

# The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: Getty Images

María Corina Machado, **Venezuela's** opposition leader, presented her Nobel peace prize medal to Donald Trump during a meeting at the White House. But she was unable to persuade America's president to support her bid to become leader of her country. Ms Machado said the gift recognised Mr Trump's "commitment to our freedom". He has previously claimed that Ms Machado, who **is popular** in Venezuela, has "no support" there.

**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.

**Netflix** signed a deal to become the exclusive streaming partner of films produced by **Sony Pictures Entertainment**. Under the agreement, Netflix will receive the rights to Sony's films for 18 months after they have appeared in cinemas. The firms did not reveal how much the deal was worth. The announcement comes

amid [Netflix's push](#) to acquire Warner Bros Discovery, another big studio.

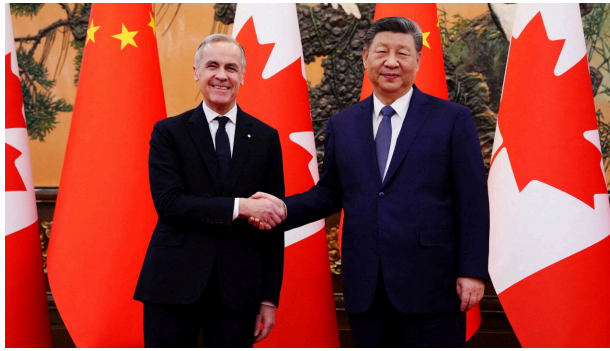
**Japan** became the latest country to start an investigation into X's **Grok** over concerns about the AI tool's [generation of sexualised images](#) of people, including children. On Wednesday, Elon Musk's company said that users would be prevented from manipulating pictures in such a way. Britain has begun a similar probe; Malaysia and Indonesia have already blocked the app.

Denmark's prime minister, Mette Frederiksen, said **Greenland's** defence was a "common concern" for NATO, as small numbers of troops from several European NATO members began to arrive on the island. Their leaders are hoping to dissuade Mr Trump from [seizing the island](#), a self-governing territory that is part of Denmark. A meeting between officials from Denmark, Greenland and America on Wednesday failed to resolve tensions.

**America** agreed to cap tariffs on **Taiwanese** imports at 15% in exchange for the island's chipmakers (including the world's largest, TSMC) investing \$500bn in their American operations. The Trump administration agreed to cut levies from 20% to the level faced by South Korea and Japan. America's commerce department said that the deal would [lead to a "massive reshoring"](#) of the country's chipmaking sector.

**Sweden's** recording-industry trade body, IFPI, banned "I know, You're Not Mine" from national charts after an investigation revealed that the folk ballad was created by AI. Team Jacob, the producers behind the song, insist the "human-controlled creative process" only used AI as a "tool". The tune has been streamed millions of times and topped Sweden's music charts.

**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

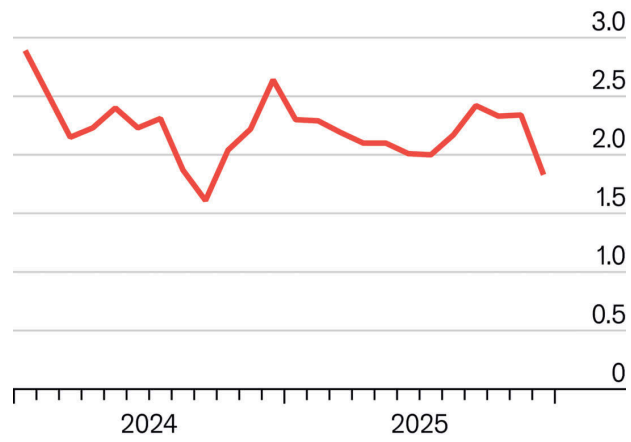
## Germany's economy shows signs of life

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: 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 [\[email protected\]](#). 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***