

# The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter

President Joe Biden rebuked the **International Criminal Court** for seeking arrest warrants for **Binyamin Netanyahu**, Israel's [prime minister](#), and **Yahya Sinwar**,  [Hamas's](#) leader. Calling the effort "outrageous", Mr Biden said that there was "no equivalence" between Israel and Hamas. The court's [chief prosecutor](#) said there was evidence that both men bore responsibility for war crimes, citing Hamas's attacks on Israel on October 7th and Israel's subsequent blocking of aid for starving Gazans. The warrants will be issued subject to the approval of the ICC's judges.

**Iran** set new elections for June 28th, following the death of **Ebrahim Raisi**, the country's president, in a helicopter crash. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the supreme leader, declared five days of mourning and offered condolences to the people of Iran. The people themselves may be less inclined to weep for their former president, who is [reviled by many](#) for his role in hanging thousands of political prisoners in the 1980s.

The chair of the **Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation**, an American banking regulator, will resign after an outside investigation found instances of sexual harassment and a "hostile" and "abusive" workplace. Martin Gruenberg, a Democrat, said he would step down once the Senate confirms his successor, preserving Democrats' majority on the FDIC's board.

**South Korea's** constitutional court held its final hearing of a landmark case in which plaintiffs, including babies and an unborn child, are suing the government for having weak climate goals. Experts say the case, the first of its kind in East Asia, could spark a

regional trend. Similar legal challenges have been filed in other parts of the world, [with some success](#).

**Jamie Dimon**, the [boss of JPMorgan Chase](#), America's biggest bank, told shareholders that plans for his succession are "well on the way". The 68-year-old suggested he would step down within a shorter time frame than previously expected, saying "it's not five years anymore". He shuffled some senior roles earlier this year. Mr Dimon's succession has [long fixated](#) Wall Street.

**Donald Trump** called the judge overseeing his hush-money trial "a tyrant" after the judge reprimanded a defence witness. "You don't say 'jeez'," he scolded Robert Costello, a lawyer whose testimony sought to paint Michael Cohen as a liar. Mr Cohen testified that Mr Trump directed him to pay off a porn star. The prosecution rested its case on Monday; a verdict could come next week.

**Scarlett Johansson**, a Hollywood star who voiced a virtual assistant in "Her", a science-fiction film, condemned **OpenAI** for programming its ChatGPT chatbot with a voice that sounds "eerily similar" to hers without permission. OpenAI, the undisputed leader in the artificial-intelligence race, recently added the voice function, which reads responses aloud. The startup, which is worth \$86bn, has suspended use of the voice.

**Figure of the day:** 56,000. The number of cancer lawsuits Bayer still faces over its weedkiller. It has settled more than 110,000 claims. [Read the full story](#).

*In the run-up to America's presidential election, we've launched [The US in brief](#)—a daily update to help you keep on top of the political stories that matter. [Sign up here](#) to receive it as a newsletter, each weekday, in your inbox.*



Photo: ROPI

## Zelensky's term ends

Volodymyr Zelensky has had a testing first term as president of Ukraine. First came the crisis of Donald Trump and “Ukrainegate”. Then covid-19 hit. And then came Russia’s terrifying full-scale invasion, since when Ukraine has been under martial law. But Mr Zelensky may soon face his biggest political challenge yet. His [term ends on Monday](#) and he will struggle to refresh his mandate with no obvious possibility of elections.

Ukraine’s constitution is confusing. Article 103 states that the president is elected for a five-year term; but Article 108 says that he or she exercises power until a new president is inaugurated. And elections are forbidden during martial law.

The mood in Kyiv is increasingly angsty. War fatigue and a steady drip of headlines about corruption are eroding public support. Recent polling shows that trust in the presidency has fallen from a net positive of 71% in 2023 to 26%. As problems worsen on the front lines, Mr Zelensky’s legitimacy problems will almost certainly intensify.



Photo: AP

## Taiwan's new president takes office

On Monday Taiwan inaugurated a new president: [William Lai Ching-te](#). The Chinese Communist Party dislikes Mr Lai, who once called himself a “pragmatic worker for Taiwan independence”. In recent weeks the CCP has [ramped up military drills](#) near the island

and coastguard patrols around Taiwan's outlying Kinmen archipelago. At the same time, Chinese officials have met legislators from Taiwan's opposition party and discussed reopening some cross-strait tourism.

China is signalling that it is open to lowering tensions if Mr Lai affirms that Taiwan is part of China. Mr Lai must “make a clear choice between peaceful development or confrontation across the Taiwan Strait”, and should take a stance on cross-strait relations in his inaugural speech, says the spokesman of China's Taiwan Affairs Office. Mr Lai wants to lower tensions too—but not on China's conditions. His speech will probably underscore that. China will keep the pressure on.



Photo: Getty Images

## What now for Iran?

On Monday Iranian state media confirmed that the country's president, Ebrahim Raisi, was [killed in a helicopter crash](#) on the previous day. What does that mean for Iran?

A likely consequence will be a power struggle. Although the president is subordinate to Ali Khamenei, the supreme leader, Mr



Raisi was considered by many to be a possible successor to the ageing cleric.

An internal battle would come just as Iran is fighting a regional war, both by direct action and via its network of proxies. The death of the president also comes at a point of mounting economic gloom, and when America and its allies are mulling the tightening of sanctions.

Even if chaos ensues, few Iranians will mourn Mr Raisi. They will remember him as the “hanging judge”, a deputy prosecutor in Tehran who helped send thousands of political prisoners to the gallows in 1988. His hapless running of the economy has also impoverished many. The regime, though, will be nervous.



Photo: Getty Images

## Biden and Trump do their book-keeping

Election watchers will get an update on how [Joe Biden](#) and [Donald Trump](#) are doing in the funding race when the two campaigns file their monthly finance reports on Monday. At the last count, Mr Biden was in the lead. By last month’s deadline, he had raised almost \$160m, compared with his rival’s \$114m. And more people

had donated to the president in battleground states by the end of March than had done so by the same date in 2020.

Mr Trump has so far failed to live up to his performance four years ago. His coffers will get a boost from a fundraising dinner in April at which the former president raked in \$50m. But he also has expenses that Mr Biden does not—fighting multiple court cases is costly. Perhaps that is why on Friday, granted a rare day off from his [hush-money trial](#) to attend his son's graduation in Florida, he also squeezed in a fundraising dinner—in Minnesota.



Photo: Getty Images

## The future of European football

The annual tournament for Europe's brightest [football talent](#) begins in Cyprus on Monday. The Under-17 European Championships has been running since 1982. Its most successful teams have been Europe's big beasts—Spain, Portugal and Germany have won half of the 39 editions. Young players tend to be attached to the academies of leading teams from their home countries. Spain's whole squad is signed to domestic teams, as are all the German and French players.

In the England squad, one defender stands out: Christian McFarlane, of New York City FC. Born in Essex, he moved to America at the age of three and learned the game stateside. That goes against the traditional direction of travel: ageing [English footballers](#) had once gone to America to earn a final payday in a weaker league. But American soccer academies have professionalised. In the 2023/24 season, 24 Americans played in the big five European leagues.



## Daily quiz

We will serve you a new question each day this week. On Friday your challenge is to give us all five answers and, as important, tell us the connecting theme. Email your responses (and include mention of your home city and country) by 1700 BST on Friday to [\[email protected\]](#). We'll pick randomly from those with the right answers and crown three winners on Saturday.

**Monday:** Which stuffed toy is named after the 26th US President?

*In diving to the bottom of pleasure we bring up more gravel than pearls.*



*Honor*  *de Balzac*