

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: Getty Images

María Corina Machado, **Venezuela's** opposition leader, presented her Nobel peace prize medal to Donald Trump during a meeting at the White House, but left [without persuading](#) America's president to support her becoming her country's leader. Ms Machado said the gift recognised Mr Trump's "commitment to our freedom". He has claimed Ms Machado, who [is popular](#) in Venezuela, has "no support" there.

America agreed to cap tariffs on **Taiwanese** imports at 15% in exchange for the island's chipmakers (including the world's largest, TSMC) investing \$500bn in their American operations. The Trump administration agreed to cut levies from 20% to the level faced by South Korea and Japan. America's commerce department said that the deal would [lead to a "massive reshoring"](#) of the country's chipmaking sector.

Netflix signed a deal to become the exclusive streaming partner of films produced by **Sony Pictures Entertainment**. Under the agreement, Netflix would get the rights to Sony's films for the first 18 months after their theatre runs. The firms did not reveal how much the deal was worth. The announcement comes amid [Netflix's push](#) to acquire Warner Bros Discovery, another big studio.

Denmark's prime minister, Mette Frederiksen, said **Greenland's** defence was a "common concern" for NATO. Meanwhile troops sent by several European members of the alliance started to arrive on the island. Their leaders hope [to deter Mr Trump](#) from invading the territory, which is part of Denmark. A meeting between senior officials from Denmark, Greenland and America on Wednesday failed to resolve tensions.

Robert Jenrick, formerly one of the most prominent members of Britain's opposition Conservative Party, defected to [Reform UK](#), **Nigel Farage's** populist-right party. Earlier, the Tory leader, Kemi Badenoch, sacked Mr Jenrick after discovering evidence of his planned defection. It is another blow to the Conservatives; on Monday Nadhim Zahawi, a former Tory chancellor, also switched allegiance to Reform, which is leading in opinion polls.

Mr Trump threatened to invoke the **Insurrection Act**, which allows the president to deploy troops to suppress armed rebellions, to quell unrest in Minnesota. The city of Minneapolis has been gripped by almost continuous protests since an Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent [killed Renee Nicole Good](#) on January 7th. Jacob Frey, the mayor, has said that the situation "is not sustainable".

Sweden's recording-industry's trade body, IFPI, banned "I know, You're Not Mine" from national charts after an investigation revealed that the folk ballad was created by AI. Team Jacub, the producers behind the song, insist the "human-controlled creative process" only used AI as a "tool". The tune has been streamed millions of times and topped Sweden's music charts.

Figure of the day: \$5bn, the value of total bagel sales in 2025.
[Read the full story](#).



Photograph: Reuters

Canada inches closer to China

[Mark Carney](#), Canada's prime minister, met Xi Jinping, his Chinese counterpart, in Beijing on Friday. Canadians are hoping for a breakthrough. Chinese tariffs, introduced last year in retaliation for Canada's levy on Chinese electric vehicles in 2024, have been crippling parts of Canada's agricultural sector. Anita Anand, Canada's foreign-affairs minister, has suggested that discussions aimed at easing the tariffs—which include a 100% levy on rapeseed (canola) oil and 25% one on seafood—have so far been productive.

In his opening remarks, Mr Xi noted that Mr Carney is the first Canadian leader to visit Beijing since 2017. The trip may help [thaw frosty relations](#) between the two countries. Donald Trump's trade war against his northern neighbour has prompted Mr Carney to diversify Canada's trade away from America. Canada wants to double its non-American exports over the next decade. Doing so without stoking the ire of Mr Trump—while courting his superpower rival Xi Jinping—will require a high-wire act of diplomacy.



Photograph: Getty Images

Tensions over Gaza test American-Israeli ties

Politicians and activists descend on Miami this week for one of America's biggest pro-Israel gatherings. The Israeli-American Council, a non-profit, is hosting its tenth annual summit. Since the [war in Gaza](#) began in 2023 the group has stepped up its advocacy, defending Zionist students on university campuses and lobbying harder for congressional support for Israel. This year the top speaker will be Miriam Adelson, a Jewish philanthropist who was the third most generous donor to Donald Trump's presidential campaign.

Support for Israel has long been a given in American politics, but the [mood has changed](#). Within the Republican Party, disputes over Washington's support for the Jewish state have [sparked fierce infighting](#). The ceasefire in Gaza has eased some tensions, but the faction that turned against Israel shows little sign of backing down. Binyamin Netanyahu, Israel's prime minister, appears to grasp the stakes: last week he told *The Economist* that the country would "taper off" its reliance on America for military aid over the next decade.



Photograph: dpa

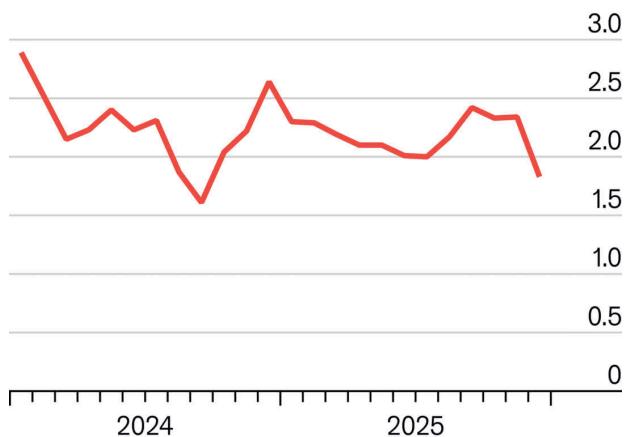
Germany's economy shows signs of life

Destatis, Germany's statistics agency, published December's inflation figures on Friday. The annual inflation rate continued to ease to 1.8% in December, down from 2.3% in November. The cooling was primarily due to softer increases in food prices and falling energy prices. Service prices, however, kept rising.

Europe's largest economy appears to be turning a corner. According to figures released on Thursday, after two years of contraction German GDP grew by 0.2% last year. The impact of the government's massive fiscal stimulus—which focuses on investment in infrastructure and defence—is at last taking effect. This is [good news](#) for Friedrich Merz, the chancellor, ahead of five state elections this year. However, two of those are in eastern German states where the populist-right [Alternative for Germany \(AfD\)](#)—which is leading the polls—could win a state election for the first time. In short, economic recovery may not be enough to stop the AfD's rise.

Turning a corner?

Germany, consumer prices,
% increase on a year earlier



Source: Haver Analytics



Photograph: Netflix

A gentle kind of reality

“The Boyfriend”, a heartfelt Japanese Netflix series, features gay men who live together and run a coffee truck—while searching, quietly, for love. The reality TV show, Japan’s first featuring just gay people, became a surprise hit last summer. It returned for a second season this week.

Japan has a rich history of gay media. The “Boys’ Love” manga, a Japanese cartoon genre which focuses on romantic male pairings, became wildly popular across Asia in the 1990s. (It has recently enjoyed a resurgence in [Thailand](#).) But in everyday life, gay rights are limited. Japan is the only G7 country that does not recognise same-sex marriage. Activists had hoped legal cases might pave the way for change, but the path has been thorny. Between 2024 and 2025, five high court rulings on the current ban found it to be “unconstitutional”. That was a breakthrough—until last November, when another court contradicted the previous decisions and upheld the ban.



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

Friday: Anna Wintour was the long-serving editor of which fashion magazine?

Thursday: Richard Branson is associated with which brand name, which has been used in industries such as music, hotels and airlines?

*Conversation enriches the
understanding, but solitude is the
school of genius.*

Edward Gibbon