

Catch up: AI giants join forces in America; Israel launches “military operation” in the West Bank



OpenAI, SoftBank and **Oracle** will form a massive joint venture, dubbed Stargate, to fund American artificial-intelligence infrastructure. Announcing the deal alongside Donald Trump, [the AI giants](#) said they could spend as much as \$500bn in four years. Stargate will initially build data centres in Texas, with more planned for other states. The president claimed the project would create “over 100,000 American jobs almost immediately”.

Binyamin Netanyahu, **Israel’s** prime minister, said his country had launched a “large-scale and significant military operation” in Jenin, a Palestinian city in the **West Bank**, to “eradicate terrorism”. The move comes a mere two days after [a ceasefire](#) in Gaza. At least ten people were killed and dozens injured, according to the Palestinian health ministry. On Monday **Donald Trump** reversed the [Biden administration’s sanctions](#) on Israeli settlers in the West Bank.

Mr Trump said he would hit the **European Union** with **tariffs**, a day after [he threatened](#) a 25% levy on goods coming into America from Mexico and Canada. He gave no timeline for hitting EU imports, or what the level might be. He reiterated that China was also in line for tariffs, perhaps as early as February 1st.

Two dozen Democrat-run American states and cities joined lawsuits seeking to block Mr Trump's attempt to end "**birthright citizenship**". The legal challenges argue that his executive order is unconstitutional—[probably correctly](#). Mr Trump says the action is needed to deter illegal migration. Currently children born in the country, including to non-citizen parents and those on temporary visas, are automatically granted citizenship.

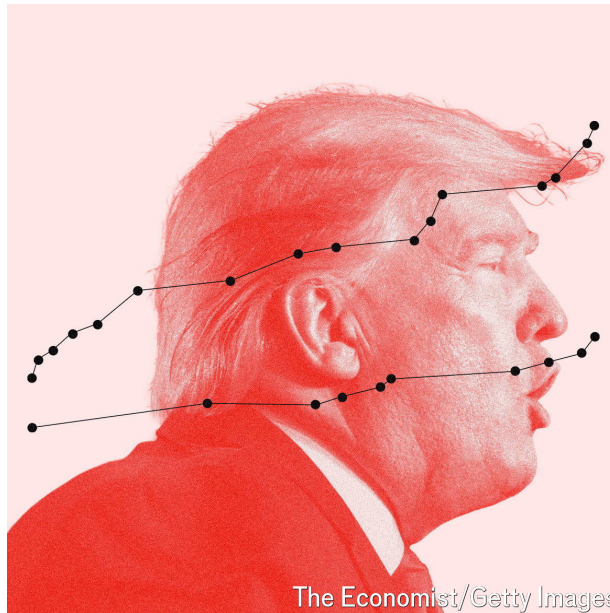
Volodymyr Zelensky said "at least 200,000" **European peacekeepers** would be needed to enforce any ceasefire deal with **Russia**. Speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Ukraine's president also warned that "there is no ocean separating European countries from Russia." Mr Zelensky is trying to secure a meeting with Mr Trump, who has repeatedly promised to quickly end the [war in Ukraine](#).

A day after Mr Trump assumed office **Vladimir Putin**, Russia's leader, spoke to **Xi Jinping**, his Chinese counterpart, in a video call lasting over 90 minutes, according to Russian state media. They "indicated a willingness to build relations" with America, a Kremlin aide said, adding that Russia was "ready for dialogue" over **Ukraine**. In 2022 [Messrs Putin and Xi](#) declared a "no-limits" partnership.

Brazil lost 30.8m hectares of vegetation to **wildfires** in 2024, an increase of 79% on the year before. According to a new report by MapBiomas, a monitoring group, nearly 60% of the loss was in the Amazon rainforest. Drought and [deforestation](#)—as well as blazes deliberately lit by farmers to clear land—were largely to blame.

Figure of the day: \$2.2bn, the amount that Venture Global, an American energy firm, aims to raise at its IPO. [Read the full story.](#)

The Economist's Trump tracker



On the campaign trail, Donald Trump promised his voters he would do all sorts of things immediately upon re-entering White House. Now back in the Oval Office, he has [already started making good](#). On his first day in office he signed 26 executive orders, on everything from border security to federal diversity requirements. Some, like pardoning the January 6th rioters, can be done with the stroke of a pen. Others are trickier.

The Economist has created a tracker to help you follow the first 100 days of Mr Trump's second term. We will keep you up to date on the president's efforts to fulfil his campaign promises. Many of his nominees for top roles in his administration require Senate confirmation, so we'll also be keeping tabs on their progress. And we'll be using data provided by YouGov, a polling firm, to assess [American's opinions on the president](#) week by week, throughout his presidency. Explore [our presidential tracker](#).

Europe prepares for Trump, Part Two



Germany's chancellor, Olaf Scholz, travels to Paris on Wednesday to meet France's president, Emmanuel Macron. The date marks the anniversary of the Elysée Treaty, signed in 1963, which sealed the countries' post-war reconciliation. The two leaders share domestic troubles at a time when [Europe is struggling](#) to work out how to deal with the new American administration.

In a speech to the French armed forces on Monday, the day of Donald Trump's inauguration, Mr Macron called for a European "strategic awakening". The French president, who is struggling to get a budget for 2025 through parliament, urged the continent to "buy European" and reduce its dependency on Uncle Sam. Mr Scholz, who faces federal elections on February 23rd, has chosen instead to buy American military kit and stresses that "NATO is our guarantor". The pair's differences are just the start. There is no European consensus on how to respond to Mr Trump: not only on defence but also on trade, tech, China and social media.

A pharma giant branches out



Johnson & Johnson, the world's largest drugmaker by revenue, reports its annual results on Wednesday. The company is preparing for competition to Stelara, its immunology drug: rivals are expected to make their debuts this month. Analysts at J.P. Morgan estimate that Stelara accounted for 12% of J&J's total sales of \$89.1bn in 2024. More such challenges are on the horizon: Darzalex, a top-selling cancer drug, will lose patent protection in 2029.

The company is looking to fresh areas for growth. On January 13th it announced a \$14.6bn acquisition of Intra-Cellular Therapies, a specialist in treatments for [bipolar depression and schizophrenia](#). In May the pharma giant bought Shockwave Medical, a cardiac-device maker, for \$13.1bn—its third deal in the medical-devices sector since 2023. J&J will probably tout that sector as a new long-term revenue source. It may also signal progress in resolving thousands of lawsuits alleging that its talcum powder caused cancer, which it has consistently denied.

Haiti's misery continues



On Wednesday the United Nations Security Council will discuss Haiti. The long-troubled Caribbean country has been in an [acute crisis](#) since gangs ousted Ariel Henry, the prime minister, in February last year. On January 18th Kenya deployed an extra 217 police officers to the peacekeeping mission it has led since June 2024, bringing the force to around 600. But it, alongside the country's transitional authorities, is failing to make much of a mark.

Over 5,600 Haitians were killed in gang violence in 2024, one fifth more than in 2023. More than 1m people are displaced. This year is set to get worse. In December Mercy Corps, a charity, warned that rising food prices caused by the violence threaten further hunger in the country. More than 4.9m people, some 40% of the population, don't have enough to eat. A lack of funds and interest from abroad, as well as other global crises, do not aid Haiti. The aim of holding elections by early 2026 seems, for now, very unlikely.

The contenders for this year's Oscars



The nominations for this year's Academy Awards will be revealed this week, after a delay following wildfires in California. Other gongs, such as the Golden Globes and the BAFTAs, have hinted at the probable contenders for the big prizes. These include “The Brutalist”, an epic of post-war immigration and the American dream; “Emilia Pérez”, an audacious musical about a transgender gangster; “A Complete Unknown”, which recounts Bob Dylan's rise to fame in the early 1960s; and “Conclave”, a papal drama.

Look out, especially, for “Anora” and “A Real Pain”. One tells of a sex worker's [entanglement with a Russian oligarch's son](#); the other of [a trip to Poland](#) made by two Jewish cousins in honour of their grandmother, a Holocaust survivor. They are united in combining relatively modest budgets with pithy screenwriting and stellar performances. The winners will be announced on March 2nd at what is set to be a subdued ceremony in Hollywood, which is still recovering from the fires.

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

Wednesday: The original “Die Hard” film is set during which seasonal holiday?

Tuesday: York, Westphalian and Tyrolean Speck are all types of which meat product?

**Natural abilities are like natural plants,
that need pruning by study.**

Francis Bacon