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**Bloomberg**

# Evening Briefing

## Europe Edition

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Russian President Vladimir Putin said [he's willing to hold talks](#) with US President-elect Donald Trump, though he said they haven't spoken in more than four years. "I don't know when we'll meet because he doesn't say anything about it," [Putin](#) said today at his annual televised news conference in Moscow. "I haven't spoken to him at all for more than four years. I'm ready for it, of course, at any time. And I'll be ready to meet if he wants." Trump has said [he wants to bring about](#) an end to Russia's [nearly three-year long war](#) on Ukraine even before he takes office for his second presidential term on Jan. 20. Trump hasn't indicated how he'll get both sides to the negotiating table to resolve the war, and on what terms. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said he welcomed the possibility of Trump initiating an effort to end Russia's war, but warned against pushing for a ceasefire agreement that could easily unravel. "I want very much Trump to help us end this war," [Zelenskiy told reporters](#) in Brussels today after a meeting with European Union

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leaders, even as he challenged mounting speculation about how to bring the nearly three years of fighting to a halt. Putin also said he hasn't spoken to ousted Syrian President Bashar al-Assad since he fled to Moscow to escape rebel forces that ended his family's more than half-century rule earlier this month. — [Jennifer Duggan](#)

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## What You Need to Know Today

**Volkswagen AG** and labor leaders are [moving closer to an agreement](#) to restructure the [automaker's namesake brand](#) without shuttering factories in Germany. Management is willing to keep plants running and reinstate job security agreements until 2030 in return for workers foregoing bonus payments, it is understood. Additional cost-cutting measures discussed include moving production of the Golf hatchback from Germany's Wolfsburg factory to Mexico, and ending production of VW-branded electric vehicles in Zwickau to trim capacity.



Workers stage a temporary walkout at the VW factory in Zwickau, on Dec. 2. *Photographer: Iona Dutz/Bloomberg*

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**Bank of England** Governor Andrew Bailey said [market bets](#) putting its next interest-rate decision on a knife-edge are a “reasonable starting point.” In an interview following the [BOE’s decision](#) to hold rates at 4.75% today, Bailey said that the “world is too uncertain” to commit to a cut in borrowing costs in February. “The market says ‘well, they might cut in February. They might not.’ [It’s a] pretty reasonable starting point,” Bailey said. “I think the path is downwards, but I really would caution that at this stage, with the amount of uncertainty, we can’t tell you by how much or when particular moves are going to take place.”

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**Alice Weidel**, the long-shot chancellor candidate from the far-right Alternative for Germany, [slammed the European Union](#) for destroying the country’s auto industry and proposed winding back the bloc to a free-trade zone. “What we need to have is free trade among the European countries, but we don’t need all the bureaucracy,” co-leader of the [second-strongest party](#) in German polls told Bloomberg TV in Berlin. The EU’s “socialist policy making” has “destroyed the market mechanism in Europe.” In its campaign platform for the Feb. 23 snap election, the AfD calls for a German exit from the EU and the euro zone.

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**A flu-like illness** that’s [sickened hundreds of people](#) in the Democratic Republic of Congo is a mix of diseases common in the region that have morphed into severe forms in a population [weakened by hunger](#). Health authorities have two working hypotheses: severe malaria or a viral infection, both against a background of malnutrition, Ngashi Ngongo, head of incident management for the mpox outbreak at the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, said in a briefing today. They also reported the death of an adult male patient with hemorrhagic fever syndrome.



Malaria-carrying mosquitoes are more frequent during the rainy season. *Photographer: OLYMPIA DE MAISMONT/AFP*

**Israeli warplanes** [struck Houthi sites](#) in Yemen's capital and elsewhere following an increase in missile attacks by the Iran-backed militia, including one overnight that damaged a school near Tel Aviv. The Israeli strikes killed nine people, according to reports from a Houthi-affiliated television station, and damaged energy facilities and power stations. Houthi-run Al Masirah Television reported that seven people were killed in Israel's strikes on Al-Salif port close to Hodeida, while two died at the nearby Ras Isa oil terminal.





Firefighters at the scene of an Israeli airstrike at the Haziz power station in southern Sanaa, on Dec. 19. *Photographer: Osamah Yahya/dpa*

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**A computer scientist** who falsely [claims to be the inventor](#) of Bitcoin was handed a suspended prison term after being found in contempt of court by a London judge following a stinging lawsuit loss. The Cryptocurrency Open Patent Alliance, a nonprofit cryptocurrency group backed by Jack Dorsey, sued Craig Wright in 2021 after he laid claim to being Satoshi Nakamoto and owned the copyright to the [Bitcoin](#) whitepaper. Judge James Mellor handed Wright, who appeared in court via a video link, a 12 month sentence, suspended for two years. Wright refused to disclose his precise location other than to say he was in Asia.

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**Romanian investor** Dan Sucu realized what is, for many, a dream come true: [owning a historic Italian football](#) team. He holds a roughly 77% stake in Genoa Cricket & Football Club after subscribing to a €45 million (\$46.8 million) capital increase. Sucu already owns Rapid Bucharest football club and is the founder of a furniture brand. The problem is that a [US investor](#) says it actually owns Genoa and never agreed to

sell the club. Founded in 1893, Genoa is Italy's oldest consistently running football club and competes in Serie A, the country's top football league.

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## What You'll Need to Know Tomorrow



### Banks

French Banks Resilient Amid Budget Crisis, Central Bank Says



### Markets

Norway's Prime Minister Says Europe Power Market 'Needs Change'



### Politics

UK Weighs Donation Cap to Stymie Farage's Pursuit of Musk Money



### Health

Lilly's US Weight-Loss Drug Shortage Ends, Curtailing Copycats



### War

Libya PM Says Won't Accept Hosting Russian Arms Moved From Syria



#### Diplomacy

Burkina Faso Junta Releases French Nationals Accused of Spying



#### Space

SpaceX, Startup Vast Ink Deal for Astronaut Trips to Space Station

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## For Your Commute

Algeria is a country that was closed off to tourists after it retreated inward following two especially difficult chapters in its history: A brutal eight-year revolution that ended French rule in 1962, and a bloody civil war between the military and Islamist groups that condemned the 1990s to history as the country's Black Decade. Now Algeria is stable—and has until recently resisted globalization in part as an effort to preserve its once-threatened identity. Sarah Khan [visits and experiences the local culture](#), including a traditional wedding celebration and a visit to the historic casbah.



The Grand Erg Occidental towering over the Oasis of Taghit. *Photographer: Will Bowen*

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