

## Despite explosion Blue Origin CEO says rocket to fly before year-end

AFP | Washington, United States

The CEO of Blue Origin vowed its New Glenn rocket "will fly again before the end of this year" after a recent ground test ended in a massive fireball that damaged the launch platform.

That ambitious promise from CEO David Limp, announced in a post late Monday on X, follows last week's colossal explosion at Cape Canaveral, Florida.

It was a major setback for Blue Origin, the company founded by billionaire Jeff Bezos, but also NASA, which was counting on the firm to collaborate on upcoming Moon missions.

NASA administrator Jared Isaacman meanwhile told CNBC that it would "take some serious time to repair" the launch pad.

He later said on X that 2028, when New Glenn is slated to carry out lunar rover deliveries, "should be well within what is possible for pad recovery."

Blue Origin's setback came at a crucial moment for the company, which is seeking to rival Elon Musk's SpaceX.

The Bezos company's New



CEO David Limp

Glenn rocket is meant to participate in NASA's Artemis lunar program, delivering both landers and cargo.

SpaceX has seen its own challenges in recent months, and Blue Origin had emerged as a promising alternative for NASA.

But New Glenn is key. With its explosion coming shortly after a malfunction that caused a recent satellite mission failure, the anomalies could disrupt NASA's tight mission schedule.

NASA is aiming to test an in-orbit rendezvous between a spacecraft and one or two lunar landers in 2027 as part of Artemis III, and carry out a crewed lunar landing before the end of 2028, before the end of US President Donald Trump's time in office.

## Hong Kong arrests parents who refused DNA test for baby

AFP | Hong Kong, China

Hong Kong authorities have arrested a couple on suspicion of child neglect after they refused to provide DNA test results for a baby boy they said had been born at home, the city's security chief said on Tuesday.



The unmarried couple said the child had been born two months ago but had not yet received a birth certificate, local media reported.

They had previously said they refused to provide DNA test results for birth registration, citing privacy and religion as reasons.

On Tuesday Secretary for Security Chris Tang denied it was a privacy issue and called on the couple to provide evidence that they are the boy's biological parents.

"At this point, the mother has not been able to provide any records of her prenatal checkups or any medical consultations," he told reporters.

She had also refused to provide photos taken while she was pregnant, he added.

"With the baby's welfare as a starting point, we will first send the baby to the hospital for a medical exam," Tang said.

The couple have also said that Swedish authorities have taken custody of their older daughter during an illegal stay in Sweden in 2023.

Their Facebook page campaigning for her return drew attention to the current Hong Kong case.

Newborns must be registered within 42 days after birth under Hong Kong law.

Anyone found guilty of child neglect faces up to 10 years in prison.

## UK sets target to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 87% by 2040

AFP | London, United Kingdom

The UK government yesterday set a legal target of cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 87 percent by 2040, an additional intermediate goal.

The country has already fixed an objective of reducing emissions by 68 percent by 2030 and at least 81 percent by 2035, compared to 1990 levels, and is aiming to be carbon neutral by the middle of the century. The announcement comes

as Energy Security and Net Zero Minister Ed Miliband said the UK faced "the second fossil fuel shock of the decade", a reference to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 followed in February by the United States war with Iran.

The government would set out its plan for implementing the objective in coming months, in line with the Paris Agreement aim to keep global warming to 1.5C, a ministry statement added.

# Rubio says Mojtaba Khamenei alive and 'increasingly engaging'

AFP | Washington, United States

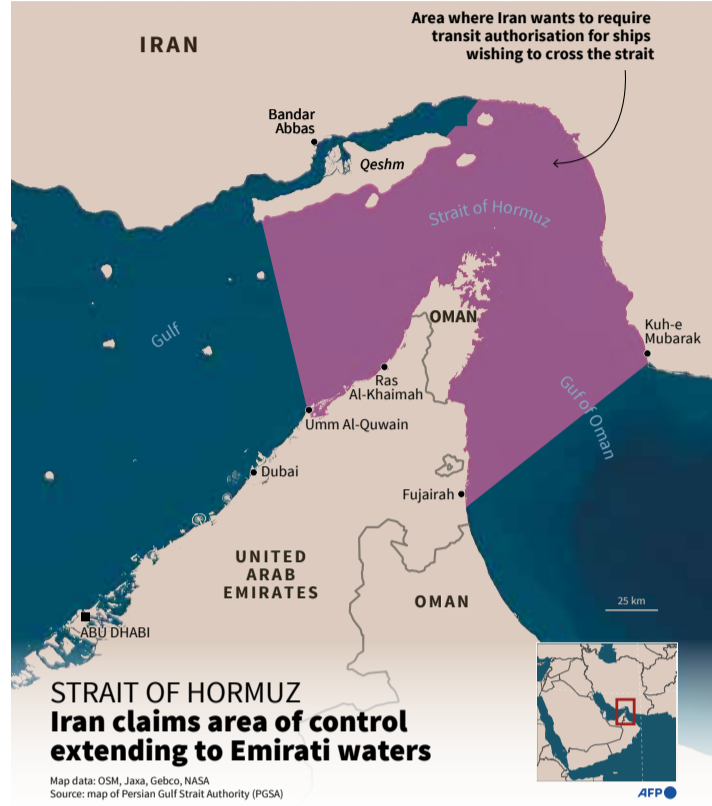
US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said yesterday that Iran's supreme leader Mojtaba Khamenei, who was wounded in US-Israeli attacks and has not been seen in public since assuming office, is alive and increasingly active.

"I think there are indications out there that he is increasingly engaging at some level," Rubio told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Mojtaba Khamenei, 56, succeeded his father Ali Khamenei, who was killed in the first wave of US-Israeli strikes that launched the war on February 28.

Rubio was testifying in front of the Senate panel as talks on ending the three-month-old war that has engulfed the Middle East and triggered a global energy crisis have stalled.

Rubio expressed hope for a deal with Iran, while insisting



**STRAIT OF HORMUZ**  
Iran claims area of control extending to Emirati waters

Map data: OSM, Jaxa, GeBCO, NASA  
Source: map of Persian Gulf Strait Authority (PGSA)

that Tehran must severely limit its nuclear program in order to see sanctions lifted.

"There is the prospect before us, which could happen today, it could happen tomorrow, it could happen next week," Rubio said.

Rubio said that Tehran must agree to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, a key shipping channel for Gulf oil and gas.

"They have to announce very clearly 'The straits are now open, we're not charging a toll.'" We will help remove the mines that they put in there, and they will not fire on ships."

Additionally, he said: "They have to agree on negotiating severe and long-term limitations and/or cancellation of enrichment activity."

Rubio continued: "Iran is being sanctioned because they've highly enriched uranium, Iran is being sanctioned because of their nuclear activities, if they agree to give up those things, there will be sanctions relief."

## Trump signs AI order giving government access to powerful models

Washington, United States

The order was triggered by concerns over Anthropic's Mythos model, which the AI startup has refused to release publicly.

US President Donald Trump signed an executive order Tuesday creating a voluntary framework under which AI developers could share advanced models with the government before public release.

The central provision allows

companies such as OpenAI, Google or Anthropic to give the government access to their most powerful models for up to 30 days before planned release.

The order was triggered by concerns over Anthropic's Mythos model, which the AI startup has refused to release publicly due to its ability to ex-

pose vulnerabilities in computer systems -- including those of banks, governments and hospitals.



## Israel, Hezbollah trade blows despite Trump declaring deal

# Israel-Lebanon talks begin in Washington

● Lebanon's health ministry said on Tuesday that Israeli attacks had killed at least 3,468 people since March 2 -- an increase of 35 compared to Monday.

● At least 26 Israeli soldiers and one civilian contractor have been killed over the same time frame.



AFP | Washington, United States

US Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee, State Department Chief of Staff Daniel Holler, Deputy National Security Advisor Mike Needham, and US Ambassador to Lebanon Michel Issa attend a meeting with Israeli and Lebanese delegations at the State Department in Washington, DC

The ambassadors of Israel and Lebanon began a new round of direct talks in Washington yesterday after US President Donald Trump said he had received commitments from both sides to de-escalate.

The fourth meeting between representatives of the two countries, which do not have diplomatic relations, is taking place at the State Department and is

scheduled to last two days.

Participants include Israel's ambassador to the United States Yechiel Leiter and Lebanese envoy Nada Hamadeh Moawad, as well as Daniel Holler, a senior advisor to Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

None of the officials made any statements.

The talks come as Hezbollah

and Israel continue to exchange fire, despite Trump announcing an agreement Monday to halt attacks.

Israel on Tuesday said it would continue targeting Hezbollah's bastions in Beirut's suburbs if the Iran-backed group continues to attack northern Israeli towns.

Recent days have seen a dramatic escalation in fighting

and bombardment as Israeli troops stage their deepest incursion into Lebanon in two decades.

Lebanon's health ministry said Tuesday that Israeli strikes a day earlier near a hospital in the southern city of Tyre killed four people and wounded 127 others, including 39 staff from the facility.