

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: AP

Columbia University will pay the government \$221m to settle an investigation into the school and regain [federal funding](#). On Tuesday the university said it had disciplined dozens of students who had staged pro-Palestinian demos on campus, including through suspensions, expulsions and the revocation of degrees. The Trump administration had accused the university of failing to protect Jewish students and paused funding in March.

The **European Union** is reportedly negotiating a trade deal with America that would impose [tariffs](#) of 15% on exports from the bloc. Markets rose after Donald Trump's earlier announcement of a "massive" deal with **Japan**; its goods will face a 15% levy, instead of the 25% that Mr Trump threatened. Dozens of countries face an August 1st deadline to reach a deal or face higher American tariffs.

Ukraine's president, **Volodymyr Zelensky**, promised new legislation to enshrine the independence of anti-corruption bodies. Mr Zelensky hopes to [assuage protesters who have gathered in Kyiv](#) after the country's parliament passed a law giving the presidential office control of the agencies. They were the first anti-Zelensky demonstrations since Russia's invasion. Ukraine's

European backers were also [unimpressed](#). The president says the corruption bodies were infiltrated by pro-Russians.

The White House dismissed a *Wall Street Journal* report alleging that Mr Trump's name appears in investigative files related to **Jeffrey Epstein**, a [convicted sex offender](#). It called the claim “fake news... concocted by the Democrats and the liberal media”. Earlier, a federal judge in Florida rejected the Department of Justice's request to unseal grand-jury transcripts from an investigation into the case, arguing such documents can only become public in narrow circumstances.

Troops from **Thailand** and **Cambodia** clashed at a disputed stretch of the countries' border. Both sides accused each other of firing first. Tensions have escalated since a Cambodian soldier was killed in May. Earlier this week [Thailand](#) expelled Cambodia's ambassador and recalled its own after a landmine injured a Thai soldier.

Tesla shares fell after Elon Musk warned of “rough quarters” ahead, as the electric-car maker posted worse results than analysts had been bracing for. Second-quarter profit fell by 16% compared with a year ago, to \$1.2bn. One of Tesla's most profitable sources of revenue—selling carbon credits—is under threat from Mr Trump's fiscal legislation. It also faces a [consumer backlash](#) and increasing competition from Chinese makers.

Emmanuel Macron, France's president, and his wife, Brigitte, sued **Candace Owens** for defamation. The American right-wing podcaster and conspiracy theorist has repeatedly claimed, without evidence, that Ms Macron is in fact male and a blood relation of the president, making their relationship incestuous. The Macrons said Ms Owens refused to retract the claim, despite being given multiple opportunities to do so.

Figure of the day: \$2.4bn, the revenue that Deloitte forecasts women's professional sports will generate in 2025 (up from \$692m in 2022). [Read the full story.](#)



Illustration: David Simonds

EU chiefs meet Xi Jinping. Don't expect warm hugs

For a celebration of half a century of diplomatic relations, China and the European Union are not showing much love. **Tensions** are growing over everything from trade (China's dumping of cheap products in the EU) to security (China's propping up of Russia's defence industries). But they are at least talking. A summit has kicked off in Beijing on Thursday. China's leader, **Xi Jinping**, has agreed to meet the European team, including the European Commission's president, Ursula von der Leyen, and the European Council's chief, Antonio Costa.

But the build-up has been turbulent. The EU scrapped a preparatory meeting on economic matters. China cancelled a side trip to the city of Hefei where the Europeans had been expected to meet businesspeople. And less than a week before the summit, the EU slapped sanctions on two Chinese banks that had dealings with Russia. Both sides are struggling with Donald Trump's tariffs, but don't expect adversity to draw them closer together.



Photograph: Alamy

A rare win in the Wild West of global trade

On Thursday India's prime minister, Narendra Modi, will be in London to sign a [trade agreement](#) with his counterpart Sir Keir Starmer. Britain's biggest post-Brexit trade deal axes tariffs on some 99% of Indian products. India will reduce, or eliminate, tariffs on 92% of existing goods imports from Britain. Britain hopes the pact will add £4.8bn (\$6.5bn) to its annual GDP.

One big winner is Scotch whisky, which makes up about 90% of Britain's food and drinks exports to India. Indian connoisseurs will have to practise delayed gratification, as a 150% tariff withers down to 75% and then 40% over the coming decade.

The two countries announced the completion of a deal on May 6th, only for a military stand-off between India and Pakistan to sideline the news the following day. Two months later, the global uncertainties of Mr Trump's tariff vendettas make the pact stand out as an unusually well-negotiated and orderly way of boosting global trade.



Photograph: Alamy

America's railway coupling

Union Pacific, America's largest rail freight carrier, will report its earnings on Thursday. Investors will be listening closely for indications that UP, which along with BNSF dominates the rail networks west of Chicago, is preparing a mega-merger. After months of growing speculation that [consolidation](#) is coming to the industry, UP is reportedly considering a bid for Norfolk Southern, one of two big operators in the eastern states. If a deal happens, it would probably force a tie-up between BNSF and CSX, the other large operator in the east.

Turning the big four firms into an even bigger two could be a boon for the industry, since avoiding interchanges between networks would mean faster trains and fewer delays. But it would also face huge challenges, starting with regulation. Since 2001 the federal Surface Transportation Board, which regulates the industry, has demanded that deals should “enhance” competition, rather than just preserve it, a vague and untested standard.



Photograph: Getty Images

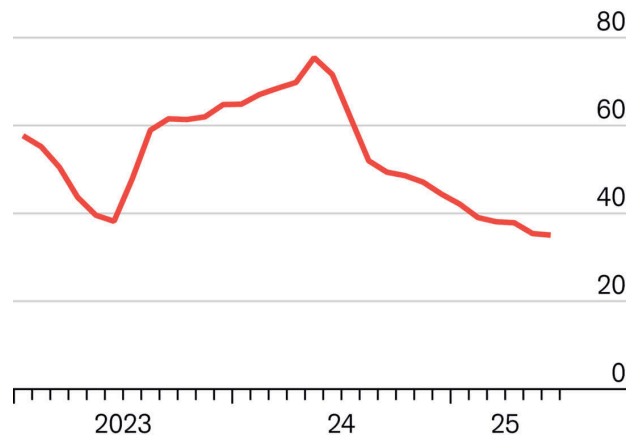
Easing resumes at Turkey's central bank

Things have not been going to plan for Turkey's monetary authorities. Three months ago, in the midst of an easing cycle, the central bank suddenly had to respond to the arrest of [Ekrem Imamoglu](#), President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's main political rival. In the wake of the subsequent market panic, it increased interest rates by 3.5 percentage points.

Mr Imamoglu, the secular Republican People's Party's (CHP) candidate in the next presidential elections, remains in prison. Hundreds of others, including the CHP mayors of some of Turkey's biggest cities, have been detained since his arrest. But the sell-off in Turkish assets, as well as the lira, the country's currency, has slowed. That, plus another decrease in [inflation](#), which dipped to an annual rate of 35% in June, has paved the way for the central bank to resume cutting rates. A majority of economists polled by Reuters expect it to lower the benchmark rate by 2.5 percentage points to 43.5%, when it convenes on Thursday.

Inflation tumbles

Turkey, consumer prices,
% increase on a year earlier



Source: Haver Analytics



Photograph: Getty Images

Should Rhodes fall?

A new biography, “The Colonialist: The Vision of Cecil Rhodes”, by William Kelleher Storey, makes one thing crystal clear. Rhodes, a businessman, diamond monopolist, gold trader and a builder of the British empire in Africa, was also a white supremacist. As prime minister of the Cape Colony in the 1890s, he helped lay the foundations for apartheid South Africa, and he established today’s Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Yet neither he nor the empire was uniquely evil. Rhodes was a man of his time, sharing the attitudes of most western Europeans. The Cape Colony was kinder to native Africans than German South West Africa, the Boer Republics or the Congo Free State, also controlled by Europeans. Rhodes’s legacy to Oriel College, Oxford, and the Rhodes scholarships were both munificent and beneficial. Those who want to [scrub his name and image](#) from public life, insisting that “Rhodes must fall” everywhere, could learn much from this balanced account of his life and times.



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 rock star was known by the nickname “The Lizard King”?

Wednesday: Back to Black was a biopic of which British singer-songwriter?

The most difficult thing is the decision to act; the rest is merely tenacity.

Amelia Earhart