

A week in the life of the world  
13 DECEMBER 2024

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📖 **Books of the year**

Our literary critics and  
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is their roundup from  
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*“  
Even as  
someone who  
reads a lot, I've  
been disturbed  
by the impact  
on my attention  
span, so what  
hope do our  
little ones have?”*

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**On the cover** Not even the most optimistic of  
rebels could have predicted last weekend's  
rapid collapse of the Assad dynasty that ruled  
Syria with an iron fist for more than 50 years.  
Yet while there was relief and joy both inside  
Syria and among the nation's vast displaced  
diaspora, it was also accompanied by  
apprehension over what might come next.  
*Hussein Malla/AP; Guardian Design*

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