

## Catch up: America promises Ukraine aid; world leaders mourn Carter



America announced nearly \$6bn in **aid to Ukraine**. President Joe Biden promised \$2.5bn-worth of military aid, while Janet Yellen, the treasury secretary, committed a further \$3.4bn in budgetary support. Mr Biden said he would work “relentlessly” to “strengthen [Ukraine’s position](#)” before leaving office in January. Many fear his successor, Donald Trump, will cut aid to Ukraine.

A state funeral will reportedly be held for **Jimmy Carter**, [who died](#) aged 100 on Sunday, at Washington National Cathedral on January 9th. Every living American president offered fond recollections of their predecessor, to which numerous world leaders added their praise for the former president’s efforts to promote peace and democracy. America will also hold a day of national mourning.

**Ukraine’s** foreign minister, Andrii Sybiha, **Syria** to meet [Ahmad al-Sharaa](#), the rebel commander who ousted Bashir al-Assad, the country’s pro-Russia former dictator. Last week Ukraine began shipping grain to Syria; Mr Sybiha said more was on its way. He encouraged Mr al-Sharaa to expel Russian forces from Syria and

met his Syrian counterpart, who spoke of forming “strategic partnerships” between the two countries.

Donald Trump endorsed **Mike Johnson’s** bid to win re-election as speaker of America’s House of Representatives. Having the president-elect in his corner will help the Republican secure the votes from his party’s right-wing, some of whom were upset by a [deal he struck](#) over the federal budget earlier this month. Members of the lower chamber will vote on Friday.

**Japan’s** purchasing-managers index, an industry survey, rose from 49.0 in November to 49.6 in December. A reading above 50 represents growth. Meanwhile South Korea’s seasonally-adjusted factory output for November fell by 0.7% compared with the previous month. The larger-than-expected drop was the result of weakening exports and low business confidence caused by geopolitical uncertainty.

**Afghanistan’s** economic ministry threatened to shut down **NGOs** that employ women. The Taliban, the ruling militant group, made a similar threat two years ago, claiming that some employees did not wear proper Islamic dress. Since regaining power in August 2021, it has [curtailed women’s rights](#), limiting their ability to work, receive an education, practice their religion or enjoy public spaces.

**South Korea** ordered a safety inspection of the country’s airlines after a plane crash killed 179 people. The aeroplane, operated by Jeju Air, burst into flames when it hit a wall while landing at Muan International Airport in the country’s south. Investigators said they were looking into a possible bird strike as the cause for the crash.

**Figure of the day:** 43, the number of UNESCO World Heritage sites in India. [Read the full story.](#)

# What can America expect from Donald Trump?



*Until January 2nd we are looking ahead to next year's big stories. Today, what will shape the United States and the rest of the Americas?*

Donald Trump returns to the presidency in January with Republican majorities in both the Senate and House of Representatives, clearing the way for him to pass legislation. A giant [tax-cutting bill](#) is on the cards. But the majorities are slim, especially in the House, and he will probably act without Congress, too. Mr Trump could invoke national-security authority to implement [sweeping tariffs](#) on China and use executive orders to try to “shut down” the southern border and limit asylum. And he will be tempted to [seek retribution](#) against his political enemies, perhaps through the Justice Department.

Mr Trump's victory entrenches his ideological transformation of the party into one dominated by a nativist, protectionist wing, sceptical of military adventurism. J.D. Vance, the new vice-president, aged 40, is the [heir-apparent](#) to the Make America Great

Again movement, provided he can stay in Mr Trump's good graces. Wherever Mr Trump takes America in the next four years will be felt for decades to come.

# What does a Trump presidency mean for Latin America?



Donald Trump gave Latin America a hard time the first time he occupied the White House. It can expect an even harder one in 2025. Cracking down on illegal immigration, trade imbalances and drugs will be priorities during his presidency. The vast majority of the millions of people Mr Trump says he wants to deport are Latin Americans. Their countries would struggle to absorb them, and [the loss of remittances](#) would hurt their economies.

A trade war may loom with Mexico—although given North America's economic integration, Mr Trump may consider a review of the United States-Mexico-Canada [free-trade agreement](#), due in 2026, as a chance to make deals. The president-elect has also promised to stem the influx into the United States of [fentanyl](#), a drug made by gangs in Mexico. Mr Trump may not actually bomb drug laboratories operated by gangs, as he has suggested, but he will probably take a more muscular approach to security threats from Mexico than have previous administrations.



# What now for the Democrats?



In blazing the Republicans' path back to the White House, Donald Trump has sparked a frenzy of finger-pointing, and even some soul-searching, within [the Democratic Party](#). There is no agreement yet on policy or message. Does the Democrats' winning path lie further left, or towards the centre? The pro-labour economic populism of the party's leftists may appeal to working-class voters who defected to Mr Trump, but those same people are alienated by leftist positions on policing, illegal immigration and transgender rights.

The Democrats can at least console themselves that they have a strong generation of rising politicians who are, at last, free to compete to set the party's direction. The buzz in 2025 will be loudest about governors who boast records of pragmatic decision-making—people such as [Gretchen Whitmer](#) of Michigan and Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania, both battleground states, and [Andy Beshear](#) of Kentucky, a firmly red one.

# Will the “iron-fist” model spread in Latin America?



Enthusiasm for a ruthless approach to crime is growing in Latin America, thanks in part to the “iron-fist” model of [Nayib Bukele](#). Since declaring a state of emergency in 2022 El Salvador’s president has thrown 80,000 people, nearly 2% of the population, into jail. Human-rights groups say torture in prison is common. Most Salvadoreans seem not to mind: homicides have plummeted and Mr Bukele was [re-elected by a landslide](#) in 2024.

In 2025 concerns about crime will shape presidential elections in [Ecuador](#), where cities have lately joined the ranks of the world’s most violent, and in Chile, where the murder rate has increased since 2019 to surpass that of the United States. Daniel Noboa, Ecuador’s president, who is running for re-election, has sent the army and police into the streets to tackle gang violence. He will probably pledge to clamp down harder. Chile, which elected Gabriel Boric, a [youthful leftist](#), in 2021, could turn towards candidates promising to be tough on crime. If they do, other leaders will surely take notice.

## Daily quiz



*The Economist*

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 [QuizEspresso@economist.com](mailto:QuizEspresso@economist.com). We'll pick randomly from those with the right answers and crown three winners on Saturday.

**Monday:** Which is the largest ice shelf in Antarctica, at almost 500,000 square kilometres?



**It requires a very unusual mind to  
undertake the analysis of the obvious.**

*Alfred North Whitehead*