

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: Bloomberg via Getty Images

Emmanuel Macron, France's president, said that his country would recognise **Palestine** as a country, in order to create a “just and lasting peace in the Middle East”. He also called for an end to the war in Gaza and for aid to flow to civilians. On Wednesday health authorities in Gaza reported that 46 people had [starved to death](#) in July. More than 140 countries recognise Palestinian statehood, but France would be the biggest European power to do so.

The **European Central Bank** kept its main interest rate at 2%. It is the first time in more than a year that it has held rates. Christine Lagarde, the ECB's president, said the “inflationary shock” of recent years is “now behind us”. The bank is expected to cut rates by 0.25 percentage points in September, after an EU-America [trade deal](#) has been finalised.

Saudi Arabia's investment minister met **Syria's** president in Damascus and pledged more than \$6bn for the Syrian economy. The investment will be in the public and private sectors, spanning energy, property, infrastructure and agriculture. The Saudis have been important supporters of the new Syrian government, as it tries to rebuild after 14 years of civil war.

Thailand closed its border with **Cambodia**, as fighting escalated over a disputed stretch of the countries' border. Thailand claimed that one of its fighter jets hit a military target in Cambodia. Cambodian troops fired artillery, killing at least 11 civilians. Both sides accused each other of firing first. Tensions have been high since a Cambodian soldier was killed in May.

Ukraine's president, [Volodymyr Zelensky](#), appeared to bow to public pressure as he drafted a new bill to assure the independence of two anti-corruption agencies. The move comes a day after [thousands](#) took to the streets to protest his earlier decision to increase presidential control over the bodies. Parliament went into recess on Wednesday, however, so it was unclear when it would consider the new draft.

A **Russian plane** carrying 49 people crashed in the eastern Amur region. There were no survivors, according to media reports. The aircraft was flying from the city of Blagoveshchensk on the Russian border with China to the remote town of Tynda. TASS news agency reported that an error during landing in poor visibility caused the crash.

Jeremy Corbyn, a [former leader](#) of Britain's Labour Party, and **Zarah Sultana**, an MP who left Labour earlier this month, launched a website for a new left-wing party. The website calls the outfit Your Party, though Ms Sultana denied this was the party's name. The party—which promises to hold its inaugural conference “soon”—has not said when it will announce its official name.

Figure of the day: \$500bn, OpenAI's planned investments in America alone. [Read the full story.](#)



Photograph: EPA

Pressure and pain in Gaza

The talks seem endless. On Thursday Steve Witkoff, Donald Trump's Middle East envoy, met in Italy with Israeli and Qatari officials. Their goal was to finalise a ceasefire in [Gaza](#). Among the issues left to resolve was the extent of Israel's withdrawal from the territory during the initial 60-day phase of a proposed truce. Mr Witkoff hoped to travel onwards to Doha to seal the deal. But hours after he landed in Italy, Israel's prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, withdrew his negotiators from the Qatari capital. The talks are not derailed, but they are delayed.

While diplomats gab, [Gazans starve](#). The World Food Programme says one-third of Gaza's 2m population go days at a time without food. Children are dying of hunger. A shadowy foundation backed by Israel and America is delivering woefully insufficient aid to southern Gaza. The United Nations, which handles distributions in the north, cannot do so properly while the war rages.



Photograph: CAMERA PRESS

Donald Trump packs his clubs

How far would you travel for a round of golf? If you are Donald Trump, the answer is around 6,600km. On Friday America's president will fly to Scotland for a four-day visit to his golf resorts at Turnberry and Menie. It will be Mr Trump's first trip to Britain since his re-election last year. He will return for an official state visit in September.

The White House is calling the trip a private visit, but Mr Trump will find time for business. On Monday he will meet Sir Keir Starmer, Britain's prime minister, to "refine" a [trade deal](#) that they struck in May. John Swinney, Scotland's first minister, will also meet the president, in part to discuss tariffs on Scotch whisky. Mr Swinney has been criticised at home for the cost of security during the visit, which is expected to reach some £3m (\$4m). An expensive round on the links.



Photograph: EPA

Europe tries to cut a deal with Iran

On Friday Britain, France and Germany will hold another round of nuclear talks with [Iran](#). They want Iran to let the United Nations' nuclear watchdog resume inspections. They also want it to restart talks with America about a nuclear deal to replace the one Donald Trump withdrew from in 2018. But Iran is prevaricating. It will allow a UN team to visit soon, but only to discuss how and when inspections might restart. It is also open to negotiating with America, but has suggested that it will not give up its uranium-enrichment programme.

The Europeans have threatened to invoke a mechanism from the old deal that would restore UN sanctions if Iran does not agree to their demands. Although that provision expires on October 18th, both sides may extend the deadline to keep their negotiations alive. Iran has threatened to leave the Non-Proliferation Treaty if the Europeans do impose sanctions. That would make diplomacy much harder.



Photograph: Getty Images

Single passengers, beware

Travel writers erupted in outrage two months ago at news that America's big legacy airlines had started charging higher per-person fares for solo travellers (often flying for business, so less price-sensitive) than for multiple-passenger bookings. Amid criticism, Delta and United reportedly scrapped the practice, but American Airlines held firm. All three have refused to comment.

To analyse this pricing, *The Economist* downloaded 19,000 economy-class airfares for all direct domestic routes on a single day, comparing one- and two-passenger prices for one-ways and round-trips.

[We found](#) that whereas Delta has abandoned the scheme and United has reintroduced it only sparingly, AA's fares are still frequently higher for solo travellers. Those who do not stay at their destination over a weekend—and are thus likely to be business travellers—paid at least 5% more on 57% of its routes, often by margins around 50%. Ironically, the outcry over the practice may have backfired: rather than reducing their fares for singletons, Delta and United simply increased prices for multiple-passenger bookings to match.



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.

Friday: Which Seattle-based musician, part of the grunge movement, was often viewed as a spokesman for Generation X?

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



Illustration: The Economist

The winners of this week's crossword

Thank you to everyone who took part in our weekly crossword, published in the weekend edition of Espresso. The winners, chosen at random, were:

Sten Faerch-Jensen, Copenhagen, Denmark

Leo Varadkar, Dublin, Ireland

Osamu Senoo, Izumo, Japan

They all gave the correct answers of legal, rival, level and [Liverpool](#).

*No man was ever yet a great poet,
without at the same time being a
profound philosopher.*

Samuel Taylor Coleridge