (Callum Turner), who died at war, or the man she spent the rest of her life with (Miles Teller). Wacky, witty and sentimental, this is a love triangle for the ages.

Curiosity is the lust of the mind.

Thomas Hobbes