

## Catch up: Harris treads the middle ground; humanitarian pauses in Gaza



In the first big interview of her presidential campaign, **Kamala Harris** pitched herself [as a moderate](#). Questioned about her abandonment of some of her more progressive principles, such as limiting fracking and decriminalising illegal border crossings, she said her [“values](#) have not changed” but she needs “to build consensus”. She raised the possibility of including a Republican in her cabinet and conceded “there’s more to do” on the economy. Ms Harris also reiterated her commitment to Israel’s defence. Donald Trump called her a “WEAPONIZING MARXIST” on social media during the interview.

The **Israel Defence Forces** and **Hamas** agreed to three, three-day humanitarian pauses in different parts of Gaza to allow children to receive **polio** vaccinations, the World Health Organisation said. Last week the WHO confirmed Gaza’s first case of the virus in 25 years, after a baby was found to be paralysed by [the disease](#). The campaign, due to begin on Sunday, aims to vaccinate around 640,000 children.

X said it expects to be suspended in Brazil “soon”. Alexandre de Moraes, a Supreme Court judge, had ordered the social-media firm to appoint a legal representative in the country; on Thursday it missed the deadline to do so. Earlier Mr Moraes blocked the local

bank accounts of [Starlink](#), Mr Musk's satellite business. Elon Musk, X's owner, called Mr Moraes an "evil dictator".

**Ukraine** confirmed that an **F-16 plane** was destroyed, and its pilot killed, on Monday during a Russian missile barrage. [The fighter jets](#) "demonstrated their high effectiveness" during the attack, according to Ukraine's army, which had long sought the American-made planes. NATO allies recently supplied a handful as part of an initial batch. The country has just enough pilots trained to fly them.

**Jake Sullivan**, America's national security adviser, concluded a three-day visit to China by meeting **Xi Jinping**, the country's president. Mr Sullivan said he spoke with Chinese officials to assess where both countries had made "progress" in [their relationship](#) and where there remained "areas of disagreement", including tensions over [Taiwan](#) and [Russia](#). President Joe Biden and Mr Xi reportedly plan to continue discussions by phone.

**Sir Keir Starmer** met **Emmanuel Macron** in Paris. The leaders of Britain and France agreed to deepen collaboration on areas such as migration and defence. Yesterday Sir Keir met Olaf Scholz in Germany, where the pair announced a similar agreement. After a period of frosty relations with the European Union, Britain's new government wants to [reset ties](#).

[Iran](#) recently increased its stockpiles of high-enriched uranium to near weapons-grade levels, according to a report by the **International Atomic Energy Agency**, seen by AFP, a news agency. Rafael Grossi, the director-general of the IAEA, said that he hoped to visit Iran soon for "constructive dialogue". Diplomatic efforts by the West to limit Iran's enrichment programme [have stalled](#).

**Figure of the day:** \$240bn, the value of trade between Russia and China last year, up by two-thirds since 2021. [Read the full story](#).

**Correction:** In an earlier edition we said that Nvidia's shares fell by 2% after the chipmaker released quarterly earnings. In fact shares closed at that level, in anticipation of the earnings report.

# India's economy slows



On Friday data will probably reveal that [India's economy](#) grew at an annual rate of nearly 7% in the three months to June. By most countries' standards, that is rapid. But in India it will be the slowest rate of expansion in five quarters, down from 7.8% in the first quarter. Blame weaker household demand and geopolitical tensions, as well as the election that ran from mid-April until June, which caused the government and companies to put off spending.

Will economic growth pick up the pace again? The election returned the Bharatiya Janata Party to power, though with a far weaker mandate. The rebuke has led the party to raise spending in rural areas, which boosts consumption. However, some analysts worry that a coalition government will find it harder to implement the [reforms](#) needed to sustain growth in the long term. Narendra Modi, the prime minister, wants India to become a developed nation by 2047. But that would require GDP growth of over 7% for the next two decades.

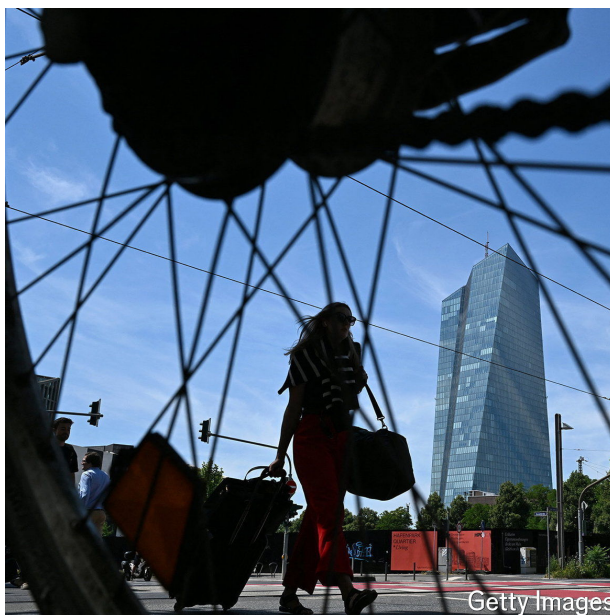
## A year since Gabon's coup



On August 30th 2023, Gabon became the [latest country](#) in Francophone Africa to succumb to a [military coup](#). Ali Bongo, the ousted president, had inherited the top job from his father, who had ruled the petrostate of 2.4m people since 1967. Mr Bongo's attempt, in 2023, to rig elections proved a step too far. But the officer who overthrew him, Brice Clotaire Oligui Nguema, is anything but a revolutionary: then the head of the Republican Guard, he is the former president's cousin.

Mr Oligui Nguema seems to be in no hurry to usher in democracy. A year after appointing himself the “transitional president”, he remains every inch the actual president. But the Western countries that might protest have kept quiet so far. Unlike most of his fellow putschists in [French-speaking Africa](#), Mr Oligui Nguema has maintained ties with France and its allies. With Russia gaining friends and influence throughout the region, the West would prefer to keep oil-rich Gabon on its side.

# The EU inflation's last-mile problem



At their [annual jamboree](#) in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, central bankers hailed the fall of inflation. European policymakers have had much to cheer: inflation in Europe has proven less stubborn than in America. Even so, the euro area's annual rate was 2.6% in July, above the European Central Bank's target of 2% and a shade higher than in June. A preliminary estimate for August, due on Friday, will inform the ECB's decision on whether to cut interest rates for the second time this year in September.

Early numbers have been encouraging: Germany's annual inflation rate decreased to 2% in August, from 2.6% in July. In Spain, inflation also fell, to its lowest level in a year. That suggests inflation could drop across [the bloc](#). Policymakers may anyway decide to keep rates on hold. Services inflation remains sticky; it has been at around 4% since November, mostly because of high wages. The final stretch is always the hardest.



# Scotland's political turmoil



On Friday the Scottish National Party will host its 90th annual conference in Edinburgh. It will not be a happy anniversary. The party was once convinced it could force a fresh independence referendum, after Scotland voted to remain in the United Kingdom in 2014. But the triumphalism that has suffused previous gatherings has dissipated.

Britain's general election in July culled the party's contingent of MPs at Westminster from 48 to nine. The Labour Party has clawed back scores of seats in Scotland's old industrial regions and younger cities—once a fertile recruiting ground for nationalists—driving the SNP back to its rural heartlands. Moreover, a police investigation is under way following a scandal related to the SNP's finances.

All that makes for an unpromising backdrop to the next elections to the Scottish Parliament, which must be held by May 2026. The party has [run Scotland's government](#) since 2007—the vote will determine whether it will continue to do so.

# The apotheosis of Nick Cave



The past decade saw a remarkable transformation in the life, career and art of Nick Cave. A terrible and [tragic catalyst](#) was the death of his teenage son, Arthur. The Australian singer-songwriter's work altered profoundly, towards experimental, free-form sound. To many of his fans, Mr Cave himself underwent a Tolstoy-esque conversion to a kind of secular sainthood, becoming a thoughtful agony uncle on his blog, Red Hand Files, where he responds to public questions with letters and images. He also left behind decades as a major cult artist to become an arena-filling star.

A new album from Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds, "Wild God", is released on Friday. It sees him change direction once again, back to the ensemble playing of anthems and piano ballads that first defined him. It is an exuberant record, rich in blues- and gospel-rock. The album feels like a release from mourning. And in one song, titled "Joy", overtly declares itself so.



## Daily quiz



*The Economist*

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 [QuizEspresso@economist.com](mailto:QuizEspresso@economist.com). We'll pick randomly from those with the right answers and crown three winners on Saturday.

**Friday:** What term is used for a hairstyle, where hair is wrapped in a ball at the top or back of the head?

**Thursday:** Which sport, similar to tennis but with a plastic ball and an underarm serve, is the official sport of Washington state, where it was invented?

# The winners of last 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:

**Nu Fate**, Chicago, Illinois, America

**Peter Grodzinski**, London, Britain

**Ana María Aponte Cepeda**, Bogotá, Colombia

They all gave the correct answers of [Nevada desert](#), [Nestle](#), [Arctic](#), and [travel](#). Check back tomorrow for this week's crossword.

**\$240bn**

*The value of trade between Russia and China last year, up by two-thirds since 2021.*

*[Read the full story.](#)*

**Poetry is what we do to break bread with  
the dead.**

*Seamus Heaney*