

1. Two South Korean army soldiers died after their AH-1S Cobra attack helicopter crashed during a training exercise on Monday morning, military officials said. The helicopter went down at 11:04 a.m. in Gapyeong County, about 34 miles northeast of Seoul, after taking off for flight training at 9:45 a.m., the army said in a text message to reporters. A cause for the crash has not yet been determined.
2. "The two occupants were urgently transported to a civilian hospital, but both unfortunately passed away," the statement said. "Both individuals held the rank of warrant officer." The accident occurred during a training flight practicing emergency landing procedures without shutting down the engine, the army said.
3. British Prime Minister Keir Starmer's Chief of Staff Morgan McSweeney stepped down on Sunday, accepting responsibility for advising the government to appoint Peter Mandelson as Britain's ambassador to the United States, despite his links to convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.
4. McSweeney's departure follows the release of a tranche of documents by US Justice Department of Justice on January 30 that revealed new details about Epstein's relationship with Peter Mandelson, who was sacked as envoy in September. The disclosures have triggered a political crisis for the Labour Party's government and intensified scrutiny of Starmer's judgment.
5. In a letter dated February 1, 2026, Iraq's ex-Speaker of Parliament, Mohammed al-Halbousi called on the prime minister to halt the implementation of Cabinet Resolution No. 957 of 2025 for a period of 90 days and to review the customs tariff structure. The request followed a parliamentary session held on January 10–11, attended by senior officials from the Border Ports Authority, Customs, and the Tax Authority.
6. According to the letter, lawmakers proposed adopting a unified customs rate of 5 percent on the affected goods and reducing duties on hybrid vehicles from 15 percent to 5 percent, citing environmental protection and fuel conservation as key considerations. The speaker said the measures were aimed at easing pressure on citizens and stabilizing the market.
7. Despite the parliamentary appeal, major commercial districts in Baghdad came to a standstill on Sunday as merchants and shopkeepers went on strike to protest the customs hikes. Markets in Al-Shorja, Al-Rashid Street, Al-Rubaie, and Al-Sina'a were closed, along with key trading areas in Karrada and Al-Nasr Square. Dozens of traders also staged protests, particularly in the Al-Shorja market.