

Catch up: South Korea's deadly plane crash; Georgians protest against president



A plane crash killed 179 people in **South Korea**. The aeroplane, operated by Jeju Air, a South Korean carrier, burst into flames when it hit a wall while landing at Muan International Airport in the country's south. Two crew members survived South Korea's worst domestic aviation disaster. The government confirmed that the pilot had been warned of bird strike risks three minutes before the crash.

Thousands of **Georgians** gathered to protest during the inauguration of the new president. Mikheil Kavelashvili, a footballer turned hard-right populist, is allied with Georgian Dream, the party of the prime minister, Irakli Kobakhidze. The [pro-Russia party](#) recently suspended Georgia's bid to join the European Union, prompting [protests](#), which were [violently repressed](#). The outgoing president, Salome Zourabichvili, who is pro-European, has refused to step down.

Croatians voted in presidential elections on Sunday. Zoran Milanovic, the leftist incumbent, is slightly ahead in the polls but is

not expected to win a majority in the first round. He will probably face Dragan Primorac, the candidate of the Croatian Democratic Union, a centre-right party that leads the government, in a run-off in January. Although the position is mostly ceremonial, Croatia's president has a say in foreign policy.

Voting began in **Chad** for parliamentary, provincial and local elections that are likely to strengthen the hold on power of the country's president, Mahamat Idriss Déby. He has governed since rebels [killed](#) his father in April 2021. The younger Mr Déby was formally elected in a disputed vote in May 2024. Many opposition parties have boycotted Sunday's elections.

Azerbaijan's president, Ilham Aliyev, called on Russia to admit "guilt" for the downing of an Azerbaijani passenger plane in Kazakhstan on Wednesday. Earlier **Vladimir Putin** apologised to Mr Aliyev, and admitted that his forces were using [anti-aircraft fire](#) against a Ukrainian drone attack at the time. But he did not accept responsibility for the crash. At least 38 passengers were killed.

Three people died trying to cross from **France** to **Britain** in a small boat. The International Organisation for Migration said that 77 people died on the English Channel in 2024. About 36,000 have attempted the journey, a new yearly record. Britain's Labour government is enforcing [new measures](#) to lower the number of illegal crossings.

Figure of the day: 43, the number of UNESCO world heritage sites in India. [Read the full story.](#)

What can America expect from Donald Trump?



Until January 2nd we are looking ahead to next year's big stories. Today, what will shape the United States and the rest of the Americas?

Donald Trump returns to the presidency in January with Republican majorities in both the Senate and House of Representatives, clearing the way for him to pass legislation. A giant [tax-cutting bill](#) is on the cards. But the majorities are slim, especially in the House, and he will probably act without Congress, too. Mr Trump could invoke national-security authority to implement [sweeping tariffs](#) on China and use executive orders to try to “shut down” the southern border and limit asylum. And he will be tempted to [seek retribution](#) against his political enemies, perhaps through the Justice Department.

Mr Trump's victory entrenches his ideological transformation of the party into one dominated by a nativist, protectionist wing, sceptical of military adventurism. J.D. Vance, the new vice-president, aged 40, is the [heir-apparent](#) to the Make America Great

Again movement, provided he can stay in Mr Trump's good graces. Wherever Mr Trump takes America in the next four years will be felt for decades to come.

What does a Trump presidency mean for Latin America?



Donald Trump gave Latin America a hard time the first time he occupied the White House. It can expect an even harder one in 2025. Cracking down on illegal immigration, trade imbalances and drugs will be priorities during his presidency. The vast majority of the millions of people Mr Trump says he wants to deport are Latin Americans. Their countries would struggle to absorb them, and [the loss of remittances](#) would hurt their economies.

A trade war may loom with Mexico—although given North America's economic integration, Mr Trump may consider a review of the United States-Mexico-Canada [free-trade agreement](#), due in 2026, as a chance to make deals. The president-elect has also promised to stem the influx into the United States of [fentanyl](#), a drug made by gangs in Mexico. Mr Trump may not actually bomb drug laboratories operated by gangs, as he has suggested, but he will probably take a more muscular approach to security threats from Mexico than have previous administrations.

What now for the Democrats?



In blazing the Republicans' path back to the White House, Donald Trump has sparked a frenzy of finger-pointing, and even some soul-searching, within [the Democratic Party](#). There is no agreement yet on policy or message. Does the Democrats' winning path lie further left, or towards the centre? The pro-labour economic populism of the party's leftists may appeal to working-class voters who defected to Mr Trump, but those same people are alienated by leftist positions on policing, illegal immigration and transgender rights.

The Democrats can at least console themselves that they have a strong generation of rising politicians who are, at last, free to compete to set the party's direction. The buzz in 2025 will be loudest about governors who boast records of pragmatic decision-making—people such as [Gretchen Whitmer](#) of Michigan and Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania, both battleground states, and [Andy Beshear](#) of Kentucky, a firmly red one.

Will the “iron-fist” model spread in Latin America?



Enthusiasm for a ruthless approach to crime is growing in Latin America, thanks in part to the “iron-fist” model of [Nayib Bukele](#). Since declaring a state of emergency in 2022 El Salvador’s president has thrown 80,000 people, nearly 2% of the population, into jail. Human-rights groups say torture in prison is common. Most Salvadoreans seem not to mind: homicides have plummeted and Mr Bukele was [re-elected by a landslide](#) in 2024.

In 2025 concerns about crime will shape presidential elections in [Ecuador](#), where cities have lately joined the ranks of the world’s most violent, and in Chile, where the murder rate has increased since 2019 to surpass that of the United States. Daniel Noboa, Ecuador’s president, who is running for re-election, has sent the army and police into the streets to tackle gang violence. He will probably pledge to clamp down harder. Chile, which elected Gabriel Boric, a [youthful leftist](#), in 2021, could turn towards candidates promising to be tough on crime. If they do, other leaders will surely take notice.

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.

Monday: Which is the largest ice shelf in Antarctica, at almost 500,000 square kilometres?

**It requires a very unusual mind to
undertake the analysis of the obvious.**

Alfred North Whitehead