

Global Watch Daily Briefing

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Today is **February 2, 2026**. The global landscape is defined by high-stakes diplomacy, major shifts in trade, and historic milestones in space exploration.

Global News Briefing: February 2, 2026

In space, **NASA's Perseverance** achieved the first AI-planned drive on Mars, navigating Jezero Crater autonomously. Meanwhile, the **Artemis II** SLS rocket underwent a critical "wet dress rehearsal" at Kennedy Space Center ahead of its mid-February crewed launch.

Diplomacy is under strain as **President Trump** expressed hope for an Iran deal despite Tehran's warnings of regional war. Tensions remain high in the Middle East following Israel's decision to terminate **Doctors Without Borders (MSF)** operations in Gaza, coinciding with a "pilot" reopening of the **Rafah crossing**.

On the trade front, the **India-EU Free Trade Agreement** has officially launched, covering 25% of global GDP. Simultaneously, the **IMF** warned of lingering impacts from 2025's global tariff wars. In defense tech, **Lockheed Martin and Fujitsu** signed a landmark MOU for quantum and AI development. Regionally, **Pakistan** concluded a bloody 40-hour counterterrorism operation in Balochistan while announcing a high-profile cricket boycott against India. Finally, critics in **CounterPunch** analyzed the "economic weaponization" of U.S. sanctions in service of foreign policy goals.

Here are top ten articles shaping the world today.

1. Space Exploration: NASA's Perseverance Achievement

- **Article:** NASA's Perseverance Rover Completes the First AI-Planned Drive on Mars
- **Description:** The Perseverance rover made history today by successfully navigating Martian terrain using autonomous AI path-planning. This technology allows the rover to identify hazards and chart routes without waiting for instructions from Earth-based engineers.
- **Link:** [ScienceDaily](#)

2. Conflict: The Siege of Gaza

- **Article:** Children Among 31 Palestinians Killed by Israeli Forces Across Gaza
- **Description:** Fatalities continue to mount across the enclave just one day before the anticipated reopening of the Rafah border crossing. The violence persists despite

international pressure and ongoing discussions regarding limited humanitarian travel through the Egyptian gateway.

- **Link:** [Al Jazeera](#)

3. Trade: Global Tariff Impacts

- **Article:** Effect of Global Tariffs on Middle East Not Yet Clear, Says IMF's Azour
- **Description:** IMF official Jihad Azour warned today at the Arab Fiscal Forum that the full impact of the 2025 "tariff war" is still unfolding. He urged Middle Eastern nations to strengthen regional cooperation to withstand the rapid geoeconomic transformation affecting trade flows.
- **Link:** [The National News](#)

4. Diplomacy: U.S.-Iran Relations

- **Article:** Trump Hopeful of Iran Deal After Tehran Warns of Regional War
- **Description:** President Trump expressed optimism regarding a new framework for negotiations with Iran, despite Supreme Leader Khamenei's warnings of a regional conflict. This comes after a period of high tension following anti-government protests and U.S. military posturing in the Gulf.
- **Link:** [The Straits Times](#)

5. China

China hands life sentence to former justice minister over bribery

A Chinese court on Monday sentenced China's former justice minister Tang Yijun to life in prison for taking bribes, state broadcaster CCTV reported. Under President Xi China has taken steps against corruption and malpractice.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/china-hands-life-sentence-former-justice-minister-over-bribery-2026-02-02/>

6. Trade: India-EU Relations

- **Article:** Historic India-EU FTA Offers India Zero-Duty Access to Europe
- **Description:** The newly implemented Free Trade Agreement (FTA) provides India with unprecedented access to European markets. This shift is expected to significantly challenge the textile export dominance of neighboring countries like Pakistan.
- **Link:** [The Sunday Guardian](#)

7. Science & Defense: Tech Alliances

- **Article:** Lockheed Martin and Fujitsu to Accelerate Dual-Use Technology Development
- **Description:** A new MOU signed today focuses on quantum computing, AI, and microelectronics for both commercial and defense sectors. The partnership aims to strengthen the technological foundations of the U.S. and Japanese defense industrial bases.
- **Link:** [Fujitsu Global](#)

8. Human Rights: Humanitarian Barriers

- **Article:** Israel to Terminate Doctors Without Borders (MSF) Work in Gaza
- **Description:** Israeli authorities have announced the termination of MSF operations, citing the organization's failure to provide detailed staff lists. MSF has countered that this is a pretext to obstruct vital medical aid to the war-torn territory.
- **Link:** [The Hindu](#)

9. Space: Artemis II Milestone

- **Article:** Watch NASA Fuel Up Its Artemis 2 Moon Rocket Today in Critical Prelaunch Test
- **Description:** Engineers began the "wet dress rehearsal" for the Artemis II mission today, loading the SLS rocket with 700,000 gallons of propellant. This test is a critical precursor to the crewed mission currently scheduled for mid-February.
- **Link:** [Space.com](#)

10. Foreign Policy: Economic Weaponization

- **Article:** Weaponizing America's Economy in Service of Israel
- **Description:** An analysis of how Washington has shifted from traditional economic competition to using sanctions and asset seizures as tools of retribution. The piece highlights the rising cost for countries in the Global South remaining beholden to Western financial systems.
- **Link:** [CounterPunch](#)