

NEWS IN BRIEF 8

January 17th – 23rd 2026

BBC NEWS

The government has launched a consultation on banning social media for under 16s in the UK as a part of a series of measures which are intended to "protect young people's wellbeing." Political momentum at Westminster in favour of a ban has grown since Australia's move last month to ban under-16s from 10 major platforms, with more than 60 Labour MPs recently joining the Conservative Party in urging a similar move. National polling by the charity Parentkind had found 93% of parents thought social media was harmful to children and young people.

TIME MAGAZINE

The United Kingdom plans to bring into force a law that criminalizes the creation of non-consensual sexualized images, including through Grok, the chatbot within Elon Musk's X application, following the app's deepfake scandal of the last few weeks, with thousands of pornographic images generated by Grok that flooded the app, including sexualized images of what appear to be minors.

NEW YORK TIMES

After a crackdown that killed thousands, Iran's prosecutor general said that "the sedition is over now," vowing to punish those responsible for the protests.

Iranian state TV released the first official death toll from the protests, saying that more than 3,000 people had been killed in the demonstrations. That figure was lower than the most recent toll of 4,519 deaths that was reported by the U.S.-based Human Rights Activists News Agency, or HRANA.

The movement was initially ignited in late December by a collapsing economy and a currency in free fall, but snowballed into a broader movement against the clerical government.

AXIOS

President Trump on Thursday called on Congress to pass a package of measures aimed at lowering drug prices, insurance premiums and increasing health cost transparency. The "Great Healthcare Plan" is a response to Democrats' attacks around expired Affordable Care Act subsidies and an acknowledgement the GOP could get blamed for health care affordability heading into the midterm elections. But the framework isn't likely to get far given the polarization around health care in the Senate and House.

NEW YORK TIMES

Cubans in Florida are being deported in record numbers. Cubans had long benefited from legal privileges unavailable to immigrants from other countries. President Trump has changed that. He has repatriated more than 1,600 Cubans in 2025, according to the Cuban government. That is about double the number of Cubans who were repatriated in 2024. And in the years that Mr. Trump has been president, he has sent more Cubans back than his three predecessors. Some of them had been in the United States for decades and built families and businesses, but were removed because of an old criminal conviction

BBC NEWS

Chinese mega-embassy in London approved by UK government



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bYQLAyFOz0E>

SKY NEWS

Nurses in transgender row suffered harassment from NHS trust, tribunal rules



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CBcDhKfab1w>

CBS NEWS

What to know as U.S. and China sign off on TikTok deal



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ag81wVxnTE>

Losing pubs ‘threatens fabric of society’

Patrick Sawer *The Telegraph*

21 January 2026

An old city centre pub, a former coaching inn, a cab drivers’ hut, a collection of concrete dinosaurs and a model boat clubhouse might not appear at first sight to have much in common. But a new study has found that without the presence of many such landmarks, the wellbeing of those who live near them would suffer profoundly. Familiar historic buildings and places are vital for mental health in “providing the permanence people need to feel secure in their surroundings and the stability to function and thrive in everyday life”, according to the report, published on Wednesday.

The positive impact of several historic pubs is highlighted in the report, emphasising the importance of such venues on community spirit and sense of permanence – with the Grade II listed Craven Arms pub in Birmingham city centre, the Grade II listed Fork ‘n’ Ale Taproom in Weston-super-Mare and the Coach and Horses in Hexham, Northumberland, among those picked out.

It comes at a time when pubs are increasingly under threat from rising taxes and costs.

The Telegraph has launched a campaign to save Britain’s pubs, which are under threat from business rates changes announced in the Chancellor’s Budget. The Government has said it is working on relief for pubs affected by the changes, which has resulted in some having their tax bills doubled overnight. However, it is yet to publish details of what this relief will look like.

(...) Researchers found that people’s connection with familiar historic places – from piers and pubs to cinemas and churches – provide what they said was “a sense of belonging and help us make sense of who we are”. (...) One of the study’s co-authors, Prof Rebecca Madgin, a professor of Urban Studies at the University of Glasgow, said: “We all have historic places that matter to us, but we probably haven’t stopped to consider the reasons why. Perhaps the only time we do this is when they are threatened with change or demolition. We might lament the gap site on the high street or feel a sense of loss as a local pub closes. This shows us that these places matter.

“The evidence suggests that our connection with historic places goes beyond a momentary emotional response to support a wider and deeper sense of wellbeing. Historic places can provoke joy, pride, calm or comfort and help us to nurture a sense of attachment and belonging that is beneficial for our wellbeing.”

Historic England argues that a community’s close connection to its historic places and buildings has a positive economic impact, with people choosing to live, work, spend and invest in these locations.

Rachel Reeves, the Chancellor, announced in her Budget in November that business rates relief for the hospitality sector would come to an end, adding to the burdens already faced by pubs still counting the cost of the employers’ National Insurance increase, a rise in alcohol duty and in the minimum wage.

Several pub landlords have told The Telegraph they could be forced to close unless the Labour Government urgently changes direction.

(...) Adala Leeson, head of social and economic research at Historic England, said: “We need to feel secure and rooted – the constancy of heritage, the stability of things we know, helps us feel secure and calm. Humans crave continuity in their environment, and we need to function in everyday life without constant anxiety about what to expect.”

The report points to figures showing that in 2023, heritage-driven domestic tourism attracted more than 225.9 million visits and generated a total of £16bn in visitor spend from day visits and overnight stays in England. Prof Madgin added: “This report comes at a critical juncture as we search for ways to grow the economy whilst at the same time needing to nurture wellbeing.”

a landmark : un site historique, un grand monument

to thrive : être florissant

a venue : un lieu de rendez-vous

grade II listed - if a property is Grade II listed, it means the building has particular historic and/or architectural significance, may be located in a conservation area and is subject to regulations which protect its unique character and preservation.

rates: des impôts locaux

business rates: des impôts locaux sur les entreprises

the Chancellor = the Chancellor of the Exchequer: le ministre des finances

relief: les aides sociales

a tax bill: un avis d’imposition

overnight: du jour au lendemain

the evidence: les signes, marques, preuves

to nurture: nourrir

the hospitality sector: l’hôtellerie

a burden: un poids, une charge, un fardeau

alcohol duty: la taxe sur l’alcool

the minimum wage: le SMIC

heritage-driven domestic tourism: le tourisme national axé sur le patrimoine