

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: Getty Images

The **FBI** said they had recovered the rifle used to kill **Charlie Kirk**, a right-wing activist who was [shot at a university event](#) in Utah on Wednesday. They said that the suspect, who is at large, “appears to be of college age” and released a photograph of a “person of interest”. Donald Trump, America’s president, blamed the rhetoric of the “radical left” for Mr Kirk’s killing.

Sir Keir Starmer, Britain’s prime minister, withdrew **Peter Mandelson** as ambassador to America. James Roscoe, Lord Mandelson’s deputy, will replace him as interim ambassador. Lord Mandelson faced pressure to resign after emails emerged showing his friendship with Jeffrey Epstein, a [deceased American paedophile](#), continued after Epstein’s indictment in 2008 for soliciting sex from a minor. His sacking comes days before Mr Trump’s state visit to Britain.

Belarus released more than 50 political prisoners, who are of several different nationalities, after an appeal from Mr Trump. It is the largest number of prisoners pardoned by [Alexander Lukashenko](#), Belarus’s dictator. In return America will waive sanctions on Belarus’s national airline, allowing it to buy parts for

its Boeing planes. Last month Mr Trump urged Belarus to free more than 1,000 prisoners.

At least 13,000 prisoners escaped from prisons across **Nepal** amid ongoing [violent protests](#). Since the anti-government demonstrations led by young people started on Monday, at least eight inmates have died during clashes with security personnel. Nepal's prime minister resigned earlier this week over the ongoing protests which were sparked by a short-lived social media ban.

A flight [repatriating](#) more than 300 **South Korean** workers arrested by Immigration and Customs Enforcement at a battery factory in Georgia was delayed. A row over whether they should be handcuffed prevented the take-off. An offer from Mr Trump, who suggested they could remain to train Americans, also held up the flight. The workers are expected to depart on Thursday.

A judge on Brazil's Federal Supreme Court broke with two of his peers to acquit the former president, **Jair Bolsonaro**, of charges that he [attempted a coup](#) after losing an election in 2022. Justice Luiz Fux's vote makes an appeal more likely. Two justices had voted to convict the hard-right leader. The final two on the panel are expected to rule this week.

Albania appointed an artificial-intelligence bot to handle government procurement. The new "cabinet member", Diella, which means "sun" in Albanian, will manage and award all public tenders. [Edi Rama](#), the prime minister, has said that Diella will make Albania "a country where public tenders are 100% free of corruption." In July he mused about one day having an AI prime minister.

Figure of the day: 40%, the proportion of children in Niue and the Cook Islands who are obese—the highest in the world. [Read the full story.](#)

When did we report that the “long duel between the Emperor Alexander and the Nihilists has ended at last in his assassination”? Play [Dateline](#), our weekly history quiz based on extracts from our archive.



Photograph: Getty Images

Japan and the Philippines try to deter China

An accord between Japan and the Philippines came into effect on Thursday. Their Reciprocal Access Agreement allows the armed forces of each country into the territory of the other. It is the latest in a network of similar accords bringing together their forces with those of America and Australia. The purpose: to deter China from going to war to assert its claims to [disputed parts of the Pacific](#) and, ultimately, Taiwan.

China is already engaged in unarmed, grey-zone confrontations with Japan and the Philippines in contested waters. Chinese forces use intimidation rather than lethal weapons to shoo away foreign vessels. The RAA may serve as a deterrent by facilitating joint Japanese and Philippine patrols. Filipino officers observe that, whenever some combination of American, Australian, Japanese, Philippine or other friendly warships patrols a disputed area, Chinese forces nearby tend to act less aggressively.



Illustration: David Simonds

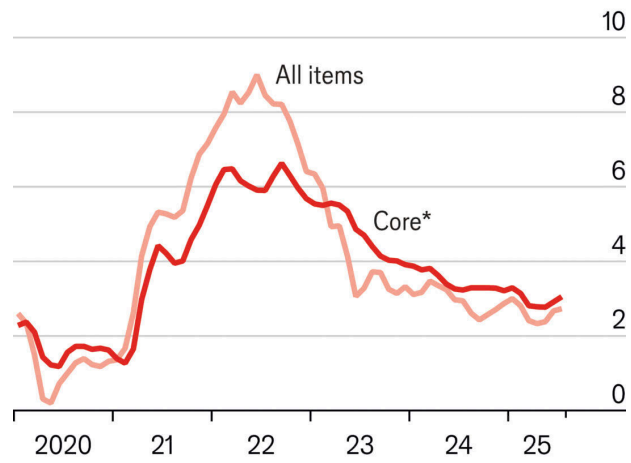
Tariffs fuel inflation in America

Five months after Donald Trump announced plans to sharply raise tariffs, they are raising the prices that Americans pay in shops. Data released on Thursday showed that the annual inflation rate was 2.9% in August, up from 2.7% in July. The core rate, which excludes volatile food and energy prices, remained at 3.1%.

In the first few months of Mr Trump's second term inflation moved tantalisingly close to the Federal Reserve's target of 2%, which had been out of reach since 2021. Now it seems businesses have been passing on the costs of tariffs to consumers. That will pose a dilemma for the Federal Reserve as it mulls whether to cut interest rates at its monetary-policy meeting next week. It is now balancing rising inflation and a weakening jobs market.

Ticking up

United States, consumer prices,
% increase on a year earlier



*Excluding energy and food
Source: Haver Analytics



Photograph: AP

The ECB to stay on hold

The first meeting after the summer break promises to be an easy one for the European Central Bank. On Thursday its top mandarins come together to assess the economy, financial conditions and inflation, and decide whether to cut its main interest rate from 2% to 1.75%. They decided to keep rates on hold.

The ECB's main aim—to keep inflation steady at 2%—is roughly on target. The annual rate was 2.1% in August, and 2% in the two months before that, low enough for bankers to turn their attention to the question of economic growth. There are some signs of improvement. Manufacturing sentiment is finally signalling growth again, in spite of American tariffs. But big government spending promises on defence and infrastructure, [especially in Germany](#), will take time to trickle down. Before the guns and mortar materialise, the ECB may need to lend the economy a helping hand with another rate cut.



Photograph: AFP

Can Adobe keep up on AI?

Adobe, an American maker of software for creative types, risks being left behind in the artificial-intelligence frenzy. The [new technology](#) has cast the competitiveness of the firm's digital-editing tools into doubt, and threatens to put lots of graphic designers, among its main customers, out of a job. Adobe's share price is down 39% in the past year; on Thursday it publishes third-quarter earnings.

The company has been trying to integrate AI into its products, but investors complain that upstarts are running rings round it. OpenAI rolled out its AI-video generator in February, when Adobe's own, Firefly Video, was still in testing. The company also faces competition from design apps like Canva and CapCut, which are easy to use on smartphones. In September Adobe said it would make its video editor, Premiere, available on iPhones. But skittish investors will need more convincing that Adobe can cut it (and paste it) in an AI world.



Photograph: Getty Images

America's constitutional rut

In his quest to remake America, Donald Trump has yet to try amending the constitution. Perhaps wisely. Of nearly 12,000 amendments proposed since 1789, only 27 have been ratified. In “We the People”, a book out on Thursday, Jill Lepore argues that America’s constitution has become too hard to change. The historian notes that Thomas Jefferson wanted conventions every 19 years, doubting that one generation had “a right to bind another”. The framers of the constitution adopted James Madison’s counterproposal, which made amendment much harder. Under Article v it requires two-thirds votes in both houses of Congress and the assent of three-quarters of states.

The last meaningful change, in 1971, lowered the voting age. With only a glancing reference to the way America’s constitutional rut contributes to its current political strife, “We the People” is not a road map for repair. But it offers an arresting chronicle of Americans striving—if sometimes failing—to redesign their republic.



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.

Thursday: Which film was really awarded the Oscar for best movie in 2017, after the presenters mistakenly announced the winner as *La La Land*?

Wednesday: Which British rock band had a hit single with “Love Will Tear Us Apart” before reforming as New Order?

I hold that the parentheses are by far the most important parts of a non-business letter.

D. H. Lawrence