

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: AFP

President Donald Trump signed into law a spending package, ending a 43-day **federal government shutdown**. Earlier America's House of Representatives approved the bill with a 222-to-209 vote. The legislation will fund the government until the end of January. Mr Trump blamed "extremists" in the [Democratic Party](#) for the country's longest-ever shutdown and urged voters to "not forget this" during the midterms.

Democrats on a congressional committee released [documents](#) from **Jeffrey Epstein's** estate. In one Epstein suggested that Mr Trump spent time at his house with one of the sex-offender's victims. In another Epstein, who killed himself in 2019, [claimed](#) that Mr Trump "knew about the girls". Mr Trump continues to deny knowledge of Epstein's sex-trafficking. Republicans on the committee released around 20,000 more documents in response.

Pakistan's parliament passed a constitutional amendment handing more power to **Field Marshal Asim Munir**, the country's army chief and de facto leader. Once the bill is approved by the president, [Field Marshal Munir](#) will have control over the navy and air force and lifelong immunity from criminal prosecution. The

amendment also creates a court that will sit above the Supreme Court.

The **European Union** reportedly wants to charge a handling fee on small parcels by early 2026, two years earlier than scheduled. The move is part of a crackdown on the import of cheap Chinese goods via e-commerce platforms such as Alibaba and Shein. According to the *Financial Times*, Maros Sefcovic, the EU's trade commissioner, believes that faster implementation would "send a strong signal" that the bloc is serious about competitiveness.

Waymo expanded its autonomous-taxi service to include **motorways** across parts of California and Arizona. Alphabet's **self-driving-car unit** already operates within cities, including San Francisco, but not on motorways, where faster speeds require different safety controls. Waymo will be the first firm to offer fully-autonomous freeway rides in America.

France's parliament voted to suspend President [Emmanuel Macron's pension reform](#), which raises the legal minimum retirement age from 62 years to 64. France's centrist government is [struggling to pass a budget](#) for 2026. The vote was a concession to the left by Sébastien Lecornu, who was reappointed as prime minister after resigning less than four weeks into the job.

Much of the world was treated to a cosmic light show, as powerful **geomagnetic storms** lit up the night sky. The auroras were caused by a bout of coronal mass ejections—eruptions of plasma from the surface of the Sun—that shot particles towards Earth. Big [geomagnetic storms](#) can cause short-wave radio blackouts, affect satellites and disrupt power grids.

Figure of the day: 39%, the share of all American stocks and mutual funds owned by people over the age of 70. [Read the full story.](#)



Photograph: Getty Images

Sheikh Hasina's trial has Bangladesh on edge

A little over a year ago student-led protests toppled Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh's autocratic prime minister from 2009. Her downfall was celebrated in Bangladesh and beyond as a triumph for democracy. Yet it was a bittersweet victory: around 1,400 people were killed in the demonstrations. In the months since, Bangladesh has been gripped by [waves of retribution](#)—often of the extrajudicial kind. But Sheikh Hasina now faces a legal reckoning. On Thursday a local court said it would issue a ruling on her role in attempting to suppress original protests on November 17th.

Prosecutors are seeking the death penalty on five charges, including crimes against humanity. Sheikh Hasina denies all accusations, and her party has dismissed the proceedings as a show trial. (She has not attended the hearings, [having sought refuge in India](#).) A lenient ruling could provoke outrage among her detractors, while a harsh one could inflame her supporters. Any mass unrest would pose yet another obstacle to Bangladesh's fragile return to democracy and jeopardise elections [scheduled for February 2026](#).



Photograph: Alamy

Disney's new destiny

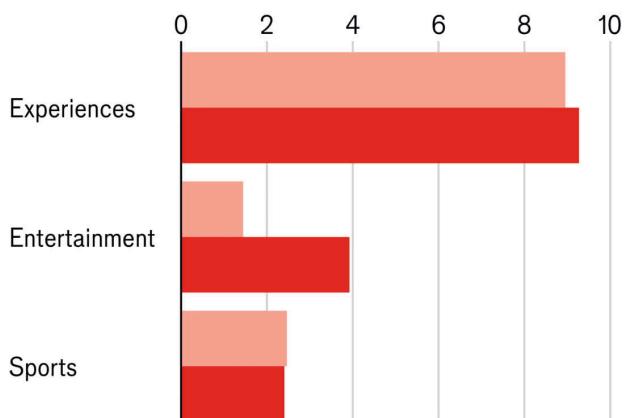
The House of Mouse may be best known for its films, but these days it [makes most of its money](#) from theme parks and cruises. Last year its “experiences” division earned \$9.3bn in profit, contributing the king’s share of Disney’s operating income. Investors will get a quarterly update on Thursday. Vacationers, meanwhile, await the launch on November 20th of the *Destiny*, Disney’s seventh cruise ship, which promises a “heroes and villains” theme featuring characters including Jack Sparrow and Cruella de Vil.

The ship’s maiden voyage may represent another launch of sorts. The man in charge of Disney’s parks and cruises, Josh D’Amaro, is the favourite to succeed [Bob Iger](#), who has been at the helm of Disney for most of the past 20 years. A fair wind for the company’s cruises will aid his ambitions. Disney will name its new captain in 2026—perhaps in time for the launch of its eighth ship, the *Adventure*.

Lion king's share

Disney, operating income by segment, \$bn

■ 2023 ■ 2024



Source: Company reports



Photograph: eyevine

Thailand's king visits China

Many expected an outpouring of public grief after [Sirikit, Thailand's queen mother](#), died in October. Instead the reaction was muted, a sign that attitudes towards the monarchy are changing within Thailand. The erratic behaviour of Sirikit's mercurial son Vajiralongkorn, who rules as King Rama X, has done little to help. Yet even as Thais reconsider their views on the monarchy, the king seems to be expanding his diplomatic role. On Thursday Vajiralongkorn arrives in China for a five-day state visit—only the second of his reign, following a trip to Bhutan in April.

He will meet Xi Jinping, China's leader, to mark the 50th anniversary of Thailand and China restoring diplomatic ties. Mr Xi has reportedly pushed for the visit since 2022. Relations between the countries have recently come under strain as China has pressed the Thai government to help [crack down on cyberscams](#). Still, economic ties remain strong: China is Thailand's top trading partner and one of its biggest foreign investors.



Photograph: Getty Images

Ten years on from the Bataclan massacre

On November 13th 2015 a jihadist commando team, wearing suicide jackets and heavily armed, murdered 130 people and wounded hundreds more in Paris. They attacked the Bataclan music venue, nearby cafés and passers-by outside the Stade de France. It was the deadliest attack on French soil since the second world war. On Thursday France will [commemorate the attacks](#) with ceremonies in the capital, attended by President Emmanuel Macron and Anne Hidalgo, the mayor of Paris.

Since then the threat of a co-ordinated terrorist attack on that scale has diminished, Nicolas Lerner, the head of the DGSE, France's external-intelligence service, said this week. But, he added, the risk of home-grown terrorism remains "the most preoccupying" threat. Radicalised individuals are becoming younger. The anti-terrorist prosecutor says that so far this year, 17 suspects under the age of 18 have been put under formal investigation for terrorist-related offences. Last month three young adult women were also detained and investigated for a suspected terrorist plot.



Illustration: David Simonds

What to expect in 2026

Donald Trump has undermined the rules-based international order, but [what will take its place](#)? Will the [trade war](#) cause a global [slowdown](#)? Is a [bond-market crisis](#) looming? Will [AI lead to a boom](#), bust or [backlash](#)? Next year is shaping up to be one in which answers to many of these questions start to emerge.

We provide our own answers in *The World Ahead*, *The Economist's* annual supplement, of which the [40th edition has just been published](#). Our future-gazing volume helps readers navigate through the fog on many other questions. What do [Labubu dolls reveal about Chinese soft power](#)? What can you expect from the [next generation of weight-loss drugs](#)? What lessons can [the story of Odysseus](#) offer in these storm-tossed times?

There are also guest essays from [Mark Carney](#), prime minister of Canada, and [Kaja Kallas](#), the European Union's foreign-policy chief, among others. What happens in 2026 could, in many ways, determine the course of the next decade.



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.

Thursday: Which city was built at the confluence of the Willamette and Columbia rivers?

Wednesday: Which city, not known for its bear population, is home to the Grizzlies basketball team?

*Life is not a matter of holding
good cards, but of playing a poor
hand well.*

Robert Louis Stevenson