

# The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: Reuters

Republicans and Democrats traded blame over an impending **government shutdown**. America's vice-president, [J. D. Vance](#), said it was likely because "Democrats won't do the right thing." Meanwhile Chuck Schumer, the Democratic leader in the Senate, suggested that reaching a funding deal was "in the president's hands". A shutdown will start on Wednesday without an agreement.

**Hamas** said it would consider [Donald Trump's plan](#) to end the war in **Gaza**. The proposal's first phase includes a ceasefire and the exchange of Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners. Israel's prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, approved the plan at a meeting with America's president on Monday. Mr Netanyahu will also have to win over religious nationalists in his government.

Mr Trump and **Pete Hegseth**, America's secretary of war, [railed against wokeness](#) at a hastily arranged gathering of American military leaders in Virginia. The president suggested military appointments would be based on merit rather than political correctness. Mr Hegseth criticised diversity initiatives and "fat generals" at the Pentagon. He had ordered America's top brass from around the world to attend the meeting.

**Britain's** prime minister, Sir Keir Starmer, used a speech at the Labour Party's annual conference to warn of the threat posed by the hard right. Sir Keir called populist politicians "snake-oil merchants" and said Nigel Farage, leader of Reform UK, a hard-right party, "doesn't like Britain". Reform is well ahead of Labour in opinion polls, according to [The Economist's tracker](#).

Daniel Ek will step down as the boss of **Spotify** at the end of the year to become executive chairman of the [Swedish music-streaming platform](#). He said the new role would allow him to focus on the "long arc" of the company. Gustav Soderstrom and Alex Norstrom, Spotify veterans, will take over as joint chief executives. Shares fell in premarket trading following the announcement.

**Madagascar's** president dissolved his government after days of youth-led protests, though he resisted calls for his own resignation. Andry Rajoelina said he understood "the anger, the sadness and the difficulties caused by power cuts and water-supply problems". The UN said that 22 people were killed in clashes with the police. It criticised their "violent response".

Shares in **Zijin Gold**, an off-shoot of China's biggest mining company, rose by nearly 70% on their first day of trading in Hong Kong. The firm now has a market valuation of more than HK\$300bn (\$39bn). The price of **gold** has reached a record of more than \$3,867 per troy ounce.

**Figure of the day:** 49%, the decline in eviction cases filed by landlords in New York City between 2016 and 2024. [Read the full story](#).



Photograph: Reuters

## **America's warrior retreat**

The secretary of war, Pete Hegseth, delivered a speech in front of America's top brass at the Marine Corps University in Virginia on Tuesday. He laid out his bravado vision of a "warrior ethos", which included a litany of familiar grievances: "no more climate change worship, no more division, distraction or gender delusions." President Donald Trump also spoke, emphasising that military appointments would be based on merit rather than political correctness. Mr [Hegseth](#) outlined new standards for fitness and grooming, requiring daily workouts and the end of beards.

Mr Hegseth defended the firing of senior military leaders and top lawyers earlier in his tenure. "You are hereby liberated to be an apolitical, hard-charging constitutional leader that you joined the military to be" he exhorted. The bizarre meeting came at a fraught time for civil-military relations. If anything, Mr Hegseth's and the president's pep rally will do little to allay fears about the politicisation of America's military.



Photograph: Reuters

## The UN discusses the Rohingya crisis

Life for the 1m or so Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh—and for counterparts who remain in Rakhine state in neighbouring Myanmar—has long been grim. Yet lately a rash of [setbacks](#) has made conditions worse. On Tuesday the UN will hold a high-level conference on the persecuted Muslim group in New York, the first such meeting on their plight.

The most immediate problem concerns funding for the giant camps in Bangladesh. America, the biggest provider of cash, has slashed aid, causing health clinics and schools to shut down. Yet as money dries up, the number of Rohingyas seeking refuge continues to rise. Many have been forced from their homes in Rakhine during [fighting](#) between Myanmar's junta and the Arakan Army, an ethnic militia also accused of targeting Rohingyas. Few expect any long-term solutions to the Rohingya crisis to emerge from the UN meeting, but the hope is that fresh publicity about the forgotten crisis will at least get more aid flowing again into the camps.



Photograph: Getty Images

## Optimism on America's economy

The prevailing narrative about the American economy over the first half of this year was that growth and the jobs market had been clobbered by Donald Trump's foolish tariff policies. Certainly, the levies did some damage. But the latest data suggest that the economy has been [more resilient](#) than expected.

New revisions to the GDP figures have knocked up growth over the first half of 2025, from an annualised rate of 1.2% in July's initial estimate to 1.6% as of the latest figures this month—hardly stellar, but not disastrous either. Recent consumer-spending statistics have been strong. Last month's purchasing-managers index surveys—a helpful, faster-moving gauge of growth—ticked up too. Job-creation numbers have been poor, but that may reflect slower immigration. New employment and PMI data over the coming week will help fill out the picture. Paradoxically, good economic news may be a pain for the Federal Reserve. Donald Trump [has pressed](#) the central bank to cut interest rates. If the economic environment looks better, that could force a nasty confrontation.



Photograph: Getty Images

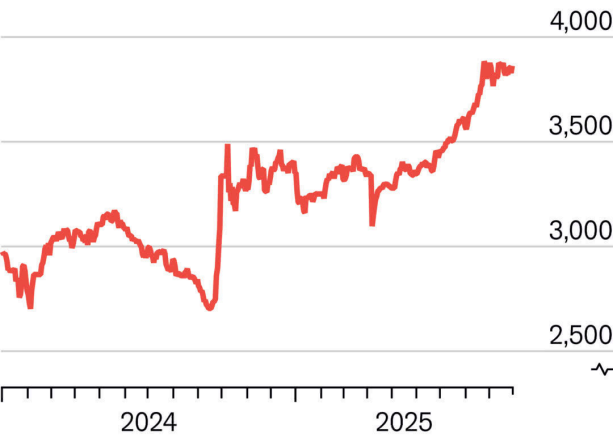
## China's lacklustre economy

On the 15th day of the eight month of China's lunar calendar, when the moon is full, the country holds its mid-autumn festival. It falls on October 6th this year, and by tradition celebrates the harvest. This year many will be celebrating a different kind of bounty: [China's stockmarket](#) has risen by over 40% since last year's festival.

The market's revival has not, however, lifted the economy. A survey of purchasing managers, released on Tuesday by China's National Bureau of Statistics, suggested that services slowed in September, largely offsetting a modest improvement in manufacturing and construction. The central bank could cut interest rates to help the economy. But it will tread cautiously, because it does not want the stockmarket to get too hot. During the mid-autumn festival, people carry paper lanterns to light the way towards prosperity. No one wants them to catch fire.

Defying gravity

Shanghai composite stockmarket index,  
December 1990=100



Source: LSEG Workspace





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.

**Tuesday:** Which British band's first hit was "You Really Got Me" in 1964?

**Monday:** Which band was responsible for most of the biggest hits of the "Saturday Night Fever" soundtrack?



*If an artist is truly committed, the audience will be the first to grasp it and will respond accordingly.*

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***Jessye Norman***