

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: EPA

A federal judge in **Minnesota** ordered Todd Lyons, the acting head of America's **Immigration and Customs Enforcement**, to appear in court on Friday, warning that he may be held in contempt. The judge said [ICE](#) has ignored dozens of court orders requiring the agency to provide hearings for people it has detained. The order comes as Donald Trump tries to contain political blowback after federal agents [fatally shot a second citizen](#) in Minneapolis.

India and the **European Union** said they had signed the "mother of all trade deals". India will [reduce tariffs](#) on more than 95% of EU goods, including gradually lowering levies on cars from 110% to 10%. The bloc expects its exports to India to more than double by 2032 as a result. The EU will also lower tariffs on more than 95% of Indian goods.

Consumer confidence in **America** dropped to its lowest level since 2014 in January, according to figures released by Conference Board, an economic-research firm. The drop follows an improvement in the consumer-confidence index in December, though sentiment worsened for most of 2025. Consumers are growing more anxious about [tariffs and trade tensions](#), as well as a softening job market and health-insurance costs.

Iran's president, Masoud Pezeshkian, met with regional authorities to give them greater powers, including making it easier to import goods, amid fears that America could strike [the regime](#). He also told Muhammad bin Salman, Saudi Arabia's crown prince, that Iran was willing to negotiate to avoid war, according to Iranian media. Earlier *USS Abraham Lincoln*, an American aircraft-carrier, arrived in the Middle East.

Boeing reported revenue of \$23.9bn in the final quarter of last year, its best quarterly figure since 2018. The company's deliveries surged at the end of 2025 after the Federal Aviation Administration eased production limits on its 737 MAX, which were introduced following a mid-air accident. In recent years the American planemaker has [struggled](#) with strikes and production problems.

Shares in **UnitedHealth** and **Humana**, two American [health-insurance providers](#), fell by around 20% after the Trump administration proposed that spending on Medicare, a health programme for the elderly, would increase at a lower rate this year. Payments to insurance companies for such plans will rise by less than 0.1% next year, down from 5% this year. Medicare Advantage plans make up around \$500bn in revenue for health insurers.

Xiao Xiao and Lei Lei, the only two **pandas** in Japan, left Tokyo for **China**. The official reason for the bears' return is that their loan from China is expiring—an arrangement that holds even though they were born in Japan. But the fact that China is not replacing them reflects worsening Sino-Japanese relations: China has been [sending pandas to Japan](#) since 1972.

Figure of the day: \$17.7bn, the sum that startups in London raised in 2025, behind only the Bay Area, New York and Los Angeles.
[Read the full story.](#)



Photograph: EPA

A long-awaited deal between the EU and India

Ursula von der Leyen, president of the European Commission, and António Costa, president of the European Council, were guests of honour at India’s Republic Day celebrations on Monday. On Tuesday it was their turn for a bit of ceremony when—alongside Narendra Modi, India’s prime minister—they announced “the mother of all trade deals”.

The agreement, which was almost two decades in the making, will remove or reduce levies on almost 97% of European exports to India. The EU, in return, will get more access to one of the world’s fastest-growing economies, reducing its dependence on China.

Increased trade should help both weather Donald Trump’s recent spree of raising tariffs. But Ms von der Leyen said the deal was “only the beginning” in a new chapter of EU-India relations. The pair simultaneously announced a new partnership focused on security and the defence industry. India wants to lessen its reliance on Russian weapons. Brussels, meanwhile, hopes to loosen India’s close ties with Russia, which have long been a source of tension.



Photograph: Reuters

Honduras gets a Trump-approved president

Hondurans will get a new president on Tuesday when Nasry “Tito” Asfura, the conservative former mayor of the country’s capital, is sworn in. Donald Trump [openly supported](#) Mr Asfura’s campaign, and cried fraud (without evidence) when a rival candidate briefly took the lead during the vote count. Worries about the election’s integrity were heightened by rapidly shifting vote totals, delays in releasing precinct-level results and the courts’ hasty dismissal of requests for a recount by Mr Asfura’s opponents. International observers ultimately declared the election fair, however.

The outgoing president, Xiomara Castro, repeatedly rowed with America while strengthening ties with China and Russia and backing Nicolás Maduro, Venezuela’s dictator, whom Mr Trump toppled this year. Mr Asfura will hope that a better relationship with Mr Trump will benefit Honduras. He will co-operate with America on drugs and corruption but delivering results will be tricky. Honduras remains poor, violent and deeply unequal. Hondurans deeply distrust its weak institutions. A daunting set of challenges awaits the new president.



Photograph: Getty Images

The world's largest luxury-goods firm is in crisis

LVMH is in an [unfashionable slump](#). In the first half of 2025 revenue fell by 4% year on year; net profit plunged by 22%. The luxury-goods company reports full-year earnings on Tuesday. Analysts have grown less confident about the company's outlook.

Scandal has struck some of LVMH's key brands: former staff accuse Moët Hennessy, its drinks division, of enabling bullying and sexual harassment. Loro Piana, its cashmere purveyor, is under judicial administration in Italy for using suppliers that allegedly violate labour rights. (Moët denies the accusations; Loro Piana admitted that overseeing its "whole ecosystem" was "a bit difficult"). Dramatic price hikes have annoyed customers. Some Louis Vuitton bags have doubled in price since 2019, though they look identical.

American tariffs and economic uncertainty in China have hurt the whole industry. But some luxury companies may be on the up. Those [expected to thrive in 2026](#), such as Hermès, are careful about the ethics (and optics) of their supply chains, and prudent about price rises. LVMH would do well to follow suit.

Bags of trouble

LVMH, share price, €



Source: LSEG Workspace



Photograph: Reuters

America is out of the Paris agreement (again)

As of Tuesday America has officially withdrawn from the [Paris agreement](#), just as it did during Donald Trump's first term. (It rejoined under President Joe Biden.) The agreement, struck in 2015, committed almost all of the world's countries to keeping global temperature rise "well below" 2°C above pre-industrial levels. America is no longer obliged to regularly submit plans on how it will mitigate against climate change, report on its progress, or help finance poorer countries' efforts.

Though the withdrawal process formally takes a year—Mr Trump issued the order last January—America has been acting as if it was already out. It has dramatically reduced climate funding as part of a general slashing of international aid, and in November declined to send a formal delegation to Brazil for COP30, the annual climate conference. Despite Mr Trump's rejection of climate diplomacy, the [global growth of emissions is slowing](#), and investment in clean-energy sources now outstrips that in fossil fuels by two-to-one.



Illustration: Sandra Navarro

Daily 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 [\[email protected\]](mailto:). We'll pick three winners at random and crown them on Saturday.

Tuesday: What is supposedly James Bond's family motto, and also the title of a film starring Pierce Brosnan?

Monday: The press are sometimes referred to by which term, dating back to when the three main classes of society were the nobility, clergy and commoners?

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

Lewis Carroll