

# The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: AFP via Getty Images

At least two people died and more than a million fled their homes as **Typhoon Fung Wong** blasted the **Philippines** with winds of up to 230kph. Power was cut across parts of Luzon, the country's most populous island, and several airports closed. Authorities placed much of the island under top storm warnings as heavy rain caused floods ahead of the typhoon's expected landfall.

**America's** Department of Agriculture ordered states to reverse efforts to issue full **food-stamp benefits** during the [government shutdown](#), threatening penalties for noncompliance. A court order had briefly restored payments before the Supreme Court paused it on Friday. Meanwhile Sean Duffy, the transport secretary, warned flights could drop "to a trickle" before Thanksgiving due to worsening air-traffic control shortages.

The **BBC's** director-general, Tim Davie, resigned amid criticism that the broadcaster displayed bias in its reporting on certain topics, including **Donald Trump**, Gaza and transgender rights. The **BBC** faced a growing backlash over a documentary that appeared to selectively edit a speech by Mr Trump. Mr Davie said he took "ultimate responsibility" for recent mistakes. Deborah Turness, the head of news, also resigned.

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

**China** said it would allow exports of **Nexperia** chips to resume for civilian use, easing shortages for European carmakers. The Dutch government in September seized control of the Netherlands-based [chipmaker](#), citing security concerns over its Chinese owner, Wingtech, under new rules allowing intervention in foreign takeovers of critical technology. China retaliated by halting exports. The Chinese government urged the Netherlands to “rectify its erroneous actions”.

Peace talks between **Afghanistan** and **Pakistan** have collapsed, but a ceasefire between the two countries will “continue to be observed”, according to an Afghan spokesperson. The Taliban official blamed the breakdown in negotiations on Pakistan’s insistence that Afghanistan take responsibility for some of Pakistan’s internal security. The two sides had been discussing a peace deal following deadly [border clashes](#) last month.

**Britain** said it would send troops and equipment to **Belgium** after suspected Russian drones breached its airspace this week, forcing flights to halt at Brussels airport. Britain’s army chief, Sir Richard Knighton, said Belgium had requested support after repeated incursions near civilian and military sites. European officials suspect Russia is probing [NATO’s air defences](#).

**Word of the week:** “Lafufus”, knock-off versions of the Labubu, a popular Chinese toy doll. [Read the full story](#).



Photograph: Getty Images

## China's deflation problem

China is on the cusp of joining the ranks of high-income countries. Its technological prowess has impressed the world, and it has held its own against America in the trade war. Some commentators now describe it as America's "peer rival".

Yet that success has been accompanied by a nagging worry: deflation. Figures released on Sunday showed that China's [factory-gate](#) prices fell by 2.1% year on year in October, declining for the 37th month in a row. China's consumer-price inflation rate is also the lowest among the G20 group of big economies.

As a consequence, the growth in China's nominal GDP, before adjusting for inflation, has been unusually weak. It will probably grow more slowly than America's in 2025 for the fourth year in a row. And when its economy is compared with America's at market exchange rates, it is expected to slip further behind. China and America are now fierce economic rivals. But on deflation, China has no peer.



Photograph: Reuters

## Europe and Latin America grow closer

The EU–CELAC summit in Santa Marta, Colombia, on Sunday aims to showcase [Europe's strengthening ties with Latin America](#) and the Caribbean. But only a few European leaders will attend: Germany's chancellor, Friedrich Merz, and the European Commission's president, Ursula von der Leyen, are staying away (the EU's top diplomat, Kaja Kallas, is going instead). Europe is wary of provoking Donald Trump, who has imposed sanctions on Colombia's president, Gustavo Petro, ordered a naval build-up in the Caribbean and threatened military action to topple Nicolás Maduro's regime in Venezuela.

What matters, say diplomats, is that the summit is happening. No such get-togethers took place between 2015 and 2023; ministerial meetings may now become annual. Moreover, EU governments and the European Parliament will probably soon ratify a trade deal with Mercosur, a Latin American trade bloc. The EU can't match America's muscle in the region—or China's money. But Europe and Latin America, eager to diversify their alliances, see promise in friendship with one another.



Photograph: Getty Images

## A better view of disappearing Arctic sea ice

The Arctic is warming four times faster than the rest of the planet. Sea ice at the [North Pole has shrunk](#) by 42% since satellite records began in 1979. Scientists warn that by 2050 there could be none during the summer, when its coverage thins. What will this mean for the Arctic?

To fill in the gaps in historical data, as well as to [improve forecasting](#), a new study in *Science*, a journal, looks to the stars. American scientists studied how extraterrestrial helium-3, an isotope of helium which falls to Earth from space, had accumulated on the Arctic seafloor, and suggest this can reveal how sea-ice coverage has changed over time. Because helium-3 cannot easily pass through ice, the amount of it buried in the seafloor indicates how much sea ice had once been above. By looking at where helium-3 had settled, researchers were able to reconstruct 30,000 years of Arctic sea ice—something that could offer clues as to what a not-so-frozen north might look like.



Illustration: The Economist

## The winners of this week's quiz

Thank you to everyone who took part in this week's quiz. The winners, chosen at random, were:

**Teresa Stewart**, Nashville, America

**Carlos Sangil**, Madrid, Spain

**Wei Shi**, Espoo, Finland

They all gave the correct answers of: beam, warp, Enterprise, Captain Robert Scott, and kirk. The theme is the original series of Star Trek; characters are beamed up to the ship, which travels at warp speed, and is called the Enterprise. The chief engineer is Montgomery Scott, who is commanded by Captain Kirk.

The questions were:

**Monday:** Cantilever, continuous and overhanging are all types of what?

**Tuesday:** Horizontal threads on a loom are called weft. What are the vertical threads called?

**Wednesday:** Which rental car company, which also owns the Alamo and National brands, is the largest in the US?

**Thursday:** Which British explorer died in 1912 after leading an expedition that failed to be the first to reach the South Pole?

**Friday:** What word, with Norse origins, is the Scottish term for a church?





Illustration: The Economist

## Mini crossword

We publish a new interactive edition of our crossword daily, allowing you to enter and check the answers and see explanations. Try it [here](#). Or, if you prefer, use the grid below.

There are two sets of clues, one for seasoned cruciverbalists and the other for less experienced solvers. Both give the same answers.

### Cryptic clues

*1 across* - In ye olde fen certain protection hides (7)

*2 across* - Now I grow hungry, though first it's very dark (5)

*3 across* - Nitrogen and uranium combine with crystalline atomic substance (7)

*1 down* - Cor! Bad nations, ie broken, get to reduce nasty emissions (15)

### Straight clues

*1 across* - American government department that has recently become more bellicose (7)

*2 across* - When stars appear (5)



*3 across* - Type of weapons tests Donald Trump wants America to restart (7)

*1 down* - The process of reducing harmful emissions, which China is going through (15)

Email all four answers, along with your home city and country, by 9am GMT on Monday to [\[email protected\]](#). We will pick three winners at random and crown them in Tuesday's edition.

1							
2							
3							

*He who destroys a good book kills  
reason itself.*

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***John Milton***