

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: Getty Images/Bloomberg Creative

America's longest-ever [federal shutdown](#) may be coming to an end after the Senate voted to advance a compromise bill. Several Democratic senators were persuaded to back legislation to fund the government until January 30th, despite their main bone of contention—that health-insurance be extended—not being immediately addressed. They were instead promised a separate vote on the issue in December. Won-over Democrats said that the legislation had included provisions to reinstate federal workers who were fired during the 40-day shutdown. The bill must still pass the House and receive Donald Trump's sign-off.

The **BBC's** director-general, Tim Davie, resigned. Britain's public broadcaster had faced growing criticism that it lacked balance on certain topics, including Mr Trump, Gaza and transgender rights. The White House criticised a documentary on the Capitol insurrection of 2021 that appeared to selectively edit a speech by America's president. Mr Davie said he took "ultimate responsibility" for recent mistakes.

South Korea's special prosecutor indicted **Yoon Suk Yeol**, a former president, on new charges, including abuse of power and aiding an enemy state. The prosecutor alleges that Mr Yoon

attempted to provoke a conflict between South and North Korea as part of his short-lived attempt to impose martial law in December 2024. South Korea's constitutional court [ruled to oust](#) Mr Yoon in April.

Typhoon Fung Wong is forecast to head towards **Taiwan** after killing two people and forcing more than 1.4m to flee their homes in the **Philippines**. Power was cut across parts of Luzon, the Philippines' most populous island, and several airports closed as heavy rain caused floods.

China said it would allow exports of **Nexperia** chips to resume for civilian use, easing shortages for European carmakers. In September the Dutch government dusted off a 73-year-old security law to seize control of the Netherlands-based [chipmaker](#), citing concerns about its Chinese owner, Wingtech. China retaliated by halting exports. The Chinese government urged the Netherlands to “rectify its erroneous actions”.

Hamas returned the remains of an **Israeli** soldier killed in Gaza in 2014, saying it was found while locating other hostages. As part of a ceasefire deal the militant group has released 20 hostages and 24 bodies in exchange for Palestinian prisoners. The move could help reinforce the [fragile truce](#).

Police in **Tanzania** detained Amani Golugwa, a senior figure in the opposition CHADEMA party, and issued warrants for nine others accused of organising unrest after last week's contested election. [Protests erupted](#) when opposition candidates were barred from the vote, which returned President Samia Suluhu Hassan to power. CHADEMA alleges over 1,000 people were killed in the ensuing crackdown, a figure the government disputes.

Figure of the day: £9bn (\$11.5bn), the value of Britain's legal-services exports last year, up from £6.3bn in 2020. [Read the full story](#).



Photograph: EPA

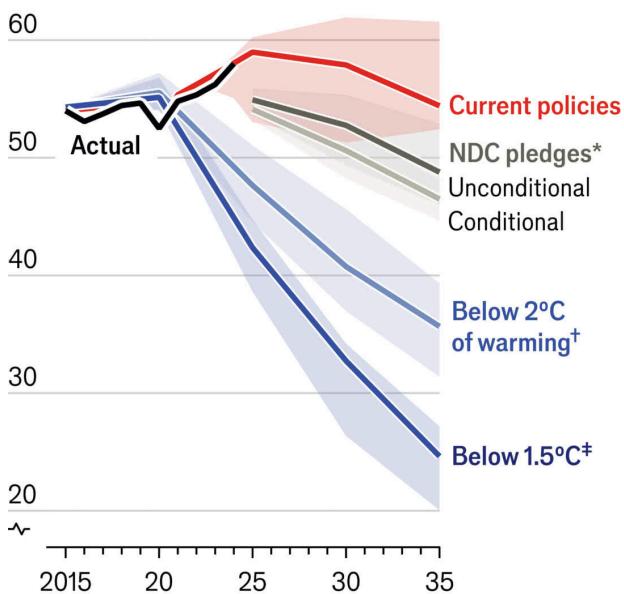
Brazil hosts a “COP of truth” in the Amazon

In 1992, Brazil hosted the Rio “Earth Summit” which produced the UN’s convention on climate change and its system of annual meetings. This year’s conference, COP30, returns to Brazil—but to Belém, a city in the Amazon. The hosts hope that being amid one of the world’s most vital ecosystems will promote cooperation.

Last week the UN admitted, for the first time, that the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels is [no longer achievable](#). Brazil’s president promised a “COP of truth” at which countries actually delivered on past promises. These include reducing emissions and transitioning away from fossil fuels more quickly, and the commitment made at COP29 to provide poor countries with at least \$300bn for climate mitigation and adaptation by 2035. But such arguments have snarled climate negotiations for three decades. And appetite for climate action in America and Europe has [dwindled drastically](#). Progress will require far more than symbolic scenery.

Off-target targets

Greenhouse-gas emission trajectories,
gigatonnes of CO₂ equivalent



*Nationally Determined Contributions
under the Paris Agreement

†A 66% chance by 2100

‡A 50% chance by 2100 (at least a 33%
chance over the course of the next century)

Source: UNEP Emissions Gap Report, 2025



Photograph: Alamy

Syria's rehabilitation abroad

It will be a scene unthinkable just a year ago. On Monday [Ahmed al-Sharaa](#), the Syrian president, will meet Donald Trump in Washington. As recently as December Mr Sharaa had a \$10m American bounty on his head for his role as an al-Qaeda commander. Now he is set to become the first Syrian president to visit the White House.

Ahead of the visit, America's Treasury removed the Syrian president and his spy chief from its sanctions list. Congress is also debating a repeal of the Caesar Act, a 2019 law that placed tough sanctions on Syria's construction, energy and finance sectors. The Senate has already voted to rescind it (the House has not).

At home, some Syrians are growing frustrated with Mr Sharaa's insular rule and [tight inner circle](#). But many admire his transformation abroad. Two decades ago he was an American prisoner in Iraq; now he will be welcomed into the Oval Office.



Photograph: Getty Images

India's poorest state goes to the polls

India's ambition to become rich depends heavily on Bihar, the eastern state that is home to about a tenth of its population. Per-person income there is only 66,000 rupees (\$800) a year, less than a third of the national average. That makes the [state's election](#), which concludes on Tuesday, hugely consequential. The result, due on Friday, will also test the popularity of the Bharatiya Janata Party, which runs India and is part of the ruling coalition in Bihar. And it will reveal how well the opposition can unite.

On the campaign trail politicians made vague promises about bringing growth to the state, but they also played up caste identities, which are particularly entrenched in Bihar. Parties have picked candidates according to their ability to rally particular communities, rather than for their ideas for development or their performance on the stump. It is an old pattern, and one reason the state remains India's poorest.



Photograph: Booker Prize Foundation

Who will win the Booker prize?

After judging the Booker prize in 1985, Joanna Lumley, a British actor, concluded that the “so-called bitchy world of acting” was a “tea party compared with the piranha-infested waters of publishing”. (Ms Lumley had described Keri Hulme’s “The Bone People” as “over-my-dead-body stuff”. The book won anyway.)

This year’s judges—who include Roddy Doyle, a former winner, and Sarah Jessica Parker, another bibliophile actor—no doubt had many lively debates and disagreements about the novels in the running for the coveted annual award for fiction in English. The winner will be revealed at a ceremony on Monday.

Bookmakers have Kiran Desai’s “The Loneliness of Sonia and Sunny”, which tells the story of two young Indians trying to make it in America, as the frontrunner. (Ms Desai previously won the Booker in 2006 for “The Inheritance of Loss”.) Another favourite is Andrew Miller’s “The Land in Winter”, which follows two pregnant neighbours during one of the coldest winters on record in Britain.



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: What city is home to the La Brea tar pits?

*The mark of mediocrity is to look
for precedent.*

Norman Mailer