

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter

In pouring rain outside 10 Downing Street, a soggy **Rishi Sunak**, Britain's prime minister, called a [general election](#), to be held on July 4th. Mr Sunak said that “now is the moment for Britain to choose its future”. He will hope that a six-week campaign will be long enough to close the 20-point gap in the opinion polls between his Conservative Party and Sir Keir Starmer's Labour Party. *The Economist's* [forecast model](#) gives the Tories less than a 1% chance of retaining their majority.

Ireland, **Norway** and **Spain** said that they would [formally recognise](#) a **Palestinian state** on May 28th. Norway's prime minister, Jonas Gahr Store, said there “cannot be peace in the Middle East” without recognition. Israel recalled its envoys from Ireland and Norway; it is expected to do the same for Spain. At least 140 UN members recognise a [Palestinian](#) state, but no member of the G7 does.

America said that **Russia** launched a “[space weapon](#)” on May 16th that may be equipped to attack other satellites. A spokesperson for the Department of Defence said that the satellite is in low-Earth orbit—the part of space nearest to the planet—and is moving in the same orbit as a satellite operated by America's government. Russia has not commented on the issue.

A **German MEP** representing the hard-right **Alternative for Germany** ceased campaigning in the European election after stating that members of the SS, a Nazi paramilitary force, were “not all criminals”. Maximilian Krah has since been [condemned](#) by hard-right European politicians. Marine Le Pen, the leader of

France's National Rally, said she would make a "clean break" with Mr Krah's party.

Grant Shapps, **Britain's** defence minister, said there is evidence that "lethal aid is now or will be flowing" from China to Russia. China has increasingly supplied [Russia's arms industry](#) with parts and electronics but has denied providing weapons and other combat equipment. Mr Shapps noted that trade between [China and Russia](#) has grown by 64% since the beginning of the war in Ukraine.

[Zhang Zhan](#), a citizen journalist who was jailed by **China** in 2020 for vlogging about **covid**, was released from prison. Ms Zhang used social media to independently report on the epidemic then engulfing the city of Wuhan; she was sentenced to four years in jail for "picking quarrels and causing trouble". Campaigners say that the freedom of Ms Zhang is limited.

An auction of Graceland, **Elvis Presley's** Tennessee mansion, was temporarily halted by a judge. An investment company is attempting a foreclosure sale, claiming that [Presley's](#) estate owes it \$3.8m in loan repayments; the King's granddaughter sued, alleging that the loan's paperwork is fraudulent. A trial is expected. Graceland claims to be one of America's most-popular homes. It remains open in the meantime.

Figure of the day: 714m, the number of barrels of oil that America's Strategic Petroleum Reserve can store. [Read the full story.](#)

In the run-up to America's presidential election, we've launched [The US in brief](#)—a daily update to help you keep on top of the political stories that matter. [Sign up here](#) to receive it as a newsletter, each weekday, in your inbox.

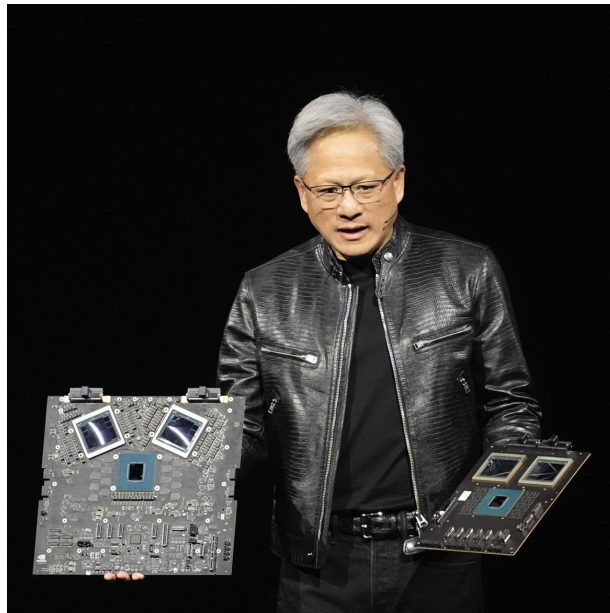


Photo: AP

How high can Nvidia go?

In its quarterly results Nvidia, the world's [most valuable](#) semiconductor company, reported year on year revenue growth of 262%, surpassing analysts' expectations and reflecting thirst for its artificial-intelligence chips. At \$2.3trn, the company's market capitalisation has almost doubled since the beginning of this year. But Jensen Huang, its boss, thinks it can grow even more.

Nvidia's fat profit margins have attracted competitors, from large companies such as AMD, another American chipmaker, to a bunch of [well-funded startups](#). But the biggest challenge to the company's dominance could come from its own customers. Tech giants including Amazon, Alphabet, Meta and Microsoft spend billions annually on chips from Nvidia to power their data centres. But these firms are also crafting chips in-house. For now, Nvidia's competitive advantage is deep: its products have the best hardware, software and networking kit. Shareholders will hope things stay that way.



Photo: EPA

So near yet so far on British inflation

Data released on Wednesday show Britain's annual inflation rate fell to 2.3% in April, down from 3.2% in March. That is close to the [Bank of England's](#) target of 2%, but still above the 2.1% that forecasters had predicted. The decline mostly reflects falling energy prices after Ofgem, the industry's regulator, lowered a price cap.

The smaller-than-expected fall suggests Britain has not yet vanquished its inflation problem. The core rate, excluding volatile food and energy prices, was 3.9% in April, still well above the headline figure. Wage growth was also high—at 6%—in the latest release, covering March. The figures make life difficult for the Bank of England's rate-setters, who are deciding when to begin interest-rate cuts. Financial markets now see the chances of a first cut in June as very unlikely.

Make it two!

Britain, consumer prices,
% increase on a year earlier



Source: Haver Analytics



Photo: EPA

Almost there: a Dutch coalition

Geert Wilders's hard-right Party for Freedom [came first](#) in the Dutch election last November, but it took almost six months of talks with three other right-leaning parties to get a rough coalition accord on May 15th. On Wednesday parliament is debating the deal, which would give the Netherlands its most right-wing government since the 1960s.



The ruling parties would agree to halt asylum applications, restrict work visas, loosen nitrogen-pollution limits (which many farmers loathe) and slash the budgets for public broadcasting, foreign aid and tech research. The deal may violate EU laws on asylum and the environment. But the coalition—which includes the governing Liberals, the fledgling New Social Contract and a farmers’ party—have the votes to implement it.

They still lack a prime minister: the parties have agreed that none of their leaders will get the job. [Mr Wilders’s](#) preferred candidate, a quirky biologist and ex-minister from the Labour party, is under fire over an allegedly unethical patent deal.



Photo: Alamy

The world’s most contested shipwreck

In June 1708 the *San José* , a Spanish galleon, sank off the coast of what is now Colombia during a naval battle with the British. She went down with 600 sailors and tantalising riches from the New World, including emeralds, gold and silver from Potos  in modern-day Bolivia. The ship has since lain near Cartagena, 600 metres deep.

On Wednesday the Colombian government will announce an archaeological exploration, which will be the first scientific investigation of a deep-sea site in the Caribbean. Gustavo Petro, Colombia's president, has said he wants some of the wreck recovered before his term ends in 2026.

The operation is legally and politically fraught. Spain, Bolivian indigenous groups and an American treasure-hunting firm all dispute Colombia's claim to the *San Jos* and its booty, which is thought to be worth hundreds of millions of dollars, at least. Colombian archaeologists, though, are adamant that the real treasure will be the [history](#) the ship may reveal.



Photo: Getty Images

A German club on the ball

Bayer Leverkusen are on the verge of a remarkable treble. The football club has already won Germany's Bundesliga, ending the 11-year winning streak of Bayern Munich. On Wednesday Leverkusen will play Italy's Atalanta in the Europa League final. Next, on May 25th, they will contest the final of the domestic cup against second-tier Kaiserslautern. Winning both these matches would also achieve something even more remarkable: an unbeaten [season](#) of 53 matches.

Occasionally teams in Europe's big five leagues win two, three or even four trophies in a season, but never without losing a match. The previous record for the longest unbeaten run was 42 matches, set by Italy's Juventus in 2011-12. Impressively, Leverkusen have achieved their streak without the resources of Europe's super-clubs. The club does not publish its accounts, but revenue has been reported at around €270m (\$293m), which would make Bayer around the 18th largest in the world. No wonder Leverkusen's manager, Xabi Alonso, is Europe's most in-demand coach.



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 Larry McMurtry Western novel won the 1986 Pulitzer prize for fiction?

Tuesday: Meryl Streep played a fashion magazine editor in which 2006 film?

Music expresses that which cannot be said and on which it is impossible to be silent.

Victor Hugo