

# The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: dpa

**Donald Trump** said he might impose tariffs on countries if they don't "go along with Greenland". Several European leaders have spoken out over the American president's threats to [seize Greenland](#), urging a larger NATO presence in the Arctic. France's finance minister said that if America were to take the self-governing territory, which is part of Denmark, it would be "crossing the line".

**OpenAI** will target users of ChatGPT with personalised advertisements as it faces [mounting pressure to make money](#) from its chatbot. Sam Altman, the company's boss, once described the strategy as a "last resort" but the startup has been [burning through cash](#) while making large investments into data centres and IT infrastructure. The ads will be tested across free and lowest-paid tiers in America.

**María Corina Machado** said she still believed Venezuela was on track to replace its "[criminal regime](#)" after meeting Donald Trump on Thursday. The opposition leader's visit to the White House did not appear to win her [more American support](#), despite presenting Mr Trump with her Nobel prize medal, which he had coveted.

Norway's Nobel Committee later confirmed that the medal "can change owners", though not the laureate title.

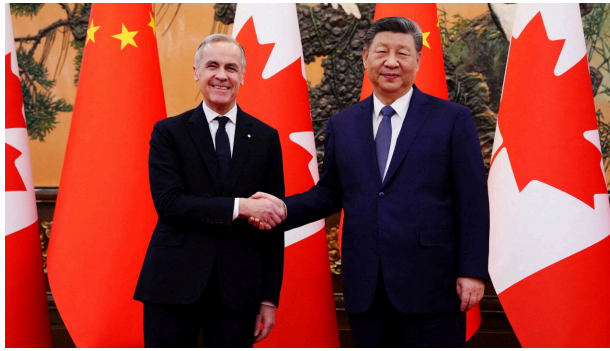
Mr Trump walked back his threat to invoke the **Insurrection Act**, which allows presidents to deploy troops to suppress armed rebellions, to quell protests in **Minnesota**. "I don't think there's any reason right now to use it," he said. Minneapolis has been in turmoil since an Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent killed [Renee Nicole Good](#) on January 7th.

The share price of **Novo Nordisk**, [a Danish drugmaker](#), rose by as much as 7% on Friday as new data on its Wegovy weight-loss pill, launched in America last week, was released. The data show that in the first four days after its launch, over 3,000 prescriptions were issued for the pill—the first oral GLP-1 approved for obesity in the country.

**South Korea's** former president, Yoon Suk Yeol, was sentenced to five years in prison for [resisting arrest](#) after he declared martial law in December 2024. A Seoul court also found him guilty of imposing martial law illegally and of fabricating official documents. A lawyer for Mr Yoon—who is the first sitting president to have been arrested—said that he would be appealing the verdict.

**Germany** returned two fragments of the **Bayeux Tapestry** to France. The scraps were reportedly taken by a Nazi textile specialist who had been in Bayeux investigating Germany's ancestral heritage during the country's occupation of France. The 11th-century embroidery depicts [the Norman conquest of England](#). It is due to be transported from France to the British Museum, where it will be displayed in September.

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



Photograph: Reuters

## Canada inches closer to China

On Friday [Mark Carney](#), Canada's prime minister, and Xi Jinping, his Chinese counterpart, agreed to significant tariff reductions as part of a "new strategic partnership". Canada will lower tariffs on up to 70,000 Chinese electric imported vehicles annually over the next five years. In exchange, China will reduce tariffs on Canadian rapeseed (canola) oil and eliminate levies entirely on some Canadian seafood as of March 1st.

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

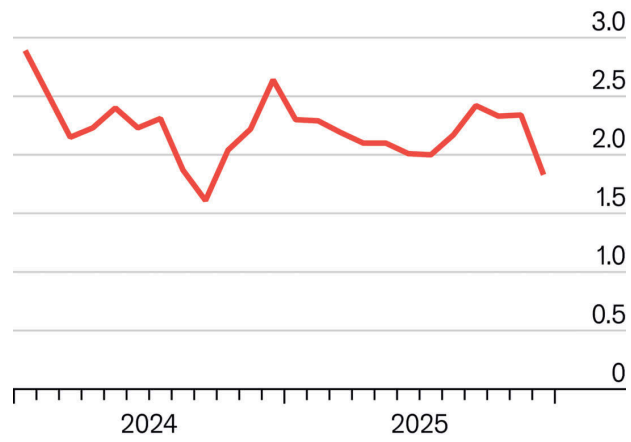
## Germany's economy shows signs of life

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: Sandra Navarro

## 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.

**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.*

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***Edward Gibbon***