

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: Reuters

As debate time ended for Donald Trump's "One Big Beautiful Bill", the president's [tax-cutting package](#) moved to a special session known as **vote-a-rama**. Amendments proposed by senators are voted on in succession. Mr Trump's bill is on thin ice. Republicans can only lose the support of three Senators if the bill is to pass the Senate, and appear to have already lost two.

The White House said that Mr Trump will sign an executive order lifting sanctions on **Syria**. The president [first announced](#) that he would roll them back in May, and issued a 180-day waiver temporarily allowing business with Syria's government. With his executive order, he will be able to terminate some sanctions. Repealing the most restrictive will take an act of Congress.

Mr Trump took to letter-writing to again demand that **Jerome Powell**, the chair of the Federal Reserve, [lower interest rates](#). In a note written on top of a chart displaying the rates of other countries, the president accused Mr Powell of costing America "a fortune". Mr Trump has [repeatedly pressured Mr Powell](#), whose term as chair ends next year, to step down.

Mark Zuckerberg said **Meta** would create a new division focused on "superintelligence", Bloomberg reported. **Alexandr Wang**, an

AI wunderkind in whose startup Meta invested \$14bn this month, will lead it. Mr Zuckerberg also announced [new recruits](#) poached from rivals including OpenAI and Google. In an internal memo he reportedly told employees, with trademark diffidence, “this will be the beginning of a new era for humanity.”

Inflation in **Germany** slowed to an annual rate of 2% in June, unexpectedly matching the European Central Bank’s target inflation rate. The euro-zone will release figures on Tuesday. Meanwhile, in the first review of its [policy strategy](#) since 2021 the ECB warned of an increasingly uncertain and volatile inflation environment.

Russia’s foreign ministry summoned Rakhman Mustafayev, the Azerbaijani ambassador, over the “unfriendly actions” of his government. Tensions between the countries, which have been poor since the end of last year, have escalated in recent days. Azerbaijan’s government cancelled several Russian cultural events in the country, after accusing Russia of the extrajudicial killing of two Azerbaijani men in Yekaterinburg, a city in Russia.

China’s Communist Party surpassed 100m members. Its ranks had been growing more slowly in recent years as Xi Jinping, China’s leader, [ousted slackers](#) who showed a “lack of revolutionary spirit”. That has not put off many candidates: the party is often seen as a way to get ahead, and competition to join remains fierce. Mr Xi did not succeed until his tenth attempt.

Figure of the day: \$10bn, the amount a majority share in the LA Lakers is being sold for. It still looks like a bargain. Read the [full story](#).



Photograph: EPA

China's economy defies the odds

The first half of this year has [gone better](#) for China's economy than anyone could have expected a couple of months ago. Despite American tariffs, exports have continued to grow. And despite low consumer confidence, retail sales have picked up, thanks partly to a recent online-shopping festival and government subsidies for consumers who trade in old products for new. This week Citigroup, an American bank, raised its growth forecast for 2025 from 4.2% in early April to 5%.

The purchasing-managers' indices released on Monday by China's statistics bureau confirmed this stability, registering a slight improvement from May to June. But worries remain. The property market is still fragile and deflationary pressures linger. China's steady growth could also lull the country's policymakers into delaying further fiscal stimulus. The economy has started the year well. But if China's leaders take too much encouragement from that fact, it may finish the year badly.



Photograph: Getty Images

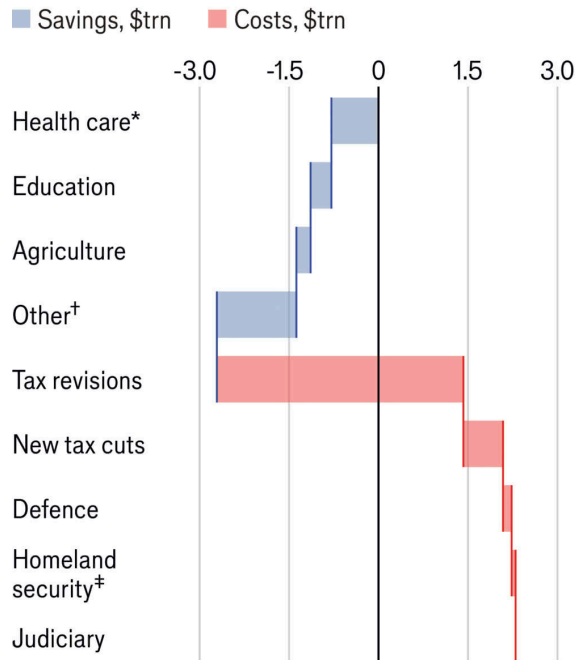
Republicans push to deliver a bill

The end may be in sight for Donald Trump's sprawling budget bill. Republicans in the Senate won a tricky preliminary vote late on Saturday, and could take a final poll as early as Monday. John Thune, the top Republican in the upper chamber, faced a daunting task: some of his members balked at the cost, others objected to the cuts to [Medicaid](#) (government health insurance for the poor). But a few last-minute tweaks—a fund to help rural hospitals, for example—appear to have helped pull a few sceptics back into line.

For months Donald Trump has been talking about passing the One Big Beautiful Bill Act by July 4th. But merging the Senate's version with the one that the House of Representatives passed earlier could be [harder still](#). More than a dozen congressmen have already said the Senate's Medicaid cuts are a deal-breaker. There are more negotiations to come, probably even beyond Independence Day, before the saga ends.

One big bill

United States, budgetary impact of House tax and spending bill, 2025-34, \$trn



*Including Medicaid †Energy, environment, communications, natural resources, transport and infrastructure, finance, oversight, and others

‡Including immigration

Source: Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget



Photograph: Getty Images

Back to the bloody impasse in Gaza

With the [war between Israel and Iran](#) apparently over, attention has returned to Gaza. Israel's bloody offensive is dragging on into its 21st month amid reports that Israeli soldiers have been shooting at civilians trying to get food from the controversial distribution hubs of the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation. Hundreds have been killed, adding to a death-toll that [surpasses](#) 55,000.

Israeli forces now control around a third, or more, of the strip. The chief of staff of the Israel Defence Forces reckons that Israel will soon “reach the lines” of its aims in Gaza. But this contradicts the ambitions of the far-right parties in Israel's government. They want to occupy Gaza in perpetuity. While Israel's stance remains unclear, and Hamas still refuses to accept a 60-day truce, President Donald Trump has weighed in. He posted on his social media channel “MAKE THE DEAL IN GAZA. GET THE HOSTAGES BACK!!!” In Iran he succeeded in imposing a ceasefire this way. In Gaza it may be more difficult.



Photograph: EPA

Soured cream on the Wimbledon strawberries

This year, like every year, Wimbledon will look [pristine](#), blooming flowerbeds offsetting the crisp Ralph Lauren uniforms. But underneath the sheen, the tournament, which begins on Monday, faces complaints from some of its players. The Professional Tennis Players' Association, an organisation co-founded by Novak Djokovic in 2020, is suing the sport's governing bodies that set the rules and organise the calendar. The operators of the four grand slams, including the All England Lawn Tennis Club, which runs Wimbledon, are also named as “co-conspirators”.

The PTPA wants a shorter calendar and more prize money. It has a case. The off-season is just six weeks. Wimbledon paid out £50m to players in 2024, which is around 12% of the AELTC's revenue. In America's National Basketball Association and National Football League, collective bargaining agreements ensure that the players receive around 50% of total revenue. The PTPA has given the grand slams three months to negotiate before it adds them to its lawsuit.



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

Monday: Horology is the study of what?

Failure seldom stops you. What stops you is the fear of failure.

Jack Lemmon