

# The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: AP

**France's** centrist prime minister is set to lose a confidence vote in the lower house of parliament on Monday. [François Bayrou](#), who leads a minority government, called the vote over his plans to reduce France's budget deficit. Mr Bayrou's fall would be another blow to President Emmanuel Macron. Mr Bayrou's successor will be Mr Macron's fifth prime minister in two years.

**Japanese markets** rose amid speculation that the country's next leader could increase government spending and pressure the Bank of Japan to keep interest rates low. The benchmark Topix index reached an all-time high; the Nikkei 225 index of big firms closed just shy of its record. Ishiba Shigeru, who [resigned on Sunday](#), will remain prime minister until his Liberal Democratic Party picks a successor.

**Donald Trump** said foreign companies needed to “hire and train American workers”, while legally bringing in their “very smart people”. Mr Trump has faced criticism for Thursday's immigration raid in Georgia, when [federal agents arrested](#) more than 300 Koreans working at a construction site of a Hyundai battery plant. South Korea chartered a plane to bring the workers back.

China's foreign ministry confirmed that **Xi Jinping** will attend a virtual **BRICS** summit on Monday to discuss Mr Trump's trade policies. Vladimir Putin, Russia's president, will also take part. Meanwhile the *Financial Times* reported that China is preparing to reopen its domestic bond market to big Russian energy companies. Chinese banks have avoided dealing with [Russian companies](#) because they fear Western sanctions.

**Argentina's** opposition [Peronists](#) won comfortably in an election in Buenos Aires province, in a rebuke to Javier Milei, the country's president. Polling had suggested a tight race with Mr Milei's Libertarian Party; provisional results showed the Peronists won by 13 percentage points. Mr Milei has undertaken a [painful](#) but long-overdue restructuring of Argentina's economy. He is also embroiled in a corruption scandal.

**Norwegians** began voting in what is expected to be a closely fought election between the ruling left-wing coalition and an opposition bloc made up of the populist Progress Party and the centre-right Conservative Party. Concerns over the cost of living and geopolitics, particularly in relation to Norway's \$2trn sovereign-wealth fund, dominated the campaign. Voting ends on Monday evening.

**Erin Patterson**, Australia's so-called mushroom murderer, was sentenced to life imprisonment and will not be eligible for parole for 33 years. In July, in a trial that gripped people around the world, Ms Patterson was [convicted](#) of serving members of her estranged husband's family a Beef Wellington containing poisonous fungi that she had foraged. Three of the guests died.

**Figure of the day:** 40%, the share of Britons who had not read or listened to any book in 2024, according to YouGov, a pollster. [Read the full story.](#)



Photograph: Getty Images

## France's government on the brink—again

Yet another French government is [expected to fall](#) on Monday, when the lower house of parliament holds a vote of confidence. François Bayrou, the centrist prime minister, called the vote over his unpopular plans to reduce the budget deficit in 2026, currently running at 5.4% of GDP, with savings worth €44bn (\$51bn). His chances of survival are extremely slim. Mr Bayrou's centrist grouping is in a minority, and the opposition on both the left and the hard right have said they will not support him.

Should the vote go as expected, it would be the second time parliament has brought down a government in nine months. President Emmanuel Macron is not obliged to call fresh elections; he can name a successor to Mr Bayrou of his choosing. Whoever gets the job, however, will face the same structural problem: a deadlocked parliament, split into three blocs, which cannot agree how to bring down France's budget deficit, the highest in the euro zone.

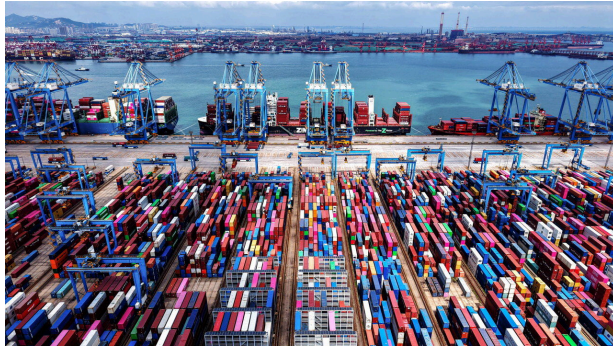


Photograph: AFP

## What next for Japan?

On Sunday Japan's prime minister, Ishiba Shigeru, resigned. For months, he had insisted he would remain in office despite two stinging [electoral defeats](#) that led his Liberal Democratic Party and its coalition to lose their majority in both houses of parliament. But the pressure from within the LDP proved too much. Mr Ishiba said he wanted to avoid division within the party.

He says he will stay on in a caretaker role until the LDP chooses a new leader. That vote will determine the [direction of the party](#)—and of Japan. The LDP has held power for most of the past seven decades by accommodating a wide range of views. Mr Ishiba was seen as a liberal moderate. His successor might be too: Koizumi Shinjiro, a telegenic centrist, is a leading contender. But the party could also veer sharply right under Takaichi Sanae (pictured), a hardline nationalist who wants to become Japan's first female prime minister.



Photograph: Getty Images

## China learns to live with tariffs

Having already waged a damaging trade war with China, America has [decided to pick a tariff fight](#) with Asia's other billion-person power. On August 27th it raised tariffs on India to 50% to punish it for buying Russian oil. President Donald Trump's latest "reciprocal" tariffs also went into effect earlier in the month, raising levies on many other trading partners, including Vietnam, Thailand and Malaysia.

All this means China no longer looks so singled out. Trade figures released today showed that its exports continued to grow in August, rising by 4.4% year on year. America is still threatening to crack down on "transshipment"—goods that reach America from China through third countries. But it has yet to define the term clearly. And by raising tariffs on China's neighbours, it has anyway reduced the incentive for rerouting goods. Mr Trump's tariffs must be endured, not escaped.



Photograph: Disney

## The winning formula of “Only Murders in the Building”

For most people, the most important word in the show title “Only Murders in the Building” is the second. For New Yorkers it’s the last. Part of the fun of watching is cattily wondering how the main characters—an actor (played by Steve Martin), director (Martin Short) and artist (Selena Gomez)—can afford to live in such beautiful apartments, especially as they are all underemployed enough to spend hours investigating crime and podcasting about it.

Expect lots of enviable interiors, punchy dialogue and famous guest stars in the show’s fifth season, which begins this week on Hulu. Meryl Streep returns as Mr Short’s wife; Renee Zellweger and Christoph Waltz play wealthy residents (and suspects). The show mixes [cosy crime](#) with household names hamming it up: the main characters’ podcast becomes successful enough to inspire a film version, which entails having other famous actors play characters played by famous actors. It sounds tortuous and smug—but is actually great fun.





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:** Which Austrian dignitary was assassinated, along with his wife, in Sarajevo on June 28th, 1914?

*Soldiers are dreamers; when the  
guns begin they think of firelit  
homes, clean beds, and wives.*

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***Siegfried Sassoon***