

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: AP

Nicolás Maduro pleaded not guilty to charges of drug-trafficking in a federal court in **Manhattan**. “I am innocent, I am not guilty, I am a decent man, I am still president of my country,” Venezuela’s deposed dictator said. His wife, Cilia Flores, also pleaded not guilty. The court ordered the couple to appear again on March 17th. America’s armed forces [captured](#) them in Venezuela’s capital, Caracas, on Saturday.

Delcy Rodríguez was formally sworn in as Venezuela’s interim president. Earlier she encouraged America to co-operate with her government, seemingly reversing previous comments that the [intervention in Venezuela](#) was an “atrocity”. Meanwhile America told the UN Security Council it was “not occupying” Venezuela. António Guterres, the secretary-general, said America’s actions risked escalating instability in the country.

The Trump administration said the **Centres for Disease Control and Prevention** was dropping its recommended number of childhood **vaccines** from 17 to 11. Robert F. Kennedy junior, America’s [vaccine-sceptical health secretary](#), said the updated schedule aligns with “international consensus”; it closely mirrors

Denmark's. States, not the federal government, mandate vaccines, but the CDC's guidance informs their policies.

Shares in **Novo Nordisk** closed around 5% higher in New York on Monday, following the launch of its Wegovy **weight-loss pill** in America—the first oral GLP-1 approved for obesity in the country. The Danish drugmaker has been [struggling to keep up](#) with its American rival, Eli Lilly, which expects its own weight-loss pill to be approved for sale by March.

Mr Trump said that he did not believe **Ukraine** had targeted a residence of **Vladimir Putin**, Russia's president, with drones last week. European leaders have accused Russia of lying about the alleged attack, which [Ukraine](#) strongly denies, in order to disrupt peace negotiations. Meanwhile Ukrainian officials said Russian strikes on Kyiv killed at least two people.

American stockmarkets rallied following the capture of Mr Maduro and Mr Trump's promise to invest heavily in [Venezuela's ailing oil industry](#). The Dow Jones rose by around 1.2%, or nearly 600 points, an all-time high. The s&p 500 and Nasdaq each closed the day more than 0.6% higher. American oil companies also made gains; shares in Chevron rose by around 5%.

A massive **bluefin tuna fish** sold for a record ¥510.3m (\$3.2m) at [Tokyo's Toyosu fish market](#). Kiyomura Corp, owner of a popular sushi chain, won the 243kg fish. The company's boss, Kiyoshi Kimura, dubbed "the Tuna King", expressed surprise at the price of this year's catch. But bluefin tuna prices are only getting dearer, as [fish stocks continue to fall](#) because of overfishing.

Figure of the day: 14m. The population of Burundi, squeezed into an area not much bigger than Wales or Massachusetts. [Read the full story.](#)



Photograph: Getty Images

America plans to “run” Venezuela

After he was snatched by American special forces in an [extraordinary nighttime raid](#) on January 3rd, Nicolás Maduro may never return to his country. Venezuela’s dictator faces charges that carry between 20 years and life in prison.

The White House’s plan for what comes next will be hotly debated when the UN’s Security Council meets on Monday. Mr Trump promises that the United States [would “run” Venezuela](#), though how hands-on it would be is unclear. He said that Delcy Rodríguez, Mr Maduro’s vice-president, was “essentially willing to do what we think is necessary to make Venezuela great again” (and played down a role for [María Corina Machado](#), a prominent opposition figure and Nobel peace prizewinner).

But Ms Rodríguez, who brands herself a leftist ideologue, may see things differently. “We will never be the colony of any empire,” she said in a televised address after America’s intervention. But on Sunday she struck a conciliatory tone, calling for “co-operation” between the two countries. Her actions will soon reveal her real view.



Photograph: AP

New year, same old Congress

The fallout from Donald Trump's intervention in Venezuela will make for a tense return to Capitol Hill. The Democrats in particular have constitutional concerns after Congress was not informed ahead of the operation carried out on January 3rd.

Lawmakers spent the final months of 2025 [haggling over government funding](#) and expiring health-care subsidies. They will begin 2026 doing more of the same. When senators return to work on Monday, they will have three weeks to agree on a new funding deal to avert yet another government shutdown. Although Democrats and Republicans have agreed on the broad outlines for next year's funding levels, they still need to pass nine individual appropriation bills.

Congress is also set to vote on whether to extend the recently expired health-care subsidies that were at the heart of last year's shutdown. A vote to extend those tax credits by three years is expected to take place in the House, and would then need to pass the Senate, which is unlikely.



Photograph: Getty Images

Playing for time in Yemen

On Wednesday the United Arab Emirates withdrew its forces from Yemen after it was pushed out by Saudi Arabia. The Southern Transitional Council, a UAE-backed secessionist group, **seized a big chunk of territory** across the south-east last month. But the UAE's departure has left the separatists exposed. Over the weekend they pulled back from many of their recently won positions amid air strikes by Saudi jets.

This is a fragile equilibrium. The STC is still bent on breaking away and re-establishing an independent south Yemen. Aiderus al-Zubaidi, its leader, said on Friday he will hold a referendum on the subject after two years. The Saudis oppose such a split, while the UAE supports it. Tensions between the two Gulf powers have never been higher; their mouthpieces continue to snipe at one another online. The Houthis, an Iranian-backed militia that controls much of western Yemen, are no doubt chuckling while their enemies feud.



Photograph: Getty Images

Turkey's bumpy inflation battle

For most economies, an inflation rate above 30% is cause for alarm. For Turkey, it is a reason to celebrate. In May 2024 annualised inflation topped 75%. A series of dramatic interest-rate increases brought it down to just under 31% in December, according to data released on Monday. The central bank expects that inflation will ease to somewhere between 13% and 19% year on year by the end of 2026.

Still, an uptick in domestic demand, as well as a recent 27% increase to the minimum wage, may slow disinflation. And [political risk](#) looms ahead of Turkey's general elections, which are scheduled for 2028 but are expected to be brought forward. The president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has in the past prioritised economic growth over stable prices. The closer election day gets, the more the central bank will feel the pressure to indulge him.



Photograph: Getty Images

Football's buzzy transfer window

Since the start of the year European football clubs have been free to buy and sell players again. This year's January transfer window is looking busy. The English Premier League is having an unusually contested season, with only four points separating Chelsea, in fifth place, from Newcastle, in 14th. At the same time, competitive title races are taking place in France and Italy. Clubs may thus look to the transfer market to find an edge.

Many players on the fringes of their clubs also have an additional reason to consider moving teams. The men's [World Cup](#) in the United States, Canada and Mexico begins in six months' time, which means that the January window is their last chance to impress international coaches and secure a spot in their country's World Cup squads. Last year clubs in England, France, Italy, Spain and Germany spent £1.1bn (\$1.5bn) on almost 600 players. This year they will probably splash out even more.



Illustration: The Economist

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

Monday: The SI unit for luminous intensity is originally based on the light emitted by what object?

*Beauty is boring because it is
predictable.*

Umberto Eco