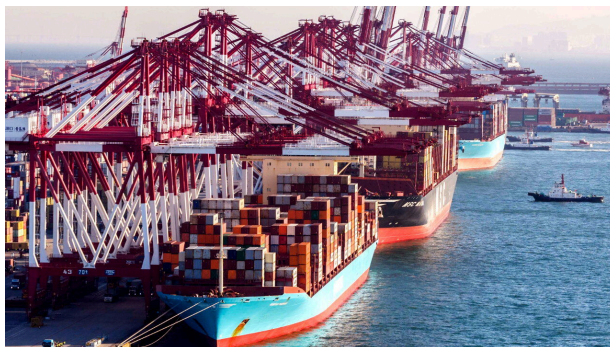


# The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: CFOTO/Future Publishing via Gett

America launched a trade probe into **China's** alleged failure to abide by a trade deal signed during **Donald Trump's** first term. The investigation, announced days before [Mr Trump meets Xi Jinping](#) in Asia, could allow the administration to impose more tariffs on China. Meanwhile **Mark Carney**, Canada's prime minister, said he was prepared to [restart talks](#) with Mr Trump after the American president ended trade negotiations on Thursday.

The Trump administration said it would deploy the *USS Gerald R. Ford*, the world's largest aircraft-carrier, to **Latin America** to [“counter narco-terrorism”](#), escalating the **United States's** military presence in the region. Earlier the Pentagon confirmed it had bombed another alleged drug-carrying boat in the Caribbean sea, killing six people. The country has hit ten boats and killed at least 40 people since September.

Meanwhile America's Treasury imposed sanctions on [Gustavo Petro](#), **Colombia's** president, and his wife and son. Scott Bessent, the treasury secretary, accused Mr Petro of letting **drug cartels** “flourish”; on Sunday Mr Trump called him “an illegal-drug leader”. In recent days America has widened its boat-striking

campaign to include vessels it claims are moving drugs out of Colombia, in addition to Venezuela.

**Porsche** reported a €1bn (\$1.2bn) loss in the third quarter; in the same period last year it made as much in profit. The fancy German carmaker, which is mostly owned by Volkswagen, has seen weak demand for its [electric models](#), forcing it to make an expensive swerve back to petrol cars. Its boss, Oliver Blume, will step down this year; he also runs Volkswagen.

The **White House** said the [government shutdown](#) would probably hold up inflation figures for October. On Friday the Bureau of Labour Statistics said that in September America's annual inflation rate edged up to 3%, 0.1 percentage points higher than a month earlier. Separately the Pentagon plans to use a \$130m donation from an unnamed "friend" of Mr Trump to pay military salaries frozen by the shutdown.

**Procter & Gamble** beat analysts' expectations with its quarterly earnings. The consumer-goods giant, which owns Pantene and Olay, saw a 6% rise in beauty-product sales for the quarter compared with the same period last year, despite raising prices in America to pay for Mr Trump's tariffs. The company revised the expected cost of tariffs down for the year, from \$800m to \$400m.

Britain's ruling **Labour Party** suffered a disastrous by-election defeat in Caerphilly, losing a Welsh parliament seat in an area it had been dominant in for a [century](#), to Plaid Cymru, a Welsh nationalist party. Labour came third behind the hard-right Reform UK. Consequently it has lost its effective majority in the Senedd, the Welsh parliament. The loss bodes ill for Labour ahead of local elections next year.

**Figure of the day:** 424%, the average wage increase workers from developing countries would get if they took low-skilled jobs in America. [Read the full story.](#)





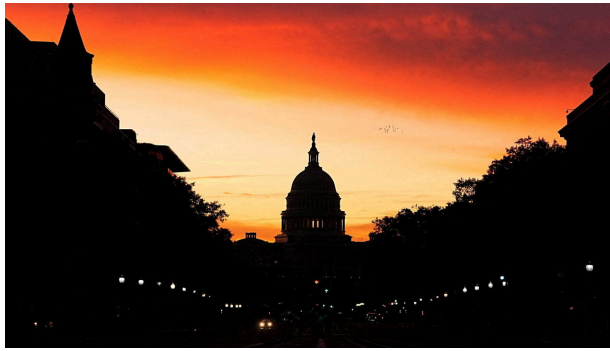
Photograph: Getty Images

## France's budget and ratings squeeze

Now that France has a new government in place—the third this year—parliament will on Friday finally start to debate the [budget for 2026](#). President Emmanuel Macron has given his re-installed prime minister, [Sébastien Lecornu](#), “carte blanche” to negotiate a compromise to get it through.

To secure support from the opposition Socialists for his minority government, Mr Lecornu has promised to suspend Mr Macron's landmark pension reform, which progressively raises the minimum retirement age from 62 to 64 years. This concession, however, needs financing. Mr Lecornu has conceded that earlier pledges to reduce the government deficit from 5.4% of GDP in 2025 to 4.6% will not be met. But he vows to keep it under 5%.

Bond markets will be watching. On Friday Moody's ratings agency will update France's sovereign credit rating. On October 17th S&P, a rival rater, lowered France's credit rating, citing “uncertainty on public finances”. Quite.



Photograph: Reuters

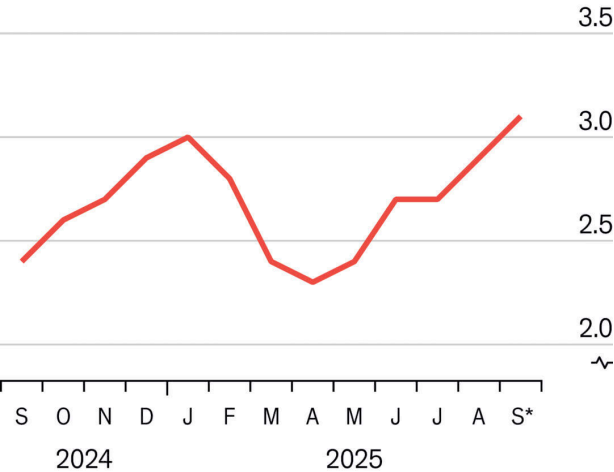
## A trickle of economic data in America

As America's government shutdown lurches into its fourth week, [economy-watchers](#) face a worsening data drought. But on Friday, the Bureau of Labour Statistics provided an oasis, releasing inflation figures for September, nine days later than originally scheduled. [Annual inflation](#) nudged up from 2.9% to 3%, a touch lower than expected, despite pressure on prices from tariffs and lower immigration.

The BLS has not published data since the shutdown began at the start of October. But it has made an exception for figures tracking consumer prices, which will help calculate the cost-of-living for some 70m Americans who receive social-security payments. Betting markets expect the shutdown to last until mid-November. That would compound the data woes at the BLS. Ordinarily, the agency's army of price-collectors would be gathering data from around the country for October's figures, due out in November. But now they sit furloughed, clipboards down.

High time

United States, consumer prices,  
% increase on a year earlier



\*Forecast  
Source: LSEG Workspace



Photograph: Getty Images

## Money for Ukraine, sanctions for Russia

Following a frenetic week of diplomacy, on Friday the European-led “coalition of the willing” will meet Ukraine’s president, Volodymyr Zelensky, in London to discuss a peace plan. The 12-point proposal, which emerged earlier this week, bears similarities to America’s 20-point deal for Gaza. It could also include a “peace board” chaired by Donald Trump. A ceasefire in Ukraine would be based on the [current front lines](#), which Russia rejects.

The proposal comes after Mr Trump scrapped a summit with Vladimir Putin in Budapest and announced sanctions on Russian oil firms. If rigorously enforced, those could help cut the funding for Moscow’s war machine. On Thursday the [European Union’s](#) leaders delayed until December a vote on a long-standing proposal for a \$162bn “reparations” loan to Kyiv using profits from frozen Russian assets in Europe. Should it be agreed it is not clear how much leeway Ukraine would have on spending the money, but Mr Zelensky insists that some of it should go on new weapons and supporting Ukraine’s defence industry.



Photograph: Alamy

## Ireland's spoiled ballot

On Friday Ireland will choose its next president. The race had promised plenty of colour, with a meteorologist, a martial-arts fighter, a former gaelic-football manager and Bob Geldof, an outspoken rock singer, in the mix. But only two, more conventional, candidates are left. The overwhelming favourite is a former barrister, Catherine Connolly (pictured left), who is a pro-Palestine independent backed by the left. Her rival, Heather Humphreys (pictured right), is from the centre-right Fine Gael party.

About half of voters polled feel represented by neither. The main parties closed ranks to stop more unusual candidates from receiving the necessary backing to run. Some people intend to spoil their ballots; others will just not vote. While the role of Ireland's president is mostly ceremonial, it has the potential to unify the country beyond party politics. But compared with the outgoing president Michael D. Higgins, a diminutive, well-liked politician and sometime poet who often brought his dogs on official business, whoever wins will be uninspiring.





Photograph: Reuters

## The team to beat in Major League Baseball

Ever since the Los Angeles Dodgers signed [Shohei Ohtani](#) (pictured), a Japanese superstar, to a contract worth \$700m in late 2023, they have been Major League Baseball's best team. It is stuffed with talent. Last year it led the league in payment of "luxury tax", a penalty levied on teams whose salary bills exceed a certain threshold. The Dodgers have cruised to this year's World Series, in which they will play Toronto's Blue Jays. The first game in the best-of-seven series takes place on Friday.

It is tempting to cast the Blue Jays as plucky underdogs. They have not reached a World Series since 1993 and were absent from the playoffs between 1994 and 2015. But the team has been splashing cash, too. It secured Vladimir Guerrero junior, a first baseman, on a \$500m contract this year, which is the third-largest in MLB history. The Blue Jays' payroll this year was the league's fifth-highest. That suggests they'll put up a good fight.



Illustration: The Economist

## Daily quiz

We will serve you a new question each weekday. On **Friday** your challenge is to give us all five answers and tell us the theme. Email your responses (and your home city and country) by 1700 BST on Friday to [\[email protected\]](#). We'll pick three winners at random and crown them on Saturday.

**Friday:** Who was the only British prime minister for whom English was not his first language?

**Thursday:** Which actor is noted for his appearances as real-life people, including Tony Blair and David Frost?

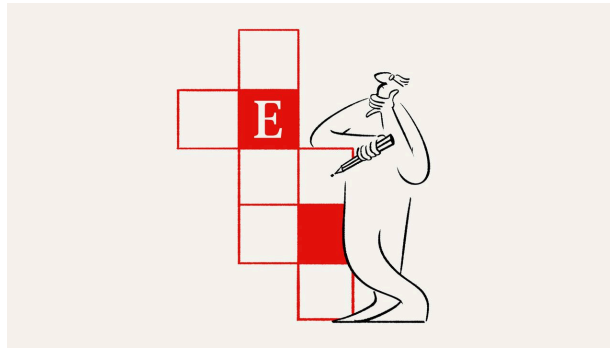


Illustration: The Economist

## The winners of last week's crossword

Thank you to everyone who took part in our crossword, published on Saturday. The winners, chosen at random, were:

**Ray Wronski**, Tokyo, Japan

**Rune Pettersson**, Höganäs, Sweden

**Celia Johnson**, Vancouver, Canada

They all gave the correct answers of Russia, luxury, throne and Royal Mint.

*A great artist is always before his  
time or behind it.*

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***G. E. Moore***