

Catch up: Trump says America should “take over” Gaza; Alphabet’s shares tumble



Donald Trump proposed that America “take over” the war-ravaged **Gaza Strip** after its 2m Palestinians are “permanently” resettled in neighbouring countries. Speaking alongside Binyamin Netanyahu, Israel’s prime minister, [America’s president](#) suggested the enclave, which he earlier called a “demolition site”, could be developed into “the riviera of the Middle East”. Mr Trump did not directly answer how and under what authority America could occupy the territory.

Alphabet’s shares tumbled after its fourth-quarter earnings fell short of analysts’ expectations. Revenues rose by 12% in the three months to December, down from 13% a year earlier. Google’s parent company announced plans to invest around \$75bn to grow its [artificial-intelligence](#) operations.

China’s central bank showed its willingness to support the **yuan** in the face of [American tariffs](#). As markets reopened following the

lunar-new-year break it maintained the pre-holiday rate of 7.2 yuan to the dollar. Meanwhile the **US Postal Service** temporarily stopped accepting parcels from China and Hong Kong, without explaining why. (It may be tied to the ending of “[de-minimis](#)” exemptions.)

Police said that 11 people were killed in a shooting at a community college in the **Swedish** city of Orebro. They said that the lone attacker, who is thought to have died at the scene, was not previously known to them, and that they do not believe he had links to an armed group. There have been occasional knife attacks at schools in recent years.

Spotify reported its first full year of profitability since its launch in 2008. The number of monthly users of the [Swedish streaming service](#) rose to 675m in the fourth quarter. In recent years Spotify has made cuts to its workforce, raised subscription prices, and diversified into audiobooks and podcasts, in addition to [music](#).

America began sending detained migrants to **Guantánamo Bay**, the White House confirmed. One military plane, carrying about a dozen people, left from Texas, according to the *Wall Street Journal*. Last week Mr Trump ordered the expansion of a migrant detention camp at America’s naval base in Cuba, with the goal of housing 30,000 of the “worst criminal illegal aliens”.

The Aga Khan, a dazzlingly rich philanthropist, horse-racing aficionado and spiritual leader of the world’s 15m Ismaili Muslims, died aged 88. The 49th hereditary imam, considered by his followers to be a direct descendant of the Prophet Muhammad, “passed away peacefully” in Portugal, according to his charity. His fortune was estimated to be worth around \$1bn in 2008, according to *Forbes* magazine.

Figure of the day: 460, the number of words in the average British parliamentary speech, down from almost 1,000 in 1938. [Read the](#)

full story.

China's face-off with Trump on tariffs



Bullies are often told to pick on someone their own size. Few of them do. President Donald Trump is an exception. After he threatened China, [Canada and Mexico](#) with new tariffs, America's two smaller neighbours found ways to placate him. [China](#), whose economy is closer to America's in size, fought back.

Shortly after America's new 10% tariffs came into effect, China launched an antitrust investigation of Google. It placed restrictions on an American biotechnology firm and PVH, which owns brands including Calvin Klein. China also said it will limit exports of rare metals and place import duties on American energy, farm machinery, big cars and pickup trucks. (It did not, however, weaken the yuan.)

China's response is largely symbolic, a warning shot intended to deter future tariffs. The only problem with this approach is that Mr Trump takes symbolism very seriously. China's show of defiance may provoke America's president into further escalation. China can match America's economic heft. But few can match Mr Trump's economic recklessness.

Novo finds new uses for slimming drugs



Novo Nordisk, Europe's most valuable company, releases annual results on Wednesday. Though the Danish drugmaker was the first to introduce a class of weight-loss treatments known as GLP-1s, it has since lost ground to its [American rival](#), Eli Lilly. Novo's experimental drug, amycletin, may help it catch up. In early trials of the drug patients lost up to 22% of their body weight over 36 weeks. Lilly's version does not reduce weight as rapidly.

Novo's treatments are proving useful for treating other medical conditions. Ozempic, the version of the slimming jab primarily used to treat diabetics, was recently approved by the Food and Drug Administration, America's drug regulator, to reduce the risk of kidney disease. Clinical trials suggest that liraglutide, an older formulation, may slow the progression of Alzheimer's disease.

Still, Novo faces pressure to reduce prices. Medicare, America's public health insurer for seniors, plans to renegotiate prices for its weight-loss drugs from 2027, which could lower the cost to patients. Meanwhile, compounding pharmacies, which mix their

own drugs, are selling cheaper versions of Novo's blockbuster treatments.

China welcomes Thailand's premier



Thailand's prime minister, Paetongtarn Shinawatra, arrives in Beijing for a four-day visit on Wednesday. The 38-year-old heiress is the daughter of Thaksin Shinawatra, a tycoon turned populist prime minister, who was ousted in a coup in 2006. Many in Bangkok, the Thai capital, suspect that he controls his daughter's government.

Regardless, China's leaders are rolling out the red carpet for her. In Beijing Ms Paetongtarn will meet her Chinese counterpart, Li Qiang, and has even been granted an audience with President Xi Jinping.

Her hosts will push Ms Paetongtarn and her father to do more to crack down on [cyber-scams](#) operating just beyond Thailand's borders in Myanmar and Cambodia. For her part, Ms Paetongtarn wants to reassure Chinese tourists that it is still safe to travel to Thailand. Last month a Chinese actor was abducted from an airport in Bangkok and transported to work in a scam centre in Myanmar. He had to be rescued.

Bayrou's no-confidence vote in France



Last December French legislators used a vote of no-confidence [to topple](#) the minority government of the conservative prime minister Michel Barnier, and scrap its budget for 2025. On Wednesday his successor, the centrist François Bayrou, also faces a no-confidence vote, tabled by the hard left after the prime minister announced that he too would try to force his budget through parliament without a vote.

But Mr Bayrou should survive. Crucially, the [Socialist Party](#) decided on Monday not to vote against him. The next day Jordan Bardella, president of the hard-right National Rally, hinted that his party might follow suit. Assuming he survives, Mr Bayrou will have defied the parliamentary odds, and France will—finally—have a budget for 2025. This should reassure the markets, but the price will be concessions to the left, notably tax increases on the rich and big companies. Bernard Arnault, head of the LVMH luxury empire, denounced these as a “cold shower”, pushing firms to move abroad.

Monsters of rock



“Becoming Led Zeppelin”, showing in cinemas from Wednesday, is the first authorised documentary about the band. Led Zeppelin towered over the 1970s rock era, selling more than 300m albums. Why it was not sanctioned sooner is an intriguing question. Perhaps the band was waiting to live down a deserved reputation for excess and debauchery. The film ends after their first flush of success, in the early 1970s, neatly dodging all the staleness and tragedy into which mega-groups have customarily sunk.

Yet Bernard MacMahon’s account is no whitewash. It explains the social context of the British quartet’s upbringings, as well as the artistry and energy that propelled them to the pinnacle. All three surviving members (Jimmy Page, Robert Plant and John Paul Jones), alongside archive tape of the late John Bonham, come across as thoughtful and lucid in their recollections. Belying all the bombast surrounding the band, they seem grateful simply to have come together to produce such [enduring music](#).

Daily quiz



The Economist

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 BST on Friday to QuizEspresso@economist.com. We'll pick randomly from those with the right answers and crown three winners on Saturday.

Wednesday: What is the common term for someone who is second-in-command of a ship?

Tuesday: Al-Fatiha, the first chapter of the Koran, has what literal meaning?

My definition of a free society is a society where it is safe to be unpopular.

Adlai Stevenson