

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter

Iran vowed revenge after accusing **Israel** of destroying its consulate in Damascus, Syria's capital, in an air strike. The [Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps](#), the Iranian regime's praetorian guard, said seven of its members, including three senior commanders, had been killed in the attack. Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said that Israel would "regret" the "crime". Israel refused to comment, but has stepped up strikes on IRGC troops and Iran-backed militants throughout the region since the war in Gaza began.

World Central Kitchen, an [American NGO](#), said that an Israeli air strike killed seven of its aid workers in **Gaza**. Those killed were Australian, Polish, British, Palestinian, and American-Canadian. WCK said they were in "a deconflicted zone" in branded vehicles, and had co-ordinated with Israel's Defence Forces. The IDF said it was "carrying out an in-depth examination" into the "tragic incident".

Donald Trump posted a bond worth \$175m as part of his civil-fraud case in New York. The payment, which was reduced on appeal from \$464m last month, staves off the seizure of the former president's assets, which could have hobbled his [election campaign](#). Last September Mr Trump was found guilty of fraudulently inflating his property values.

Ukrainian drones targeted an oil refinery and other factories in Tatarstan, a Russian region more than 1,000km away from the border between the countries. The region's leader, Rustam Minnikhanov, claimed that the strikes had not caused significant

damage, though admitted that several people were injured. The attacks are among Ukraine's farthest into [Russian territory](#) so far.

Factory activity in the **euro zone** [slumped](#) again in March, as new orders fell for the 23rd month in a row. A benchmark purchasing managers' index for manufacturing fell to 46.1 last month, compared with 46.5 in February (a reading below 50 denotes contraction). Still, the figure was better than the preliminary estimate of 45.7.

Shares in **Xiaomi** surged by 16% on the first day of trading since the Chinese smartphone-maker rolled out its first electric vehicle. Investors were buoyed by the SU7's initial sales. The company received nearly 90,000 orders for the car within 24 hours of its release. Xiaomi's entry into EV production increases competition in an [already-cutthroat market](#).

India rebuked **China** for announcing the renaming of around 30 places in Arunachal Pradesh, a north-eastern Indian state that Chinese authorities claim is theirs. China considers the territory part of south Tibet, and has previously "standardised" place names as an [expression of sovereignty](#). In 2020 a clash on another contested part of the border killed 20 Indian troops and at least four Chinese ones.

Figure of the day: 26%, the amount the market for weight-loss drugs is expected to grow per year in the next five years. [Read the full story](#).

In yesterday's World in Brief we wrongly wrote that Xi Jinping was China's premier. We should have written that he is China's president. Sorry.



Photo: AFP

A swing state goes to the polls

America's presidential election will probably be won [on the margins](#). One of the states with an outsize importance is Wisconsin, which holds its Republican and Democratic primaries on Tuesday. Party strategists will be paying less attention to the headline races—Donald Trump and Joe Biden are already the two parties' [unofficial nominees](#)—than to down-ballot ones.

Wisconsin is voting based on new district lines, which the governor signed into law last month. In December the state's Supreme Court [struck down](#) the legislative maps as unconstitutional. Previously, many electoral districts were gerrymandered to favour Republicans; in the new districts, races will be close. The head of Wisconsin's Democrats hopes that these competitive local elections will inspire [disaffected liberals](#) to turn out. That, in turn, will translate to votes for Mr Biden. The top Republican in Wisconsin's state assembly is sceptical of this bottom-up theory. Just like anywhere else, he argues, the Democratic base is merely “going to be motivated by hatred of Donald Trump”.



Photo: Getty Images

Shell returns to court

In May 2021 The Hague's district court delivered a watershed [verdict](#). It declared that Shell was failing to do enough to prevent climate change, and thus endangering Dutch citizens' lives. It ordered the oil major to reduce its emissions—including those generated by consumers using its products—by 45% by 2030, relative to 2019 levels. Shell appealed.

On Tuesday a court began to hear that appeal. Over four days the company will face off against the group that brought the initial case, Milieudefensie—the Dutch branch of Friends of the Earth, an environmental organisation. Shell's argument, in part, is that Milieudefensie singled it out unfairly—it is not the only large fossil-fuel producer. Shell also swears that it intends to reduce emissions to net zero anyway (by 2050). It says the district court's timeline is unfeasible. Milieudefensie, meanwhile, is confident of victory. It says that Shell has backtracked on climate commitments made since the original ruling.



Photo: dpa

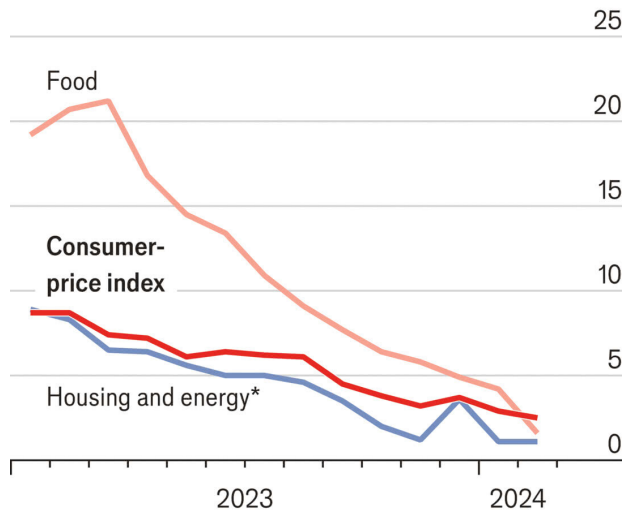
A bright spot amid Germany's economic gloom

On Tuesday Destatis, Germany's statistics office, will publish the inflation rate for March. The existing downward trend will probably continue: the annual rate fell from 3.7% in December to 2.9% in January because of a decline in energy prices and a slowdown of food inflation.

That will be a rare piece of good economic news for Germany. Last year the economy shrank by 0.3%; this year it is forecast to grow by very little. Such a gloomy outlook is mostly the result of sluggish public and corporate investment—a consequence of tight monetary policy—as well as an acute shortage of skilled labour. The [war in Ukraine](#) is making businesses anxious and energy prices remain high compared with those in America. Further ahead, prospects are a little rosier: growth for 2025, the year of the next federal elections, is forecast to be around 1.2%. Even that, though, is unlikely to be enough to keep the governing coalition in power.

Heading in the right direction

Germany, consumer prices
% increase on a year earlier



*Including water, electricity, gas and other fuels

Source: Destatis



Photo: Getty Images

The SEC's new climate-risk plan

Regulators and Wall Street lawyers will gather in Washington on Tuesday for the Securities and Exchange Commission's annual conference. Over two days officials from America's main financial regulator will lay out their policy priorities.

High on the agenda will be the SEC's plans to require **big firms** to disclose climate-related risks and greenhouse-gas emissions starting in 2026. The rules, given the green light last month, were watered down from their original version. The initial proposal, released in 2022, drew ire from Republicans and lobby groups. The SEC dropped a requirement that companies disclose "scope-3 emissions" (which include those generated by a firm's suppliers and end-users).

The final rules were still met with fierce criticism. Companies argue that disclosures will scare off investors, incentivising them to move assets somewhere with laxer environmental rules. A coalition of ten states has mounted a legal challenge. Expect the argument to continue, even though the plan has now been approved.



Photo: dpa

A new kind of Spanish holiday

"Spain is different", ran a slogan from the 1960s intended to entice tourists. Northern Europeans headed to the country's beaches, and sleepy Mediterranean towns like Benidorm became garish but successful destinations. Foreigners later discovered the cities, notably Barcelona. Last year Spain broke its record, with 85m visitors. **Tourism** is so important to the economy that Spaniards will

watch Tuesday's release of visitor statistics with the interest other countries pay to exports or consumer confidence.

But Spanish tourism faces a risk: the increasingly intense summer heat, especially in the popular south of the country. Water temperatures in the Mediterranean—as in much of the globe—are record-breaking. They topped 30°C last summer, making the sea hardly any relief from the sweltering air. That is bad news for Benidorm, but better for Spain's cooler north coast. Visitors are discovering the attractions of cities like Gijón, Santander and San Sebastián. Climate change is making Spain different indeed.



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 GMT on Friday to [\[email protected\]](#). We'll pick randomly from those with the right answers and crown three winners on Saturday.

Tuesday: Which is the highest mountain in the United Kingdom?

Monday: Thomas Aquinas, the medieval theologian, was a member of which order of friars?

The artist is nothing without the gift, but the gift is nothing without work.

Émile Zola