

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: Getty Images

Donald Trump warned Delcy Rodríguez, **Venezuela's** interim leader, that she would pay “a very big price” if she did not meet [America's policy demands](#). Mr Trump insisted that America was “in charge” despite Ms Rodriguez being at the helm following the capture of Nicolás Maduro, the Venezuelan president. Mr Trump also hinted at a possible intervention in Colombia, accusing its leader of being a “sick man” for shipping drugs to America.

Meanwhile Ms Rodríguez called on **America** to work with her government on an “agenda of co-operation oriented towards shared development”. The statement appeared to be a reversal of her earlier stance following America's intervention in Venezuela, which she had described as an “atrocity”. Ms Rodríguez also convened her first cabinet meeting on Sunday, which included loyalists to Mr Maduro.

Oil prices fluctuated as investors considered the [impact](#) of America's operation in Venezuela, which sits on a fifth of the world's oil reserves. Brent crude, the international benchmark, initially fell by around 1% before rising again during early trading in Asia. Regional stockmarkets also rose. The benchmark indices in Japan, South Korea and Taiwan all climbed by more than 2%.

Mette Frederiksen, **Denmark's** prime minister, urged Mr Trump to “stop the threats” about America annexing **Greenland**. Ms Frederiksen’s remarks came after Mr Trump reiterated his interest in taking over the [self-governing Danish territory](#), saying that America needed it “for defence”. Last month the Trump administration appointed a “special envoy to Greenland”, infuriating Denmark.

Russia accused **Ukraine** of targeting Moscow with drones for four consecutive days since the new year. Ukraine did not comment on the claim. So far its [attacks](#) on the Russian capital have tended to be sporadic. On Sunday the Kremlin shut three of the city’s four airports. Meanwhile Ukrainian officials said Russian strikes on Kyiv had killed at least two people.

Botswana invited **Russia** to invest in its rare earths and diamonds, according to Russian state media citing Botswana’s foreign minister. The country, which [stands out for its political stability](#) in southern Africa, is also set to open an embassy in Russia. Diamond-mining heavily contributes to Botswana’s GDP, though the country was [overtaken by Russia](#) as the world’s biggest producer in 2014.

Police in **Germany** said they suspected a far-left group of a “politically motivated” arson attack that left more than 45,000 homes in Berlin without power on Saturday. The capital’s mayor, Kai Wegner, condemned “extremists” for putting “lives at risk” after Vulkangruppe (Volcano Group) claimed responsibility for the “sabotage” that the group said targeted “the fossil-fuel economy”. Tens of thousands of homes remain without electricity.

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

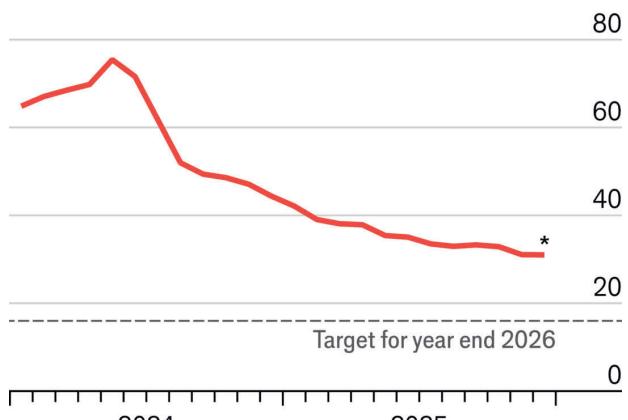
Turkey's bumpy inflation battle

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.

The long descent

Turkey, consumer prices,
% increase on a year earlier



Source: LSEG Workspace

*Estimate



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 [\[email protected\]](mailto:). 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