

The world in brief

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Photograph: Reuters

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Polish forces shot down **Russian** drones after they entered Poland's airspace during an attack on western Ukraine. It is the first time a NATO member has directly engaged with Russia since [the war began](#). Poland's army said that NATO and Dutch aircraft were also involved in the operation. Donald Tusk, the prime minister, called an emergency meeting in response.

Donald Trump said he was "very unhappy about every aspect" of an [Israeli attack](#) aimed at assassinating **Hamas** leaders in **Qatar**. The president promised to issue a full statement on Wednesday, but the White House said earlier that the air strike "does not advance Israel or America's goals". Hamas said its leadership survived but six people, including a Qatari security official, were killed.

Mr Trump reportedly asked the **European Union** to slap tariffs of up to 100% on **India** and **China**—two big importers of Russian oil

—to pressure the Kremlin into ending its war with Ukraine. According to the *Financial Times*, Mr Trump made the request during a meeting between senior EU and American officials in Washington. He said America would also then increase tariffs on the two countries.

Nepal's army imposed a nationwide curfew after government buildings were attacked during [anti-corruption protests](#). The army said “lawless” groups had infiltrated the demonstrations to commit acts of vandalism and arson. The protests were triggered by the government’s short-lived attempt to ban social-media platforms, including WhatsApp. They have forced the prime minister, KP Sharma Oli, to resign. At least 22 people have died since Monday.

The first two Brazilian Supreme Court judges announced their verdicts in the trial of **Jair Bolsonaro**, a former president. Both found him guilty. Mr Bolsonaro is accused of [leading a criminal conspiracy](#) to overturn the presidential election in 2022. He denies the charges, but is widely expected to be convicted as the three remaining judges on the panel cast their votes in the coming days.

A federal judge temporarily blocked Mr Trump from firing **Lisa Cook**, a Federal Reserve governor. Mr Trump [sacked Ms Cook](#) last month ostensibly over allegations of financial misconduct, which she denies, but probably also because the central bank has refused to cut interest rates as fast as he demands. The judge said the allegations were unsubstantiated, allowing Ms Cook to continue until her case was heard.

Emmanuel Macron, **France's** centrist president, named **Sébastien Lecornu** as the country’s new prime minister—its fifth in two years. Earlier [François Bayrou](#) resigned from the role after losing a confidence vote in the National Assembly. Mr Lecornu was appointed defence minister in 2022. He faces an unsympathetic parliament that wants fresh parliamentary elections.

Figure of the day: 22%, the share of Ethiopia's 122m population connected to the grid. A new mega dam could change that. [Read the full story.](#)

Wars in Gaza, Ukraine and Sudan are reshaping the world. Stay informed with the [War Room](#), our weekly newsletter on international security.



Photograph: EPA

China's leaders face up to deflation

“What’s so bad about deflation?” Xi Jinping, China’s ruler, once asked his advisers, according to the *Wall Street Journal*. “Don’t people like it when things are cheaper?” Things have been getting cheaper in China for more than two years now, by some measures. Figures released on Wednesday showed that factory-gate prices fell year on year in August, as they have for the 34 previous months.

China’s leaders seem to have finally concluded that this [deflationary trend](#) is a bad thing. In recent months they have warned against the dangers of excessive, “involutionary” competition, which drives prices below costs. They have increased scrutiny of mining permits, reprimanded electric carmakers for aggressive discounts and urged food-delivery platforms to treat their drivers better. But these efforts to restrain supply are unlikely to defeat deflation without a stronger push to lift demand through greater public spending. Deflation makes things cheaper. But a fiscal cure for deflation is often expensive.



Photograph: AP

Israel's risky escalation

The damage done to Hamas by [an Israeli strike on its leadership](#) in Qatar on Tuesday is still unclear. The militant group claims its top brass survived. Even if that is true, negotiations for a ceasefire in Gaza are almost certainly over, at least in Qatar, which may abandon its role as mediator. If talks resume they will probably move to Egypt.

Qatar had previously believed that America would restrain Israel from attacking on its soil. The Trump administration criticised Israel's strike, but was either unable or unwilling to stop it. It might boost the standing at home of Binyamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, but it will also exacerbate the bitter debate over the war in Gaza, which most Israelis want to end. Mr Netanyahu has resisted such calls at the behest of his far-right allies, who want to reoccupy Gaza and displace its population. For other countries in the region, fears of the war spilling over their borders will only grow.



Photograph: Getty Images

An unwelcome guest in the Pacific islands

The leaders of eighteen Pacific island countries, including Australia and New Zealand, are holding annual talks in the Solomon Islands on Wednesday. [China](#) is not invited, but the country's diplomats are nonetheless planning to be in Honiara, the host country's capital, to announce new aid packages and business deals.

China is seeking access to ports and airfields throughout the Pacific. A permanent beachhead in the region would allow it to complicate the plans of America and its allies in the event of conflict over Taiwan. To block China's efforts, America and Australia have been signing deals with Pacific island countries worth billions of dollars on the condition that they keep China out. Seeking another way in, China has struck agreements in recent years to deploy police to three countries in the region, including the Solomon Islands. If China's envoys were to try to push past the doors into Wednesday's meeting, they would have muscle on hand to help.





Photograph: AP

Talking up the state of Europe

On Wednesday Ursula von der Leyen, president of the European Commission, will give her annual “state of the union” speech in front of members of the European Parliament in Strasbourg. The speech traditionally marks the end of the long summer holiday for the EU’s political class. This year, it has been a few months to forget, as the bloc acceded to a lopsided trade deal with America.

Mrs von der Leyen will try to persuade MEPs to sign off the agreement, as well as another trade deal with Mercosur, a Latin American bloc. Expect to hear more about Europe’s enduring support for Ukraine, the need to bolster innovation, spend more on defence and forge ahead on a pact to stem illegal migration. The EU’s figurehead is under pressure. She could face two votes of no confidence brought on by rivals from the hard left and right. Still, her opponents lack the support to topple her.



Photograph: Getty Images

The first task for France's next PM

France is bracing itself for a day of blockages on Wednesday as protesters seek to disrupt the country. The movement, brought together under the slogan “*Bloquons tout*”, or “Let’s block everything”, emerged via social media, the same platform that gave rise to the *gilets jaunes* (yellow vests) protests in 2018. France’s more militant unions have now joined the new movement, as has Jean-Luc Mélenchon’s hard-left Unsubmissive France party. The unions are also organising a day of strikes on September 18th.

The movement is disparate and its demands unclear, besides a call for President Emmanuel Macron to resign. On Monday small groups held sit-ins and parties to celebrate after [parliament toppled François Bayrou](#), the prime minister. Some chanted “bye-bye Bayrou”. By Tuesday Mr Macron named his former defence minister, Sébastien Lecornu, to be the next prime minister. The unrest will be a reminder that he inherits a discontented and unstable country.



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.

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

Tuesday: What title did Napoleon Bonaparte assume in December 1804?

*Between too early and too late,
there is never more than a
moment.*

Franz Werfel