

## THE WORLD THIS WEEK

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### The world this year 2025

The year 2025 saw Donald Trump's second term drastically reshape domestic and international politics, marked by withdrawals from the Paris climate accord, increased border security, and attacks on independent institutions. Economically, tariffs led to stock market volatility, though the global economy showed resilience with an estimated 3% growth. The AI sector boomed with massive investments like the \$500bn Stargate project, making companies like Nvidia reach \$5trn, but concerns lingered about profitability. A fragile ceasefire in Gaza was brokered by Trump, followed by an ambitious peace plan and Israeli bombings in Iran targeting senior officials and nuclear scientists. Regional conflicts escalated, with India and Pakistan experiencing military clashes, Sudan's civil war worsening, and M23 rebels taking Goma in the DRC.

### The weekly cartoon

This section directs readers to delve deeper into the subject of the week's cartoon, providing links to articles discussing America's support for Ukraine, Europe's responsibility to fund Ukraine's defense, and Vladimir Putin's lack of a winning strategy in the conflict. The editorial cartoon is a weekly feature in The Economist, with a link to the previous week's edition.

## LEADERS

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### China proved its strengths in 2025?and Donald Trump helped

In 2025, President Xi Jinping and China demonstrated significant strength, defying Donald Trump's tariff efforts and revealing global dependency on Chinese industrial chokeholds in areas like green technology and AI. Trump's policies, both his tariffs abroad and his domestic attacks on science and immigration, inadvertently played into China's hands by alienating allies and impeding American innovation. While China's short-term advantage is clear, its rigid politics and economic issues like deflation and overcapacity could stifle dynamism in the long run. The article suggests that America's foundational values, now undermined by Trump's ethno-nationalist approach, were once its greatest strength, offering a basis for renewal if these principles are re-embraced.

### Two months in, the Gaza ceasefire is floundering

# The Weekly Digest

Two months after its signing, the Gaza ceasefire agreement is faltering, with winter storms worsening the humanitarian crisis for Gazans and aid efforts stalled. Hamas refuses to disarm, preventing reconstruction and further Israeli withdrawal, while international interest in advancing peace seems to have waned. President Trump's promised "board of peace" for post-war Gaza has not materialized, and no country has committed to an international stabilization force. America's focus on building "planned communities" in Israeli-controlled Gaza is seen as a limited and potentially tacit admission of the peace plan's stall. Progress is urgently needed to alleviate suffering, pressure Hamas, and uphold America's credibility in future peace negotiations.

## **The Economist's country of the year for 2025**

The Economist named Syria as its Country of the Year for 2025, recognizing its remarkable political improvement since the ousting of Bashar al-Assad in late 2024. Under the new ruler, Ahmed al-Sharaa, Syria has avoided grim Islamist theocracy or chaos, instead seeing women gain freedoms, entertainment allowed, and an economy beginning to recover as Western sanctions ease. This selection highlights Syria's significant shift towards peace and relative normalcy after 13 years of civil war, despite remaining challenges like militia massacres and clannish governance. Other strong contenders included Argentina for its economic reforms and Canada for electing a technocrat and standing up to American bullying, along with South Korea and Brazil for their defenses of democracy.

## **What Novo Nordisk, OpenAI and Pop Mart have in common**

The article highlights that runaway success can bring significant problems, as illustrated by OpenAI, Novo Nordisk, and Pop Mart in 2025. These companies faced challenges in scaling up to meet unpredictable demand, leading to underinvestment. This underinvestment created shadow markets, such as compounding pharmacies for Novo Nordisk's weight-loss drugs and fake dolls for Pop Mart, causing lasting issues. Additionally, early success attracted legitimate competitors, enabling them to learn from the pioneers' triumphs and failures, turning a "first-mover disadvantage" into market leadership for rivals like Eli Lilly and Google.

## **Your Well Informed guide to surviving Christmas**

This guide offers evidence-based advice for navigating the health challenges of Yuletide feasting and drinking. For alcohol, it suggests building muscle mass, choosing clear spirits, sipping slowly, alternating with water, and stopping well before bed to minimize hangovers and sleep disruption. For food, incorporating viscous fiber from almonds, oats, or apples can block cholesterol absorption, and eating sugar with fats, protein, and fiber prevents glucose spikes. The article also acknowledges the psychological benefits of moderate drinking for social connection, cautioning against heavy consumption but advocating for fun, relaxation, and taking everything in moderation, including moderation itself.

# The Weekly Digest

## How the young can make sense of the news

The Economist's Christmas campaign highlights the work of the Economist Educational Foundation in teaching critical thinking and media literacy to young people. The charity creates lessons on topical issues, encouraging civil debate and helping students evaluate information in an age of misinformation and AI. The program, Topical Talk, reached over 500,000 young people in 2025, particularly benefiting those from low-income backgrounds by fostering communication skills and challenging assumptions. The foundation's initiatives aim to empower well-informed citizens, capable of constructive dialogue, which is crucial for democracy in a polarized world.

## LETTERS

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### Europeans should be worried by America's new national security strategy

Readers express concern over America's new national security strategy, viewing it as a continuation of long-standing American demands for European self-reliance in defense. Letters highlight Europe's historical failure to adequately respond to threats like Russian aggression, its continued reliance on Russian energy, and the internal threats posed by American efforts to "cultivate resistance" within Europe. Correspondents also draw parallels between Trump's vision and Orwell's "1984" superpowers, suggesting a future of constant conflict maintained for totalitarian control. Concerns extend to China's trade practices, with arguments for Europe to adopt industrial policies and tariffs to counter Chinese market distortions, rather than solely focusing on services. The section also includes lighter notes on linguistic observations and brand comparisons for political parties.

## UNITED STATES

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### Will California try to block Hollywood's next megadeal?

California's Attorney-General, Rob Bonta, is a potential wildcard in the proposed merger between Netflix or Paramount and Warner Bros Discovery, signaling that state antitrust enforcers may act independently of federal regulators. Following instances where states successfully challenged mergers like Kroger's acquisition of Albertsons, states are increasing their antitrust powers through new legislation and pursuing their own cases. This growing assertiveness, especially from Democratic AGs who use such cases to boost their profiles, means that even if federal agencies approve a Hollywood deal, California could still block it, driven by concerns for consumers and unions. The looming 2026 California gubernatorial race adds political weight to Mr. Bonta's stance.

# The Weekly Digest

## **Toll roads are spreading in America**

Toll roads are proliferating across America due to a decline in petrol tax revenues, which historically funded highway maintenance. States like Indiana are now seeking authority to toll existing interstates, a move that could lead to widespread adoption. The federal highway trust fund faces a significant deficit because fuel-efficient cars reduce tax intake, and raising gas taxes is politically unpopular. Tolls are presented as a fairer way to fund infrastructure, especially to capture revenue from out-of-state drivers, and can also help manage congestion through variable pricing, though the trend faces populist opposition from some Republicans who advocate for free roads.

## **More schools in America are adopting a four-day week**

More than 2,100 schools across America, initially in rural areas but now expanding to towns, are adopting a four-day school week to save money or attract teachers. While teachers, students, and parents generally praise the schedule for improving attendance, behavior, and mental health, its impact on educational outcomes is mixed, with some studies suggesting students may fall two to seven weeks behind. The policy offers minimal budget savings (around 2.5%) and has not significantly boosted rural teacher retention. Concerns remain about children in single-parent families who might lose a day of childcare, but high parental satisfaction suggests the trend will continue.

## **The race for an AI Jesus is on**

An app called "Text with Jesus," built with OpenAI's ChatGPT, offers personalized theological and personal counsel, gaining 150,000 users across America and Latin America. The virtual Jesus avatar provides scriptural quotes and friendly advice, allowing users to consult various biblical figures, including even Satan for subscribers. While the app's founder, Stéphane Peter, faces accusations of blasphemy from his own mother and critics for its "palatable" answers, the Vatican and Elon Musk have also expressed caution about reading wisdom into aggregated data and the potential dangers of AI.

## **A vote against gerrymandering shows why political courage is rare**

Republican state senators in Indiana displayed rare political courage by rejecting a gerrymandering bill designed to benefit their party, despite intense pressure and threats from Donald Trump and others. This act of principle, aligning with public common sense, highlighted the debased state of American politics where both parties often prioritize partisan gain over integrity. The incident demonstrated that courage can be contagious, with dissenting numbers growing as a few senators stood firm. In an age of conformity and strong partisan forces, such independent judgment is crucial for addressing national challenges and fostering healthy dissent, contrasting with the self-serving actions often seen in both Republican and Democratic parties.

## THE AMERICAS

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### **An oil boom where the Amazon meets the Atlantic**

Brazil is experiencing an oil boom where the Amazon meets the Atlantic, driven by state oil firm Petrobras's exploration in the Equatorial Margin, aiming to revive depleting reserves and secure future oil exports. Despite President Lula's green platform, the potential for 10 billion barrels of recoverable oil is too significant to ignore, projecting South America as the fastest-growing oil production region. This development sparks economic hopes in impoverished areas like Oiapoque, but environmentalists warn of immense risks to the highly biodiverse Amazon river estuary. The complex and dangerous deep-water drilling poses substantial environmental threats, while the influx of people and money raises concerns about corruption and strain on local infrastructure.

### **Javier Milei loosens his grip on the peso**

Argentine President Javier Milei has subtly shifted his economic strategy, allowing the peso to float more freely against inflation from January, a move welcomed by the IMF and markets. Previously, efforts to keep the peso strong helped reduce inflation but hindered exports and foreign reserve accumulation, leading to central bank intervention and a US Treasury lifeline before midterm elections. While this loosening risks a modest rise in inflation, it alleviates market concerns about the peso's overvaluation and could enable Argentina to re-enter global capital markets. However, the measure is not a full float, and further monetary policy reforms, including inflation targeting through interest rates, are still pending.

## ASIA

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### **Can Australia defend itself against jihadist murderers?**

Australia is grappling with heightened anxieties after a deadly jihadist terrorist attack at Bondi Beach, Sydney, where a father and son killed 15 people during a Hanukkah celebration. The attackers, linked to Islamic State ideology, had previously been known to intelligence services and traveled to Mindanao, Philippines, possibly for training. The incident has intensified demands from Jewish leaders for stronger action against antisemitism, which has surged in Australia. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has pledged to toughen hate-speech laws, enhance penalties for incitement to violence, and implement stricter gun controls, including potentially a national firearms register, in response to the country's deadliest terrorist act.

### **Why has the border between the Koreas fallen silent?**

The border between North and South Korea has fallen silent, as South Korea's President Lee Jae Myung pursues a conciliatory approach to reduce tensions with its menacing neighbor.

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Following his inauguration in June, Lee ceased loudspeaker propaganda blasts into North Korea, which reciprocated by turning off its own noise-makers. More controversially, South Korea's spy agency also stopped its radio broadcasts into the North for the first time since 2010, significantly reducing uncensored information reaching North Koreans. This gesture aims to entice Kim Jong Un back to negotiations, though the North, emboldened by Chinese and Russian backing, appears more interested in extracting concessions from an America under Donald Trump, whose potential meeting with Kim Jong Un next year could be pivotal.

## **The botched response to a devastating storm infuriates Indonesians**

Indonesia's government has been widely criticized for its botched response to Cyclone Senyar, which ravaged Sumatra, killing over 1,000 and displacing nearly 1 million people. Officials declined to formally designate it a national disaster, impeding foreign aid, and President Prabowo Subianto dismissed criticism as foreign-fueled lies. Relief efforts have been slow and poorly coordinated, leading to widespread anger and white flags of desperation in Aceh. Environmentalists argue deforestation exacerbated the floods, linking it to palm-oil plantations and illegal logging, and question the government's sincerity in prevention efforts as climate change makes such extreme weather events more common and Indonesia remains highly vulnerable.

## **CHINA**

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### **Jimmy Lai's judgment day**

Media tycoon Jimmy Lai was found guilty of conspiring to commit sedition and foreign collusion in Hong Kong, facing potential life imprisonment, a verdict widely seen as a blow to the city's civil liberties. Lai, a long-time supporter of democratic causes and founder of the outspoken Apple Daily, was accused of using his influence to call for foreign sanctions against China. The case, held under sweeping national security laws, has a high conviction rate and comes amidst a febrile atmosphere in Hong Kong, marked by low election turnout and government warnings to international media. Despite international condemnation from Britain and the EU, major world leaders like Sir Keir Starmer and Donald Trump are expected to prioritize diplomacy with China, potentially avoiding confrontation over Lai's case.

### **The Christmas-industrial complex centres on Yiwu**

Yiwu, China, serves as the world's Christmas capital, with its vast wholesale markets supplying most global Christmas decorations. In 2025, China's Christmas trinket exports saw a decline, primarily due to President Donald Trump's "Liberation Day" tariffs, which imposed a 20% duty on Chinese goods. In response, many merchants are shifting to other markets, with exports to Germany and the Netherlands rising, and some resorting to creative methods to circumvent American tariffs. Traders express frustration over the unpredictable trade policies, but remain

focused on upcoming orders for various festivals, highlighting the city's global reach beyond Christmas.

## MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA

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### **Donald Trump's peace plan is faltering in the chaos of Gaza**

Donald Trump's Gaza peace plan is floundering amidst ongoing chaos, with Rafah reduced to rubble and little progress on key "Phase Two" elements like Hamas disarmament or an International Stabilisation Force (ISF). While American officials insist on a bright future with "planned communities," Israeli officers are skeptical about tunnel destruction and the viability of these compounds. Hamas has reasserted control, and ceasefire infractions continue, with ongoing Israeli attacks and Palestinian casualties. Deepening disagreements between Israel and America, particularly over Turkey's inclusion in the ISF and Israel's control over Gaza access, underscore the plan's fragility. Trump, growing impatient, is set to press Netanyahu to accept his terms in an upcoming meeting.

### **Just 74 intensive-care beds remain in Gaza**

Gaza's health-care system is in ruins, with only 74 intensive-care beds and 215 emergency-room beds remaining functional out of 35 hospitals and clinics. Infrastructure is shattered, critical supplies are scarce, and Israel's "dual-use" policy restricts entry of essential medical equipment. Over 1,700 health-care workers were killed during the war, and thousands of patients await evacuation for treatment. The psychological trauma on children is profound, impacting their brain development. Rebuilding the system is estimated to cost \$7-8 billion and take years, but current political instability and the ongoing conflict prevent any meaningful reconstruction, leaving Gazans in dire medical need.

### **Ethiopia wants to build Africa's biggest airport**

Ethiopian Airlines plans to build Africa's largest airport near Addis Ababa, aiming to handle 110m passengers annually and cement Ethiopia's status as a continental air-travel hub. The \$10bn project, backed by ET and the African Development Bank, seeks to alleviate strain on the current airport and enable direct long-haul flights from a lower altitude. Despite Ethiopian Airlines' profitability and strong business case, the project faces challenges from ongoing internal conflicts, growing competition from Gulf airlines, and government meddling. Critics suggest a smaller, phased approach would be more prudent, questioning the monumental scale driven by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's penchant for mega-projects, which is already displacing thousands of people.



## EUROPE

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### **Ukraine scrabbles for handholds against Russia's massive assault**

Ukraine achieved a rare tactical victory by successfully counter-attacking and liberating most of Kupiansk in the north-east, encircling Russian forces and demonstrating creative military thinking. However, elsewhere, Russia is pressing its advantage with superior manpower and materiel, causing Ukrainian defenses to retreat faster than at any point in the war. The defense of Pokrovsk and Myrnohrad is nearing a bitter end, and Siversk is largely under Russian control, indicating a potential chain of panic. Ukraine's struggles with conscription and supplies contrast with Russia's growing drone warfare competence and ability to sustain high casualties, allowing Moscow to seize territory and weaken Ukraine while peace talks continue.

### **Italy is using the Winter Olympics to appeal to the ultra-wealthy**

Milan is leveraging the 2026 Winter Olympics, co-hosting with the ritzy resort Cortina d'Ampezzo, to attract ultra-high-net-worth individuals to Italy. A tax break introduced in 2017, now proposed to increase, has already drawn thousands of wealthy individuals, primarily to Milan. This influx has spurred new luxury clubs and private schools, but also soaring property prices and a real-estate scandal that has halted housing projects. Despite these issues and the logistical challenges of Milan's low altitude, the focus on exclusive venues like Cortina underscores a strategy to cultivate an image of opulent wealth.

### **Why German cities feel like war zones on New Year's Eve**

German cities experience intense street battles with fireworks on New Year's Eve, making parts of Berlin resemble war zones, with multiple deaths, hundreds of injuries, and numerous fires reported in 2024. The chaos, fueled by both legal fireworks and illegal Kugelbomben smuggled from neighboring countries, leads to overwhelmed emergency services and significant pollution. Despite widespread public support for extending the firework ban, politicians view Silvester fireworks as an inviolable national tradition, and federal law limits local prohibitions. Campaigners look to the Netherlands, which outlawed private fireworks this year, as a potential model for change, but German pyrophobes will endure the spectacle for at least another year.

### **European nationalism is dead. Long live European gastronationalism**

Europe, facing external threats, continues to find intense emotional division in culinary matters, as demonstrated by Italy's agriculture minister's outrage over ready-made carbonara sauce. Decades of EU integration have harmonized laws and erased borders, but food habits remain a potent source of national identity and patriotic virility. Historical use of food to denigrate neighbors persists, and a cultural "horizontal line" divides butter-using northerners from olive-oil-loving southerners. Southerners actively defend their traditions, securing EU protections for regional foods like feta and Parmesan. This "gastronationalism" highlights how



cuisine remains a deeply personal and politically charged aspect of European identity, even as societies globalize.

## BRITAIN

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### How to heal the trauma from Northern Ireland's killings

The British government under Sir Keir Starmer is pursuing a new policy with the Irish government to reinvestigate Troubles deaths in Northern Ireland, hoping to draw a line under the conflict's legacy. This approach replaces the previous Conservative government's de facto amnesty. The Troubles, which saw over 3,500 deaths, continue to fester, with debates over the retrospective legitimization of violence and the glorification of killers. While the new bill maintains the possibility of prosecutions, it focuses on "information recovery," though concerns remain about information suppression. The article emphasizes the need for statesmanship and reconciliation to overcome deeply embedded myths and heal the profound trauma.

### Britons are becoming obsessed with pet photography

Britons are increasingly obsessed with pet photography, with a 2024 survey revealing they post three times as many pet photos on Instagram as those of their partners or themselves. Demand for professional pet portraits surges around Christmas, offering services from simple studio shots to elaborate setups with London landmarks. This trend is linked to the growing affluence of "pet parents," with higher rates of pet social media profiles in wealthier boroughs. The article highlights the physical challenges faced by pet photographers and the artistic choices involved, such as Jon Mills's preference for "naked dogs" over elaborate outfits.

### A portrait of Britain's aristocrats

Britain's aristocracy, though numerically dwindling, still exerts significant influence over the nation's physical landscape and cultural heritage. The annual Historic Houses meeting now focuses on preserving grand homes rather than traditional social seasons. While the House of Lords is set to remove its last hereditary peers in 2026, ending a millennium of direct political power, the titled gentry continue to own a third of the land. Economic pressures, such as death duties, force modern aristocrats like the Earl of Sandwich to open their estates to the public, blending noble titles with middle-class existence. Critics argue aristocracy fosters snobbery, but for many Britons, these figures embody a cherished national heritage.

### All sides have learned a lot from Extinction Rebellion's co-founder

Roger Hallam, co-founder of Extinction Rebellion and Just Stop Oil, has significantly influenced civil disobedience in Britain, inspiring protest groups to adopt tactics like mass arrests and shocking stunts. His philosophy, advocating for jail time as a means of martyrdom,

has been embraced by various movements, including pro-Palestine activists. This strategy of seeking martyrdom has now spread to the right, with figures like Tommy Robinson and Lucy Connolly gaining celebrity status after arrests. The rise of such "catastrophism" on both political extremes, coupled with voter despair, makes radical ideas seem rational, pushing British politics towards a fragmented and unpredictable future, where organized groups may pick up the pieces if the system fractures.

## CHRISTMAS SPECIALS

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### **A journey into the world's most mysterious rainforest**

The Congo basin, the world's second-largest tropical rainforest, remains largely mysterious despite its critical importance as the largest terrestrial carbon sink and a hub of biodiversity. Researchers in Odzala-Kokoua National Park are uncovering its secrets in climate science, ecology, and archaeology, using advanced tools like lidar and flux towers to study its vast peatlands and the role of forest elephants as "ecosystem engineers." Despite these discoveries, the forest faces severe threats from logging, mining, oil extraction, and population growth, with deforestation rates indicating it may soon emit more carbon than it absorbs. International efforts to protect it are underway, but challenges remain due to insufficient funding and governmental corruption.

### **What The Economist discovered at dating bootcamp**

Dating manuals, often comical and morally questionable, continue to sell millions, reflecting a widespread need for advice in an era of rising singlehood and loneliness. Historical and scientific evidence suggests men seek dating guidance more than women, partly due to biological differences in sexual selectivity. The article describes attending a \$10,000 "dating bootcamp" run by a "pick-up artist" named Mystery, which teaches highly formulaic, sometimes insulting, methods to attract women. While such courses can improve social skills by forcing participants to interact, their effectiveness in fostering genuine relationships is debatable. Modern dating advice is shifting towards listening to women and recognizing individual preferences, moving beyond rigid "pick-up" techniques.

### **How humankind's 10m-year love affair with booze might end**

Humankind's long love affair with alcohol, rooted in evolutionary adaptations 10 million years ago, has profoundly shaped human history and social cohesion. Alcohol's ability to stimulate endorphins and neurotransmitters fostered trust and cooperation in early societies. However, modern understanding reveals the significant health risks of even moderate drinking, leading to a new wariness, especially among younger generations. This shift is evident in declining alcohol sales in rich countries and the rise of "NoLo" (no- or low-alcohol) alternatives and "functional" drinks containing plant extracts or minerals designed to mimic alcohol's

pleasurable effects without the downsides. Emerging technologies like GLP-1 drugs, which reduce alcohol cravings, and substances like Alcarelle, designed to replicate the "buzzy feeling," suggest a future where neurological tinkering could offer more precise and healthier alternatives, potentially ending our species' reliance on traditional booze.

## **The tariffs that nearly stole Christmas**

In 2025, President Donald Trump's "Liberation Day" tariffs severely disrupted the global toy supply chain, threatening Christmas for many toymakers who rely on Chinese manufacturing. Initial 145% tariffs led to shipping halts and financial distress for firms like MGA Entertainment and The Queen's Treasures, though a temporary pause offered some reprieve. Educational toy firm Learning Resources sued the administration, arguing the tariffs were illegal. While some large companies like Lego are building factories closer to customers, the high costs of US manufacturing and inconsistent trade policies make a widespread return of toy production to America unlikely. The article follows the year's struggles, culminating in a Supreme Court challenge that could curb the president's power to impose tariffs unilaterally, offering a potential "gift" to global trade.

## **From honeycomb curry to blood fry: India's 'untouchable' cooking**

India's Dalit community, historically marginalized as "untouchables," possesses a rich, yet practically invisible, cuisine shaped by cruelty, scarcity, and shame. This food, often featuring pork, beef, and offal shunned by upper-caste Hindus, utilizes wild greens and overlooked ingredients to create fiercely flavorful dishes like honeycomb curry and blood fry. Despite caste discrimination being outlawed, prejudice persists, with violent "cow vigilantes" targeting Dalits and Muslims involved in bovine butchery. While most Indians consume meat, a pervasive image of a vegetarian nation endures, influencing policies like food-delivery app features. Efforts by historians and artists like Sri Vamsi Matta are now attempting to bring Dalit cuisine from the margins to the mainstream, fostering curiosity and challenging ingrained notions of "pure" food.

## **The battle to stop clever people betting**

Sports-betting firms actively try to prevent "sharps"—skilled gamblers who use statistical models—from placing large wagers, despite advertising riches to ordinary punters. Firms employ "player-profiling" strategies to identify and restrict winning players, often based on betting patterns, types of bets, and even demographics like gender. Sharps, in turn, use various methods to evade detection, including anonymous cash wagers, offshore sites, and "beards" (friends or relatives who place bets for them). The most sophisticated tactics involve "priming" accounts with intentional losing bets to raise limits, or "whale-flipping" by partnering with large recreational losers. Some jurisdictions are attempting to limit betting restrictions, but sharps paradoxically prefer the status quo, as it maintains their edge by keeping less skilled gamblers in check.

## **Adam Smith is misinterpreted and his influence overstated**

Adam Smith's "The Wealth of Nations," celebrating its 250th anniversary in 2026, is often misinterpreted, with its reputation exceeding its actual content and revolutionary ideas. Popularly seen as a champion of self-interest and the "invisible hand" of free markets, a closer reading reveals Smith's emphasis on moral sentiments, the "impartial spectator," and the civilizing effects of trade. He also supported government intervention, favored legal caps on interest rates, and made economic errors like the labor theory of value, which later influenced Marxism. Furthermore, Smith is credited with ideas like GDP and free trade that were not his own, and his writing style was often diffuse. While a significant work, its groundbreaking nature and Smith's singular influence are arguably overstated.

## **What street talk reveals about Anglophone civilisation**

Slang, often dismissed as trivial, offers deep insights into Anglophone civilization, with some terms like "arse" and "booze" dating back a millennium. Slang dictionaries, like Jonathon Green's comprehensive "Green's Dictionary of Slang," document how colloquialisms evolve, baffle outsiders (e.g., Cockney rhyming slang), and allow for expression around taboos. The advent of social media has accelerated slang's diffusion and shortened its half-life, with new terms like "skibidi" emerging and fading rapidly. While technology aids lexicography, it also makes language harder to pin down. English-speaking nations exhibit distinctive slang styles, from Australian creativity to British self-seriousness, and despite globalization, slang remains a quintessentially insider language, revealing identity and attitude far beyond literal meaning.

## **America's fight back against China starts in Los Angeles in flip-flops**

El Segundo, near LAX, known as "Gundo," is emerging as a critical hub for American high-tech manufacturing, aiming to reclaim industrial supremacy from China. This community of pro-American engineers, many ex-SpaceX employees, is backed by venture capital and driven by a patriotic mission to build "atoms" (hardware) over "bits" (software). Firms like HydraWedge, General Matter, and Rangeview are developing technologies for defense, space, and energy, with government support under Donald Trump's manufacturing revival agenda. Despite its unassuming appearance and challenging location, Gundo fosters a unique entrepreneurial cluster, leveraging its diaspora of skilled workers and a countercultural aversion to Silicon Valley's tech scene. Companies like Neros are already producing lethal drones for Ukraine, actively stripping Chinese technology from their products and aiming to scale up America's industrial base in a new arms race with China.

## **The long, strange journey of a temple from profane to sacred**

A magnificent wooden Jain temple, originally commissioned by British colonialists in Calcutta for the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair to promote tea sales, has undergone a century-long transformation from commercial artifice to sacred object. After being sold as salvage, it resurfaced in 1963 as "The Jewel of Palitana" in Las Vegas's Castaways casino, serving as a

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"Gateway to Luck" for gamblers. In the late 1970s, Jain migrants from India, settling in Southern California, identified it as their place of worship and successfully acquired it after the casino's closure. Reconstructed in Buena Park, it now stands as the focal point of the Jain Centre of Southern California, reinforcing the community's distinctive identity amidst assimilation, even if fire-safety regulations prevent its full use as a consecrated temple.

## **What if the best way to learn about history is by playing with it?**

Historical video games like Paradox Interactive's Europa Universalis series and Civilization are changing how people learn history, offering "learning by doing" through complex simulations. These "Great Games" allow players to control historical states, manage economies, diplomacy, and conflicts, generating alternate histories that encourage critical thinking beyond rote memorization. The games impart "procedural rhetoric," subtly teaching concepts like the "security dilemma" through interactive experience. While not perfect, as players can exploit game systems and reload from catastrophic decisions, these immersive simulations make history alluring to a new generation, providing a valuable entry point for students in a field increasingly overshadowed by science and engineering.

## **How two explorers, a mother and a baby made America**

The Lewis and Clark expedition, launched by President Thomas Jefferson in 1803 after the Louisiana Purchase, played a crucial role in America's westward expansion. Jefferson, driven by strategic and economic interests, dispatched Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to map the vast new territory, study its natural resources, and engage with Native American tribes. The expedition, supported by an unlimited letter of credit and a substantial arsenal, faced immense challenges, including harsh weather, unfamiliar terrain, and tense encounters with tribes. The inclusion of Sacagawea and her infant son, Pompey, proved serendipitous, as the baby's presence served as a sign of peaceful intentions, potentially averting disaster during a near-calamitous encounter with the Teton Sioux. Their journals and maps provided invaluable scientific and geographical data, guiding future settlers and contributing to America's transformation into a transcontinental power.

## **The gigantic task of catering on the world's biggest cruise ship**

Catering on the Star of the Seas, the world's largest cruise ship, is a gargantuan task managed by Chef Gary Thomas and his team of 344 chefs and 1,700 staff, serving 100,000 meals daily to 7,600 guests and 2,350 crew. The operation, inspired by Auguste Escoffier's 19th-century kitchen discipline and specialization, requires military precision, immaculate hygiene to prevent outbreaks, and meticulous inventory management by Randy Nicolas. Using AI-powered software called Crunchtime, the team predicts ingredient needs and manages orders for \$1.5m worth of food per week-long cruise, adapting to passenger demographics. Despite efforts to minimize waste, the all-you-can-eat buffet model inevitably leads to significant food disposal. The demanding conditions for predominantly emerging-market crew involve seven-day

workweeks and long contracts, highlighting the immense effort behind the illusion of effortless luxury.

## How wolves became dogs

The strange and pervasive symbiosis between humans and dogs, unique in the animal kingdom, dates back over 14,000 years, long before agriculture. Genetic and fossil evidence suggests domestication likely occurred in East Eurasia, with dogs rapidly spreading globally alongside humans. The "scavenger hypothesis" posits that wolves gradually evolved to exploit human food surpluses, leading to "survival of the friendliest." Dogs display unique psychological adaptations, or "dognition," showing early friendliness and a remarkable ability to read human minds and emotions, even developing a special facial muscle for the "puppy-dog-eye" look. While selective breeding later shaped diverse modern breeds, the initial transition from wild wolf to domestic dog was a profound evolutionary process, fostering a bond that continues to thrive today.

## A journey along East Asia's hidden artery

The Kuroshio, or Black Stream, is a powerful ocean current that flows through East Asia, profoundly shaping its history, ecology, and societies. Named for its clear, dark waters, it carries more water than the Amazon and transports tropical heat northward, influencing the region's fisheries and weather patterns. Historically, the current facilitated Spanish trade routes between the Philippines and Mexico, and its strategic importance is still recognized in modern military and geopolitical contexts, particularly concerning Taiwan. The Tao people of Orchid Island demonstrate deep cultural ties to the Kuroshio, with their lives revolving around flying fish and the ocean. Archaeological evidence, supported by scientific simulations, suggests ancient humans used the current for migration, establishing early settlements in the Ryukyu islands. Today, the Kuroshio faces threats from pollution, overfishing, and climate change, with rising temperatures and shifting currents causing more extreme weather events and impacting marine ecosystems.

## How Jane Austen revealed the economic basis of society

Jane Austen's novels, celebrating her 250th birth anniversary, reveal the unacknowledged economic underpinnings of 19th-century British society with quantitative precision. While love is central, a good fortune is portrayed as a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for happiness, often debated by her characters. Austen meticulously details characters' finances, providing "shorthand" for social rank and the realities of living on various incomes, showing even "less fortunate" characters were often still well-off compared to the majority. Her personal experiences, just one step removed from wealth, informed her understanding of money's importance. Austen's works subtly engage with contemporary economic theories like Malthus's population principle and even anticipate modern concepts like the permanent income hypothesis, while also critiquing both excessive miserliness and profligacy, ultimately



championing a "cheerful confidence in futurity."

## Was Mr Darcy the richest of all Jane Austen's characters?

Comparing the fortunes of Jane Austen's characters across her novels, such as Mr. Darcy from "Pride and Prejudice" and Mr. Rushworth from "Mansfield Park," reveals "fiscal twins" with seemingly similar incomes. However, the purchasing power of the pound fluctuated significantly due to harvest failures, wars, and demobilization between the settings of Austen's novels. For instance, the cost of living rose by over half between 1793-94 (the probable setting of "Pride and Prejudice") and 1808-1812 (the setting of "Mansfield Park"). Therefore, Mr. Rushworth's annual income of £12,000, while higher on paper, was worth less in real terms than Mr. Darcy's £10,000, making Mr. Darcy the richer catch when adjusted for inflation.

## The most friendless place on earth

Loneliness, often perceived as a problem of rich, individualistic societies, is surprisingly more prevalent in poorer countries, with Africa being the loneliest region. Madagascar, in particular, stands out, with 60% of people in its arid south reporting loneliness. Poverty significantly impacts social connections, as economic hardship limits opportunities for socializing and strains relationships, often forcing migration that separates families. While money doesn't directly cause loneliness, higher income correlates with less loneliness, as it frees up time and resources for social engagement. Interventions like "community connectors" in places like Frome, England, and "friendship benches" in Zimbabwe demonstrate that directly addressing loneliness can improve well-being and even reduce healthcare burdens, suggesting that combating poverty and fostering social support are key.

## Two centuries ago, Russian revolutionaries tried to change the world

Two centuries ago, on December 26th, 1825, a group of aristocratic military officers known as the Decembrists attempted a revolution in St Petersburg, inspired by Enlightenment ideals and the Napoleonic wars. These young men sought to emancipate serfs, establish representative government, and end caste-based privileges, representing a new generation that valued service to society over the monarch. Though their disorganized coup failed, leading to bloodshed and the execution or exile of its leaders to Siberia, their actions became a powerful myth in Russian history. Interpreted variously as traitors by authorities and champions of freedom by admirers like Pushkin and Tolstoy, the Decembrists continue to inspire figures like Alexei Navalny, symbolizing an enduring hope for a different Russia despite the regime's efforts to suppress their legacy.

## The rise and fall and rebirth of lapsang souchong

Lapsang souchong, a smoky black tea originating from Tongmu in China's Wuyi hills over 400 years ago, is facing a decline in popularity in the West despite its historical prestige. The tea, initially produced by smoke-curing leaves to survive long sea journeys, became a favorite of



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refined Western drinkers, though its name and taste evolved differently from its Chinese counterpart, zhengshan xiaozhong. However, Western palates are changing, and brands like Twinings have discontinued it, facing scathing reviews for substitutes. In China, zhengshan xiaozhong thrives as a luxury item for wealthy customers, with producers inventing new forms like Jin Jun Mei. Strict controls on pinewood use to protect Wuyi's forests, along with its high cost and changing Western tastes, contribute to the tea's fading relevance in the West, while it is reborn as a status symbol in China.

## How magicians stay relevant in the age of AI

Magicians today face challenges reminiscent of Harry Houdini's era?monetizing mystery and guarding secrets?but are also contending with shrinking attention spans, social media's proliferation of tricks, and AI's jading effect on wonder. Modern conjurors like Justin Flom generate massive online engagement by revealing the "secrets" behind illusions, arguing that exposure can be more entertaining than the trick itself. This approach, while controversial among purists, highlights a shift in how magic is consumed and monetized. Technology also offers new tools for magicians, such as microchips in cards, enabling cheaper and grander shows. Despite fears of AI replacing human performers, the demand for live, immersive magic experiences is growing, as seen at places like the Magic Castle, where the absence of phones enhances the mystique, demonstrating that genuine wonder remains a valued human experience.

## INTERNATIONAL

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### Ditch textbooks and learn how to use a wrench to AI-proof your job?

Generation Z is increasingly rethinking the value of university education in favor of skilled manual jobs, viewing them as more "AI-proof" and offering better job security. Declining confidence in higher education stems from its high cost and perceived lack of relevant skills for modern jobs, especially as AI adoption reduces demand for entry-level white-collar workers. Vocational and trade programs are seeing growing enrollment, with electricians and plumbers earning competitive salaries, sometimes exceeding those of arts and humanities graduates. Industries like advanced manufacturing and defense face critical shortages of skilled blue-collar workers, yet a stigma persists. Learning from countries like Switzerland, which offers permeable vocational paths, and implementing degree apprenticeships could help address this skills gap and empower young people like Jacob Palmer and Nolan Cunningham.

### How to survive abandonment by America

Seen from East Asia, America under Donald Trump is perceived as a fickle partner, demanding more from allies while offering less security and raising fears of abandonment. South Korea is being pressed to take more responsibility for its defense, commit massive investments to the US

economy, and be prepared to join any future conflict with China, despite strong public opposition to antagonizing Beijing. While South Korean progressives hope for closer ties with Russia, Moscow is seen as an unreliable "wrecker" by diplomats. An emerging consensus in South Korea favors a project to build nuclear-powered attack submarines with America, as Trumpworld appears receptive to "friendly nuclear proliferation" among allies. However, concerns remain that a nuclear-armed South Korea could spark an Asian arms race and further destabilize the region, emphasizing the need for South Korea to seek stronger ties with like-minded partners like Japan.

## BUSINESS

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### **The plan to rescue Novo Nordisk**

Novo Nordisk, the Danish drugmaker, is working to recover its lead in the weight-loss drug market after Eli Lilly's Zepbound surpassed its pioneering Wegovy in sales by 2025. CEO Maziar Mike Doustdar plans a ruthless transformation, including launching a new oral Wegovy and a higher-dose injection, backed by ample production capacity. The company is shifting to a "consumer mindset," expanding direct sales channels and revising pricing, including deals with the Trump administration for Medicare coverage. Following leadership changes and a workforce reduction, Novo is also looking to acquisitions to build a broad portfolio, recognizing the need for outside help against fierce competition and upcoming patent expirations in key emerging markets.

### **Retreating from EVs could be hazardous for Western carmakers**

Western carmakers are hitting the brakes on their electric vehicle (EV) transition, adjusting to slower customer adoption and government pullbacks, including the EU easing its 2035 petrol car ban to a 90% emissions reduction target. This shift, exemplified by Ford realigning its EV strategy and ending sales of an all-electric F-150, risks giving Chinese EV brands a significant advantage, as they already control over 10% of the Western European market. While profiting from petrol cars now may seem appealing, a gradual slowdown in EV investment could leave Western manufacturers uncompetitive when EVs eventually become the cheaper option for consumers.

### **Job apocalypse? Not yet. AI is creating brand new occupations**

Despite fears of widespread job losses, artificial intelligence (AI) is already creating new and specialized occupations that require uniquely human skills. Data annotators, now high-paid experts in fields like finance and medicine, train advanced AI models. Forward-deployed engineers (FDEs) embed AI tools into organizations, acting as a blend of developer, consultant, and salesperson, requiring a "consumer mindset" and interpersonal skills. The rise of "the guy?or gal?in the sky" at robotaxi firms like Waymo demonstrates the need for human

troubleshooters who can manage both technology and frazzled passengers. Additionally, AI risk-and-governance specialists are in high demand to ensure bots behave, and Chief AI Officers are increasingly popular in C-suites to navigate the complex AI landscape.

## **Luxury handbags may be shoddier than you think**

Luxury handbags, central to brands' success and often their priciest products, are facing increasing scrutiny over quality, as online videos expose issues like loose heel caps and shoddy stitching. This comes as the handbag business experiences a slump, partly due to middle-class financial strain and a shift towards "experience" spending by wealthy shoppers. Luxury brands have exacerbated the problem by significantly raising prices, inviting greater examination of value. The market for secondhand luxury goods and "superfakes" also offers alternatives to discerning consumers. Brands like Chanel and Prada are responding by taking stakes in manufacturers and tightening oversight, while Hermès maintains its reputation through single-artisan craftsmanship, proving quality still commands a premium.

## **How to conduct a job interview**

Job interviews, despite their often-predictable questions and candidate nervousness, are surprisingly the most useful part of the selection process when conducted correctly. Structured interviews, which use standardized, job-related questions and an agreed-upon scoring system, have the highest predictive value for job performance, far outperforming unstructured interviews. However, interviewers often resist structured approaches, viewing them as limiting their agency. Even well-structured interviews only predict a small fraction of a candidate's actual job performance, highlighting the need for multiple assessment methods like personality tests and work samples. Ultimately, hiring managers should approach interviews with a script, a scoring system, and a dose of realism, recognizing there's no foolproof way to judge a stranger.

## **SpaceX, OpenAI, Anthropic and their giga-IPO dreams**

SpaceX, OpenAI, and Anthropic are reportedly exploring massive initial public offerings (IPOs) as soon as next year, aiming for valuations as high as \$1.5trn for SpaceX and hundreds of billions for the AI firms. This sudden interest in public markets, unusual given their success in attracting private funding, is driven by the need for ever more capital to fund ambitious projects like Starship and vast AI computing infrastructure. However, a public listing would subject these companies to greater scrutiny, particularly regarding SpaceX's corporate governance under Elon Musk and the AI firms' substantial ongoing losses. The move signals a potential trade-off between securing capital and navigating the discerning demands of public investors, testing whether immense capital can trump concerns over profitability and corporate oversight.

## FINANCE & ECONOMICS

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### Where America's most prominent short-sellers are placing their bets

America's prominent short-sellers, like Jim Chanos, Carson Block, and Andrew Left, hold varied views on the current market's optimism, particularly regarding artificial intelligence, with some seeing exuberance and others solid earnings growth. While they agree that predicting market turns is impossible, they anticipate a potential future correction driven by the failure of AI to convert technology into profits or a sharp rise in unemployment. Concerns are raised about the vast AI-related capital expenditures and the increased exposure of American households to the stock market, which is at a record high. The article also notes that unscrupulous firms may be concealing wrongdoing amidst the boom, and the effectiveness of short-sellers in uncovering fraud has been hampered by legal scrutiny against them.

### Meet the American investors rushing into Congo

American investors, including mining firm KoBold Metals, are rushing into the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to access its vast reserves of critical minerals like lithium, cobalt, and copper, taking on challenges of war, corruption, and Chinese dominance. This shift is encouraged by Donald Trump's "Washington Accords" with Congo and Rwanda, aiming to diversify US mineral supply away from China in exchange for help with regional peace. Despite the DRC's conflicts and historical corruption, KoBold believes US government backing can ease the process, with American firms even wearing flags to signal support. However, ongoing fighting and informal governance structures pose significant challenges, making it a test of Trump's deal diplomacy and a difficult battle to dislodge China's established mining grip.

### This Christmas, raise a glass to concentrated market returns

Bank of America's stock recently hit a new record, finally surpassing its 2006 peak, illustrating that many companies take years, even decades, to recover old highs. The phenomenon of "laggardly stocks" is surprisingly common, with about 36% of publicly listed companies existing before November 2007 still trading below their pre-financial-crisis share price. Even in America's tech sector, 22% of firms are below their pre-crisis levels. This trend is explained by the powerful force of concentrated returns: a small number of stocks, such as Apple, Nvidia, and Netflix, account for the bulk of market gains, rising by thousands of percentage points since 2007. For most investors, the few dominant firms, rather than the many laggards, ultimately drive portfolio performance.

### Crypto's real threat to banks

The crypto industry is challenging banks' privileged position on the American right, threatening their long-held political clout despite shared interests in deregulation under Donald Trump. The GENIUS Act, which regulated stablecoins, still allows workarounds for offering yields, prompting banks to demand stricter enforcement. Bankers are also alarmed by crypto firms

gaining national bank-trust charters, enabling them to provide custody for assets without taking deposits, a move banks opposed. These developments, though seemingly minor, signify a serious long-term threat to traditional banks, whose influence is waning as crypto aligns with the countercultural, anti-elite politics of the new American right, securing significant political funding and shifting legislative outcomes.

## **Watch who you're calling childless**

The common measure of fertility, the total fertility rate (TFR), suggests a sharp decline in births across the West, including America, raising alarms about population shrinkage. However, the TFR can be misleading as it measures the hypothetical number of children a woman would have based on current age-specific birth rates, without accounting for delayed childbearing. A different measure, the completed fertility rate (CFR), which tracks the actual number of babies a woman has by the end of her reproductive years, shows America's CFR has remained stable or slightly risen over the past two decades. This suggests women are deferring, not forgoing, childbirth, similar to a "Planet Lizard" fable where birth timing shifts but total numbers remain constant. While not quite at "replacement level," the CFR indicates a more manageable population trajectory than the alarming TFR suggests.

## **SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

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### **A debate is raging over the origins of an elusive cousin to modern humans**

A newly studied Harbin skull, linked to the mysterious Denisovans, is fueling a debate that could upend theories of human origins by suggesting Homo sapiens ancestors may have arisen outside Africa. Discovered in China in 1933 and recently identified as Denisovan through DNA and protein analysis, the skull's morphology clashes with genetic evidence. Nuclear genomes suggest Denisovans and Neanderthals split from modern humans before diverging from each other. However, the skull's physical features imply Homo longi (Dragon Man, including Denisovans) split from sapiens after Neanderthals, leading to the hypothesis that early Denisovans remained in Asia while sapiens' ancestors migrated back into Africa, then returned. Scientists are seeking more fossils and refining DNA extraction to resolve this complex evolutionary paradox.

### **Saudi Arabia wants to host the world's cheapest data centres**

Saudi Arabia is aiming to host the world's cheapest data centers for artificial intelligence (AI), leveraging its abundant land and extremely low electricity costs from solar farms. This national priority, championed by Muhammad bin Salman (MBS) and spearheaded by Humain, is integral to the country's "Vision 2030" to diversify beyond fossil fuels. By acquiring cutting-edge AI chips from Nvidia and Groq, Saudi Arabia plans to offer AI companies

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significantly reduced costs for processing "output tokens." The strategy, bolstered by MBS's meeting with Donald Trump, has already secured major deals for data center construction and is being used internally with an Arabic AI model, with ambitions to build a "world-first AI operating system for the enterprise."

## How dogs make teens feel less anxious

New research suggests that dogs can reduce anxiety and improve sociality in teenagers, with the beneficial relationship extending beyond surface interactions to the gut microbiome. A study found that dog owners' gut microbes differed significantly from non-owners, with specific bacteria variants linked to reduced aggression, delinquent behavior, and social withdrawal in teens. Animal experiments with mice further indicated that transferring these dog-owner-associated microbes influenced murine sociality and stress responses. The findings suggest that microbe transfer from dogs may positively impact human brain function and mental health.

## Are some types of sugar healthier than others?

Contrary to popular belief, the type of sugar consumed—whether refined white sugar, raw sugar, or honey—does not significantly impact health, as most derive sweetness from fructose and glucose. Glucose spikes the blood sugar, causing hunger and potentially impairing blood-glucose control over time, while excess fructose is processed into fat by the liver. A more effective strategy for managing sugar intake is to consume it slowly, especially with fiber, protein, or fat, which slow absorption and promote satiety. Drinking sugary beverages like fruit juice is worse than eating whole fruit due to faster consumption and lack of fiber.

## CULTURE

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### What goes into raising the turkey on your holiday table

Raising domesticated turkeys for holiday tables, a cherished tradition in many Western countries, is a labor-intensive and unglamorous process that sustains small family farms. Unlike their wild counterparts, farmed turkeys lack a survival instinct, making them easy to handle. Farms like Baffoni's Poultry Farm raise broad-breasted whites, known for their quick growth and table presentation. The birds are raised in staggered batches, then humanely slaughtered and processed on-site. Despite the tough work and competition from large brands offering cheaper frozen birds, small farms persist by combining traditional methods with niche markets, often passing down their vision for generations, highlighting the deep connection between farming, food, and cultural celebrations.

### And 2025's winners are?Timothée Chalamet and Sydney Sweeney



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Timothée Chalamet and Sydney Sweeney emerged as Hollywood's biggest winners in 2025, solidifying their status as bona fide movie stars. Chalamet garnered Oscar buzz for his roles in "Marty Supreme" and "A Complete Unknown," showcasing his versatility and magnetic screen presence. Sweeney, despite mixed box office results for her films "The Housemaid" and "Christy," captivated public attention with a controversial clothing advert and her screen charisma. Both artists master the delicate balance of intimacy and mystique crucial for modern stardom, feeding the publicity machine while guarding their private selves. Their success is vital for the future of cinema, offering the star power needed to draw audiences to big-screen storytelling amidst the rise of streaming and the threat of AI actors.

## The best podcasts of 2025

This section lists The Economist's top podcast recommendations for 2025. "Articles of Interest" explores the history of clothes, connecting weaving to early computing. "Final Thoughts: Jerry Springer" delves into the political career of the late talk show host. "Fela Kuti: Fear No Man" is a 12-episode series on the innovative Nigerian musician and Afrobeat pioneer. "Flesh and Code" compassionately chronicles individuals building relationships with AI companions. "Heavyweight" offers funny and poignant stories about life's unresolved moments. "Missing in the Amazon" investigates the disappearance of a British journalist and an indigenous activist. "Past Present Future: Politics on Trial" examines lawfare with historical comparisons. "The Protocol" traces the controversial history of transgender medicine. "Shell Game" explores how AI might transform the workforce. "The Wargame" simulates Britain's response to a fictional Russian attack, questioning its readiness for war.

## ECONOMIC & FINANCIAL INDICATORS

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### Economic data, commodities and markets

No significant coverage this issue.

## OBITUARY

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### Iain Douglas-Hamilton fought to save the beasts he loved

Iain Douglas-Hamilton, a campaigning zoologist, dedicated his life to studying and saving African elephants, a mission that began in 1965 in Tanzania. He pioneered ethological methods, observing elephants as individuals and later using aerial surveys to precisely count populations, revealing the devastating impact of ivory poaching. His work was instrumental in passing America's African Elephant Conservation Act and leading anti-poaching efforts in Uganda, which significantly restored the country's elephant population. Douglas-Hamilton



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institutionalized his efforts by co-founding Save the Elephants in 1993, contributing to the recovery of savannah elephants in several African nations. Despite facing ongoing challenges with forest elephants and a near-fatal bee attack, he continued his work, embodying a deep commitment to conservation.