

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: Shutterstock

An American [Immigration and Customs Enforcement \(ICE\)](#) officer shot and killed a woman in **Minneapolis**, Minnesota. A Department of Homeland Security official said the victim had tried to run over ICE agents with her car. But a video of the incident and eyewitness reports dispute DHS's account. Minneapolis's Democratic mayor, Jacob Frey, called it "bullshit". Authorities identified the victim as Renee Nicole Macklin Good, a 37-year-old mother of three.

American forces seized an empty oil tanker in the north Atlantic that had been heading towards **Venezuela** to pick up oil before [fleeing](#) back towards Europe. The *Marinera* re-registered as a Russian vessel as it was being pursued. America also seized another tanker loaded with Venezuelan oil in the Caribbean on Wednesday. Earlier the Trump administration said it would control the sale of oil from Venezuela "indefinitely".

Marco Rubio, America's secretary of state, said he would meet Danish officials next week to discuss **Greenland**. The White House has floated the idea of using military force to acquire the self-governing Arctic territory, which is part of Denmark. Mr Rubio has reportedly told lawmakers that the president would prefer to [purchase the island](#).

Donald Trump said he would meet **Gustavo Petro**, Colombia's president, in Washington, DC, without specifying a date. The leaders agreed to the visit after a phone call that America's president described as a "great honour". Relations between them have been tense for months; just days ago Mr Trump threatened to [launch strikes](#) on Colombia.

Samsung Electronics said that its profits probably trebled year on year in the fourth quarter of 2025. The South Korean firm said that demand for its chips, driven by the AI frenzy, could push its operating profits for the period up to 20trn won (\$13.8bn). Chips now account for more than half of Samsung Electronics' revenue.

Cambodia arrested Chen Zi and extradited him to **China**. The Chinese-born businessman is accused of masterminding huge transnational cryptocurrency scams—so-called [pig-butchering](#). His Cambodian nationality was revoked in December. In October America charged Mr Chen with [wire fraud and money-laundering](#) and seized \$15bn in cryptocurrency. Britain also froze his assets, including a £100m office building in London.

A study published in the *British Medical Journal* found that people who stop using **weight-loss jabs** regain their shed kilos much more quickly than those who trimmed down just through dieting and exercise. The researchers, led by scientists from the University of Oxford, advised caution over short-term use of the [hugely popular](#) drugs, such as Wegovy and Ozempic. In 2024 global spending on the jabs reached \$54bn.

Figure of the day: 20m barrels. The volume of Iranian oil moved by American-captured tanker *Marinera* (aka *Bella 1*) to China since late 2020. Read the full story.



Photograph: Getty Images

Investors warm to Chinese AI

Chinese technology and foreign capital have been at odds with each other for a few years. The American government has told its investors to avoid bankrolling Chinese tech. And the Chinese government has wanted to stop foreigners from getting their hands on the country's technology and data through investments. The mutual mistrust persists, with president Donald Trump telling Chinese investors on January 2nd to unwind their positions in an American chip maker.

But there are also reasons to be optimistic for a thaw in relations. In December Meta, the American tech group, bought [Manus](#), a Chinese AI firm based in Singapore. In recent weeks several Chinese AI outfits have listed in Hong Kong, where foreigners can more freely invest in them. One such firm, MiniMax, prices its shares on Thursday. Another, Zhipu, will be the first LLM-maker to list on the exchange. The America-China tech conflict is far from over but deals such as these are a good sign.



Photograph: Getty Images

Long live the Shah?

If Iranians heed the call of [Reza Pahlavi](#), the exiled son of the last shah, the [12th day of protests](#), on Thursday, could be the biggest yet. Unrest has touched almost every province; crowds have grown from dozens to hundreds. Fearing chaos if the regime falters, some Iranians are thinking of reviving the monarchy they overthrew in 1979.

Yet Mr Pahlavi may struggle to turn noise into power. His advisers worry that courting leftists, secular democrats and reformists—long the backbone of dissent inside Iran—would dilute his influence. He lacks both an organised base and the grit shown by Ruhollah Khomeini, who flew from exile to topple the Pahlavi monarchy.

Many Iranians yearn for an alternative to the supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, one of the world's longest-serving rulers. Even some in [his circle](#) now see him as a liability. But his strongest defence may be an opposition as riven by internal dislikes as it is united by its loathing of him.



Photograph: Getty Images

Welcome to Newsomland

It's a big week in Californian politics. On Thursday Gavin Newsom, the Democratic governor, will deliver his final State of the State address to the legislature in Sacramento. The speech is a chance for Mr Newsom to present his plans for his final year in office. He is term-limited, so come 2027 will need a new gig. He won't admit it yet, but the de facto leader of the Democratic Party has [his eyes on the presidency](#).

Among the initiatives he will probably announce is another push to curb homelessness and build housing. Mr Newsom knows he must convince Americans that California is not the liberal wasteland Republicans say it is, and that the California Dream is still attainable. Unfortunately, California has no cash for new programmes. The first item on his agenda will be plugging an \$18bn budget deficit.



Illustration: David Simonds

The BBC's muffled voice

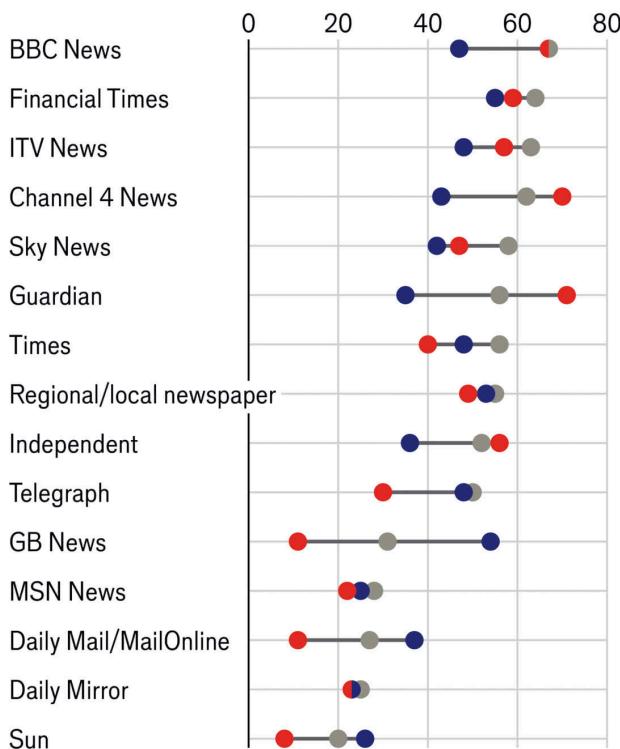
Tim Davie, the BBC's outgoing director-general, will face questions from MPs on Thursday. The public broadcaster's boss [announced his resignation](#) in November after a BBC documentary was found to have misleadingly edited a speech by Donald Trump. The president is suing the corporation for defamation. The lawsuit has little chance of succeeding but every chance of taking up BBC time and resources.

The MPs will also focus on another threat: government-imposed cuts that have [weakened the BBC's](#) overseas output. The BBC World Service's budget has fallen by a fifth in four years. It has responded by closing TV and radio services, causing audiences to drop by 14%. Those 50m or so lost listeners and viewers are tuning into dubious new sources: Chinese and Russian outlets are expanding their foreign operations as Western news services pull back.

Trusted sources?

Britain, trust in news outlets,
by respondents' political leaning, 2025, %

● Left ● Centre ● Right



Source: Reuters Institute, Oxford University



Photograph: Getty Images

Rising from the Ashes

The final day of the Ashes, the biennial cricket competition between Australia and England, ended with Australia victorious again. For England, which entered the series with high expectations, the 4-1 defeat over five games was a bitter disappointment. Slapdash in their preparations, they failed to execute the basics, dropping catches and losing wickets recklessly. Casualness has been a perennial criticism of their famously aggressive, freewheeling style of play, [nicknamed “Bazball”](#) after their coach, Brendon McCullum. He and his boss, Rob Key, may not survive the post-series inquests if they can’t change their ways.

Despite the win, Australia—currently the best team in the world—also has work to do. It is ageing and beset by injuries. To defeat South Africa, ranked second, in 2026 it will have to bring in some new faces.



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 [\[email protected\]](mailto:). We'll pick three winners at random and crown them on Saturday.

Thursday: Which baseball player is mentioned in the song “Mrs Robinson” by Simon & Garfunkel?

Wednesday: Which band, which shares its name with a drink, had a hit with “You Sexy Thing”, a song that featured in the firm “The Full Monty”?

God may exist, but science can explain the universe without the need for a creator.

Stephen Hawking