

# The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: Bloomberg via Getty Images

**Amazon's** share price rose by almost 10% in after-hours trading after it reported strong quarterly earnings. Revenues of its cloud-computing unit, **Amazon Web Services**, grew by 20% in this quarter compared with last year—its fastest pace since 2022—driven by AI-related demand for [extra computing power](#). The tech giant's net income overall was \$21.2bn, up by 39%.

**Donald Trump** said he will lower the overall tariff rate on China from 57% to 47% following a [meeting with Xi Jinping](#) in South Korea. Levies intended to push China to stem the flow of fentanyl will be halved to 10%. In return China has promised to continue rare-earths exports, crack down on the fentanyl trade and restart purchases of soyabeans, America's president said. He also announced plans to visit China in April.

The **European Central Bank** kept its benchmark interest rate at 2% for a third straight meeting. **Christine Lagarde**, the ECB chair, said monetary policy is “in a good place” as the economy begins to show signs of a recovery. Policymakers didn't rule out future cuts, however, noting that the impact of America's tariffs [could weigh](#) on growth in the months ahead.

The **Trump administration** slashed the number of refugees it will admit to America over the next year to 7,500, a decision it said was “in the national interest”. The previous limit under the Biden administration was 125,000. It said it would prioritise white South Africans, known as Afrikaners—a group the administration has [claimed have been discriminated against](#).

**Prince Andrew**, the brother of **King Charles III**, was stripped of his prince title. He will be known as Andrew Mountbatten Windsor and must leave the Royal Lodge. The censures, “deemed necessary”, by Buckingham Palace, come after the publication of a posthumous book by Virginia Giuffre, who [accused him of sexual abuse](#) when she was 17 years old. He has always denied wrongdoing.

**Palantir**, a data-analysis outfit, sued two of its former top artificial-intelligence engineers, accusing them of using the company’s trade secrets to launch a “competing copycat business”. The lawsuit claims the engineers, having been “entrusted with Palantir’s crown jewels”, violated their contractual obligations to create an AI company called Percepta. [Palantir](#), whose stock has soared in 2025, was co-founded by Peter Thiel, a venture capitalist.

Hundreds of thousands of ultra-Orthodox Jews, or Haredim, gathered in Jerusalem to [protest against conscription](#) in **Israel**. The authorities shut down some public-transport services in response. Some of the protesters climbed on top of buildings; one teenager fell to his death. Israel’s parliament is struggling to draft a bill to end ultra-Orthodox Jews’ exemption from conscription, which they refuse on religious grounds.

**Figure of the day: \$1.5bn**, the projected value of India’s GLP-1 weight-loss drug market by 2030. [Read the full story](#).

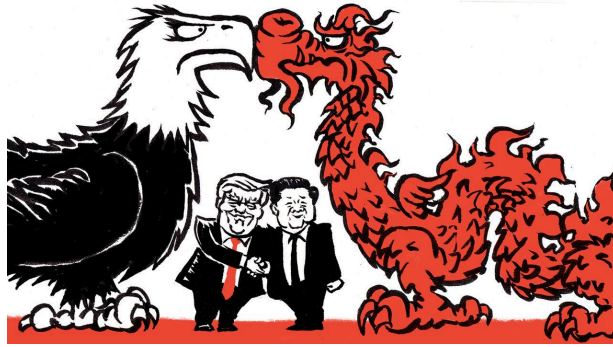


Illustration: David Simonds

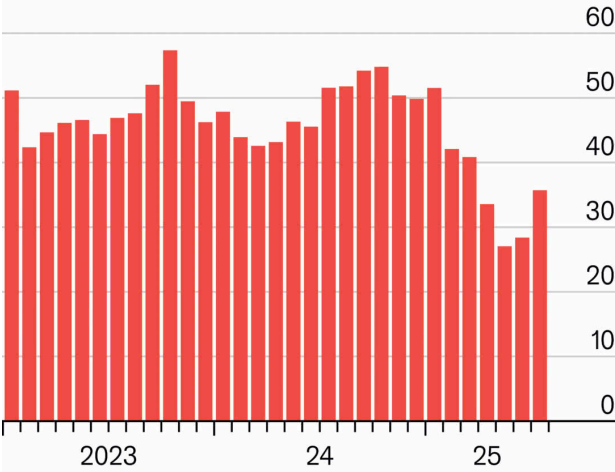
## A tariff truce, for now

Donald Trump met his Chinese counterpart, [Xi Jinping](#), in South Korea on the sidelines of an Asia-Pacific summit on Thursday. It was their first meeting since 2019. Markets rallied ahead of the talks, hoping that the two countries will de-escalate the economic warfare they have been conducting. This week a bullish Mr Trump predicted “a very good outcome”.

The countries’ negotiators have already hashed out a “framework” for a [deal](#). Details of Thursday’s meeting are still emerging, but America will probably postpone an upcoming tranche of tariffs on Chinese goods and lower existing ones. Mr Trump said China will buy more American soyabeans, a boon to Trump-friendly farmers. The country may also delay implementation of restrictions on exports of rare earths. China has a near-monopoly on the supply of the minerals, which are used to make high-tech goods. All this should enable the two men to declare a truce. But past bargains between the superpowers have never lasted very long.

Tariff-ic times

United States, goods trade with China, \$bn



Source: Census Bureau



Photograph: AP

## Signs of life in Europe's economy

Europe's economy has had a rough few years. An inflation and energy crisis was worsened by Russia's invasion of Ukraine; America, its closest ally, has turned protectionist; and China, once a vital export market, has become a fierce competitor, flooding Europe with cheap goods. To top it all off, the strong polling of [hard-right parties](#) has deterred many governments from carrying out essential reforms and cutting spending. Even so, the euro zone's GDP quarterly-on-quarterly growth of 0.2% in the third quarter—boosted by France—was slightly stronger than expected.

There are further reasons for [optimism](#). Surveys of business sentiment have improved in recent months, and euro-zone firms report rising orders. Even German manufacturers are seeing stronger demand from abroad, according to S&P Global, a financial-data provider.

What Europe needs now is a revival in [consumer](#) confidence. In the first half of 2025 households increased the share of income they saved. If that trend reverses, the recovery could gain momentum.



Photograph: Reuters

## Japan's interest-rate tightrope

The Bank of Japan (BOJ) kept benchmark interest rates at 0.5% on Thursday. Earlier this year it raised rates, hinting at an end to Japan's deflationary past. But uncertainty persists. Donald Trump's new tariffs have clouded the outlook for exporters, while [falling real wages](#) continue to sap consumer spending. With growth weak and the yen under pressure, policymakers decided to hold fire.

Politics is adding to the uncertainty. Japan's new prime minister, [Takaichi Sanae](#), is more inclined than her predecessor to support tax cuts or stimulus to cushion households from inflation. Her broader agenda remains vague. Ms Takaichi's new finance minister has hinted at wanting a stronger yen—something that would require higher rates. Still, the BOJ seems in no rush. After decades [battling](#) deflation, a few more months will hardly matter.



Photograph: EPA

## Precarious peace in Gaza

Gaza's shaky ceasefire is being [tested](#) again. On Tuesday Israel accused Hamas of violating the deal, both by opening fire on its soldiers near Rafah (one was killed) and by being slow to return the bodies of hostages who died in captivity (13 are still in Gaza). It carried out a string of air strikes that killed more than 100 people, according to Palestinian officials.

America is putting pressure on [Israel](#) to stay the course. Donald Trump said the incident did not mean the ceasefire would collapse: "Nothing is going to jeopardise that," he said. Indeed, after hours of bombardment, the Israeli army confirmed the ceasefire was back in effect.

For now, an uneasy truce [holds](#). Yet little progress has been made towards disarming Hamas or standing up an international peacekeeping force, both of which are prerequisites for the next phase of Israel's military retreat. Gaza's future remains in doubt.



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 BST on Friday to [\[email protected\]](#). We'll pick three winners at random and crown them on Saturday.

**Thursday:** Which human organ is contained within the pericardium?

**Wednesday:** Which university did Prince William and his wife, Kate, attend?

*Liberty, once lost, is lost forever.*

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***John Adams***