

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: EPA

Donald Trump unveiled an American-led “**Board of Peace**” meant to oversee ceasefires and post-war reconstruction, initially in Gaza. Officials from 19 countries, including Saudi Arabia, Hungary and Argentina, have signed up, while western **European leaders** are notably absent. Mr Trump said the board—which he intends to chair—could work alongside the United Nations to address global crises, rather than replace it.

Earlier Mr Trump said that he had agreed to “the framework of a future deal” on **Greenland** after a “very productive” meeting with the head of NATO. America’s president withdrew his threats to impose **additional tariffs** on European countries opposed to his designs on Greenland, or to take the Arctic island by force. Still, he maintained that only America could defend the **territory**.

The Kremlin said that **Vladimir Putin** will meet **Steve Witkoff**, America’s special envoy, and Jared Kushner, Mr Trump’s son-in-law, in Moscow on Thursday to discuss a possible peace deal on **Ukraine**. Mr Trump said an agreement was “reasonably close”, after days of parallel talks with Ukrainian and European leaders. He is due to meet Volodymyr Zelensky later on Thursday.

A decades-old coalition between **Australia's** conservative National and Liberal parties, currently in opposition, collapsed after a disagreement over new **hate-crime** laws. The Liberal Party supported the bills, which were drawn up in response to the massacre at [Bondi beach](#) in December. The Nationals described the legislation as a “mess” that “overreached” and withdrew from the coalition two days after parliament passed the laws.

Blue Origin, Jeff Bezos's space company, said it would launch a satellite-internet service. Terawave will comprise 5,408 satellites and serve businesses, data centres and governments. The firm said it would send up the first satellites in late 2027, providing “connectivity to locations unreachable by traditional methods”. The market is dominated by Elon Musk's [Starlink](#), which has more than 9,000 satellites.

Argentina's economy contracted in November, following a market sell-off sparked by a [close midterm election](#) in October. The country's economic activity indicator, a proxy for GDP, slowed by 0.3% year-on-year. The official index was dragged down by sharp slowdown in the fishing sector, as well as declines in manufacturing and retail.

Wind and solar energy overtook **fossil fuels** as the **European Union's** largest [sources of electricity](#) in 2025, data from Ember, a think tank, showed. The two renewables generated around three-tenths of the bloc's power, driven by another year of rapid solar expansion. Nearly half of EU electricity came from renewables overall. Coal's contribution sank to its lowest level ever.

Figure of the day: \$440bn, global retail spending on beauty products in 2024. [Read the full story.](#)

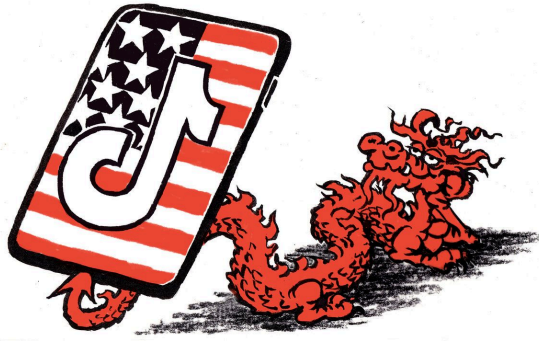
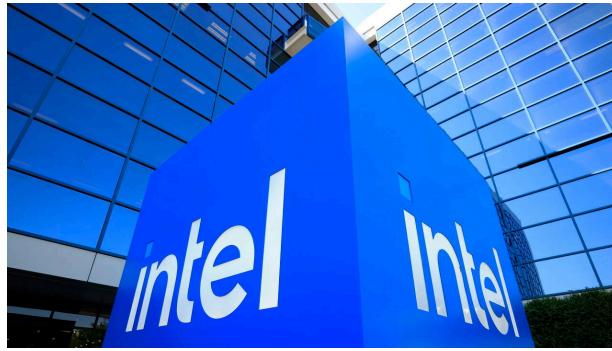


Illustration: David Simonds

TikTok cuts links to China—sort of

Six years ago Donald Trump tried to ban TikTok. On Thursday an American-led consortium is [due to buy it](#). Western governments have long worried that China could use the video app to steal users' personal data or manipulate their news diet. Last year America's Supreme Court upheld a law forcing TikTok's owner, [ByteDance](#), to sell the app to non-Chinese investors or close it. Twelve months on, such a deal has at last been struck.

The new America-only version of TikTok will be owned by investors including Oracle, a tech firm that will retrain TikTok's algorithm on American data. ByteDance will keep a 19.9% stake and a board seat. It will lease its algorithm to the American affiliate and continue to manage advertising, e-commerce and "global product interoperability". This seems to fall short of the law's requirement that TikTok be cut off from any "operational relationship" with ByteDance. But with 170m American users, TikTok looks too big to ban.



Photograph: Getty Images

Intel's prospects are looking up

The American chipmaking giant reports its annual results for 2025 on Thursday. Investor confidence is rising after a dire half-decade. Between 2020 and 2025, its market value nearly halved as it missed the [surge in demand for AI chips](#), made by firms such as Nvidia, and stumbled in its efforts to keep pace in advanced chip manufacturing.

But in August, fears about foreign semiconductor supremacy led the American government to take a 10% stake in Intel. That, combined with aggressive cost-cutting and a concerted effort to catch up with cutting-edge techniques, kicked off a comeback. In the past year Intel's share price has jumped by more than 125%, compared with a 17% gain in the NASDAQ, a tech-heavy index.

Intel is also starting to benefit from AI indirectly, because the servers in data centres require the central processing units in which it has long specialised. And in September Nvidia also agreed to work with Intel to develop new CPU chips, accompanied by a \$5bn investment.

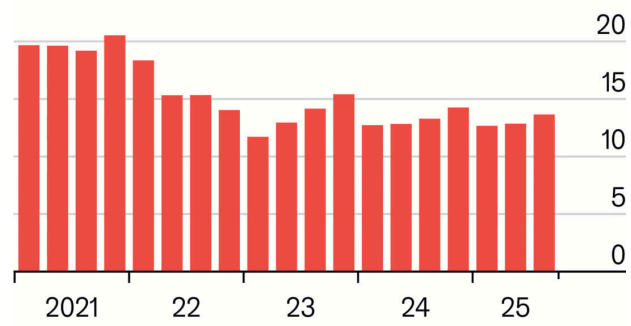
Wheel of fortune

Intel

Share price, \$



Revenue, \$bn



Source: LSEG Workspace



Photograph: Getty Images

Bangladesh gears up for elections

On Thursday, political parties in Bangladesh began campaigning ahead of a general election on February 12th. It will be the 13th national poll since Bangladesh gained independence from Pakistan in 1971—and arguably the most consequential. It is the first national vote since mass protests in 2024 toppled Sheikh Hasina, the then-prime minister. That ended 15 years of increasingly authoritarian rule by her Awami League party, which is currently suspended.

It is appropriate, then, that Bangladeshis will also vote in a referendum on democratic reform. Should it pass, the package would strengthen judicial independence, boost the number of women in parliament and put limits on prime-ministerial terms. But transformation will also depend on [the parties themselves](#). The Bangladesh Nationalist Party—the favourite to win the election—is seen by many Bangladeshis as just as corrupt as the Awami League. And polling suggests that the BNP faces a close race with a coalition led by Jamaat-e-Islami, an Islamist group accused of indulging extremists.



Photograph: Alamy

The long shadow of Turkish inflation

Turkey's central bank has been steadily lowering interest rates since December 2024, cutting them by more than 10 percentage points as inflation has eased. Annual consumer-price growth fell to just under 31% in December, clearing the way for another move. Analysts expect the central bank to cut its main rate by 1.5 percentage points, to 36.5%, when policymakers meet on Thursday for the first time this year.

For ordinary Turks, relief still feels distant. Borrowing costs remain high, government spending has been tightened and annual inflation—though lower—has stayed in double digits for more than six years. A recent 27% rise in the minimum wage, which failed to keep pace with price rises, has sparked protests from some trade unions. [The public mood is sour](#). And in a recent survey, fewer than a quarter of Turks said they expect the economy to improve in 2026.



Illustration: Sandra Navarro

Daily quiz

We will serve you a new question each day this week. On Friday your challenge is to give us all five answers and, as important, tell us the connecting theme. Email your responses (and include mention of your home city and country) by 1700 GMT on Friday to [\[email protected\]](#). We'll pick randomly from those with the right answers and crown three winners on Saturday.

Thursday: Which actor played the psychiatrist who treats Micheal Myers in the first Halloween film?

Wednesday: Which actor won an Oscar for best supporting actor as a traumatised Vietnam veteran in “The Deer Hunter”?

*When you light a candle, you also
cast a shadow.*

Ursula K. Le Guin