

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: Getty Images

A magnitude 6.3 earthquake struck near Mazar-i-Sharif, a city of 682,000 people in northern **Afghanistan**. A local health official reported a preliminary death toll of at least 20. In August an earthquake with a similar magnitude killed at least 2,200 people in the country. Afghanistan's ability to respond to natural disasters has been hindered by [curbs](#) on international aid.

Samia Suluhu Hassan was sworn in for a second term as Tanzania's president following a [disputed election](#). Hundreds of people died in a crackdown on protests after the vote, from which the opposition was excluded. An internet blackout continues. Ms Hassan's oath was moved to the State House to ensure tighter security and was not open to the public.

Kimberly-Clark, maker of Huggies nappies and Kleenex tissues, has agreed to buy **Kenvue**, which produces Tylenol, a painkiller. The landmark health-care tie-up is worth \$48.7bn, including debt, according to Kimberly-Clark. Kenvue has had a rough quarter after Donald Trump [claimed that Tylenol caused autism](#); its stock has dropped by roughly a third since the beginning of 2025.

Migration to rich countries dropped 4% in 2024—to 6.2m permanent arrivals—according to the OECD, a club that represents

them. As the economic outlook worsened, especially in Europe, 21% fewer people [migrated for work](#) compared with 2023. The number of new international students also plunged by 13%. Refugee flows continued to increase, driving a 20% rise in permanent migration to America.

Inflation in Turkey eased in October, falling to 32.9% year on year from 33.3% a month earlier. Pressure remained high on food and non-alcoholic drink prices. The larger-than-expected drop—to a 47-month low—paves the way for the central bank to continue cutting rates. The [optimism](#) pushed Turkish bank shares up, the Borsa Istanbul 100 Index rallied by 1.5%.

Anthony Williams was charged following the **mass stabbing** on a train in Cambridgeshire, England on Saturday. Police had not determined the 32-year-old's motive, but said that there was no reason to suspect that it was a terrorist attack. Eleven people were taken to hospital; one remains in a critical but stable condition.

A **Parisian** prosecutor said that small-time criminals from a deprived area in the north of the city had conducted [a brazen heist](#) at **the Louvre** on October 19th, not organised-crime groups. Thieves escaped with eight items of Napoleonic and royal jewellery worth \$102m. Three of four suspected robbers have now been arrested. The jewels are still missing.

Figure of the day: 7.4%, the share of deaths in Equatorial Guinea caused by heat. [Read the full story](#).



Photograph: Shutterstock

China's economy breathes a sigh of relief

Heading into trade talks with China last month, Scott Bessent, America's treasury secretary, said the Chinese economy was in a “recession/depression”. That was an exaggeration. But it will nonetheless benefit from the two superpowers' decision, [announced on October 30th](#), to back down from their trade war for a year. The Trump administration will lower tariffs by 10% and China will delay cumbersome licensing requirements on rare earths and batteries. Both concessions will aid China's exports, which have helped prop up the economy this year.

Recent surveys of purchasing managers illustrated the danger. An official survey released on October 31st showed export orders plunging after China and America exchanged trade threats earlier in the month. “Rising trade uncertainty” caused a similar tumble in export orders in a survey sponsored by RatingDog, a Chinese credit-rating firm, that was released on Monday. Reducing that uncertainty is, for China, the main reason to welcome the remission/intermission of the trade war.



Photograph: AP

Repression and rigging in Tanzania

On October 29th Samia Suluhu Hassan, Tanzania's president, was re-elected as president. According to her, at least. Prior to the poll her Chama Cha Mapinduzi party, which has ruled the East African country since independence in 1961, filed ludicrous treason charges against Tundu Lissu, the leader of [Chadema](#), the main opposition party, and banned this group. Several observers alleged on the day that vote counts were rigged. On November 1st Mrs Samia claimed to have won a North Korean-style 98% share of the vote.

Widespread demonstrations broke out. Security forces cracked down, killing hundreds, according to Chadema. (The UN puts the number at closer to ten.) Opposition leaders say they will continue to contest the result. But it may be enough to keep CCM in power, assuming the army stays in its camp. Either way, the brutality of Mrs Samia's "victory" has ended her country's once-deserved reputation as a somewhat democratic, peaceful place.



Photograph: AP

Trump's redistricting push slows

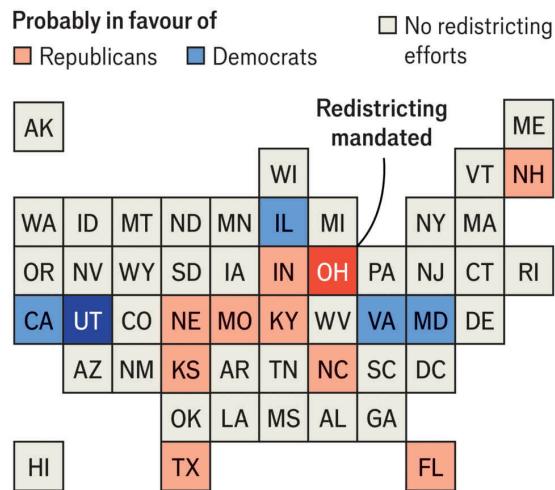
President Donald Trump has notched some victories in his [redistricting push](#), which aims to give Republicans a better chance of retaining their majority in the House of Representatives.

Looking ahead to next year's midterms, three states have redrawn a total of seven districts to favour Republicans. Mike Braun, Indiana's governor, wants his state to add two more to that tally in a special session of the state legislature that begins on Monday.

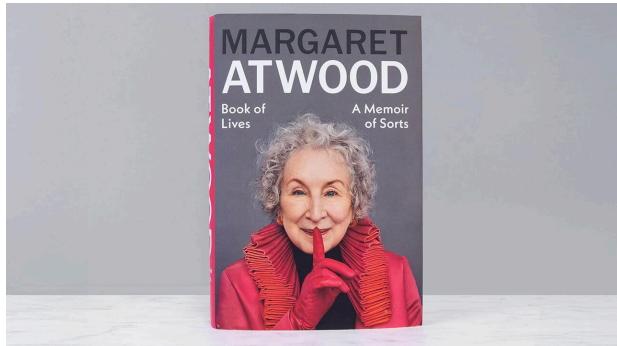
Indiana's lawmakers, though, will not convene in the capital for at least a few days. Republican leaders blame "member availability". It may be that they don't have the votes to pass a new map. Some Republican lawmakers worry about endangering their own re-election if they support redistricting. Others are opposed to it on principle. Republicans in Kansas, New Hampshire and Nebraska have voiced similar concerns. As Republican efforts slow, more Democratic-controlled states, such as Virginia, are entering the gerrymander war. And on November 4th, Californians will vote on a measure that would let the state legislature draw a new congressional map—one that would favour Democrats.

Gerrymanders run amok

US states that have redistricted* or may redistrict before 2026 midterms, at October 29th 2025



*MO, NC, and TX boundaries have been approved by legislature Sources: Press reports; *The Economist*



Photograph: Chatto & Windus

Margaret Atwood's many lives

Over more than 60 years, Margaret Atwood has written fiction, poetry and essays. But she has never attempted an autobiography, until now. This week the Canadian writer publishes her “Book of Lives”. In this “Memoir of Sorts”, Ms Atwood chronicles episodes from her past, including her rural and nomadic childhood in Ontario and Quebec and her romantic partnership with fellow writer Graeme Gibson.

Along with witty accounts of travel and shrewd observations on motherhood, cooking and the natural world, Ms Atwood shares insights into her craft (“poetry breaks a subject open, fiction grows from the break”). Fans will relish the origin stories of novels such as “The Handmaid’s Tale”—she decided to explore the “unthinkable idea” of America as a totalitarian theocracy while in West Berlin in 1984, separated from another autocracy by only a wall. As with all good memoirs, the “Book of Lives” shows how Ms Atwood’s eventful life fed her singular art.



Illustration: The Economist

Daily Quiz

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 [\[email protected\]](mailto:). We'll pick randomly from those with the right answers and crown three winners on Saturday.

Monday: Cantilever, continuous and overhanging are all types of what?

The test of a man or woman's breeding is how they behave in a quarrel.

George Bernard Shaw