

# The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: AFP via Getty Images

**Donald Trump** signed an executive order approving a deal to allow **TikTok** to continue operating in America by splitting it from ByteDance, its Chinese owner. Mr Trump said Xi Jinping, China's leader, had given him the "go ahead" to proceed. He added that Oracle, a software giant, will play a "very big part" in TikTok's new American ownership. ByteDance will maintain a minority stake. J.D. Vance, America's vice president, said [the deal](#) values the app at \$14bn.

Mette Frederiksen, **Denmark's** prime minister, said she would work with NATO to address the "serious" drone swarms that forced Danish airports to temporarily close this week. On Thursday Denmark's defence minister said a "professional actor" was responsible for the latest, in Aalborg, but found no evidence of [Russian involvement](#). Ms Frederiksen has suggested that Russia was responsible for an attack at Copenhagen airport on Monday.

**Amazon** agreed to pay \$2.5bn in fines and customer payouts in one of the [Federal Trade Commission's](#) biggest settlements. America's competition watchdog accused Amazon of deceiving millions of people into subscribing to its Prime service and making it difficult

to cancel. Amazon neither admitted nor denied wrongdoing but agreed to introduce clearer options for signing up and cancelling.

**Nicolas Sarkozy** was sentenced to five years in prison for receiving illegal campaign funding from the late Libyan dictator, Muammar Qaddafi, during the French presidential election in 2007. The former French president is accused of agreeing to help Qaddafi improve his international reputation in return. Mr Sarkozy, along with 12 other accused, including three former government ministers, have denied wrongdoing.

**America's** government struck a deal to provide xAI's services to federal agencies, four months after Elon Musk's [acrimonious departure from the Trump administration](#). Mr Musk, who owns xAI, said it would help the administration "accomplish its mission more effectively than ever before". Grok, a chatbot, is xAI's flagship product. The government has agreed similar deals to use [AI models](#) such as Google's Gemini.

**Microsoft** disabled some cloud storage and AI services within **Israel's** Ministry of Defence, after finding evidence that it was using the technology to store data about civilians in [Gaza](#) and the West Bank. The tech giant said it began a review, which is still ongoing, after the *Guardian* published allegations of "mass surveillance" in a recent investigation.

**South Korea's** parliament inked a deal that will allow **tattoo** artists to legally practise their trade without a medical licence. The legislation, known as the Tattooist Act, ends a decades-long [rule](#) that permitted only doctors to carry out the procedure. The act will take effect two years after it is formally proclaimed by President Lee Jae Myung.

**Figure of the day:** 90%, the share of the world's young people who live in developing countries. [Read the full story.](#)



Photograph: Getty Images

## Erdogan courts Trump

On Thursday Turkey's president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, will make his first trip to the White House since 2019. Relations between the two NATO allies have been strained over the past decade, largely because of differences over [Syria](#) and Russia, and the Turkish government's [disregard for the rule of law](#). Mr Erdogan's meeting with Donald Trump heralds a reset.

Multibillion-dollar contracts are helping the rapprochement. The two leaders are expected to announce Turkey's purchase of some 250 Boeing commercial airliners, dozens of F-16 fighter jets, as well as other weapons from America. Mr Erdogan also hopes to convince his host to lift America's ban on selling F-35 stealth fighters to Turkey, imposed after the country bought a Russian S-400 air-defence system in 2017.

Turkey may also promise to boost imports of American liquefied natural gas, acceding to Mr Trump's wish that allies reduce reliance on Russian energy. The country is a big buyer of Russian oil and gas. Mr Erdogan will want to protect his country from the punishment that Mr Trump imposed on India, another big customer: a doubling of tariffs.

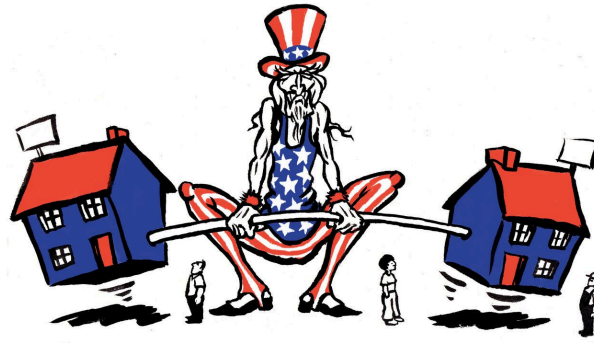


Illustration: David Simonds

## How strong is America's housing market?

America's [housing market](#) has shown signs of resilience this summer after a bleak spring. In July sales of existing homes unexpectedly rose by 2% month on month, according to the National Association of Realtors.

Whether that momentum continued in August will become clear on Thursday, when the association publishes its latest data. By some measures housing is becoming more affordable. Wages are rising faster than house prices, and inventory is at its highest since 2020. In July the average price of a house fell for the first time in six months. But [mortgages](#) are still expensive. Thirty-year rates are at around 6%. The Federal Reserve has started to cut interest rates, but the effect on home loans is expected to be small because their rates are tied to long-term Treasury yields. Builders, meanwhile, are pulling back: housing permits are down more than 11% year on year. A drop in new supply could cut short a fragile recovery.

## Home run

United States, 30-year fixed mortgage rate, %



Source: Freddie Mac



Photograph: Getty Images

## Tokyo's gaming playground

One of the world's biggest gaming expos opens on Thursday near Japan's capital. The Tokyo Game Show, now in its 29th year, will show off the wares of more than 1,100 companies, from big publishers to independent studios, over four days. Half will come from abroad. Tens of thousands of visitors are expected.

The show comes at an anxious time for the global gaming industry. The end of the pandemic boom has forced many publishers to cancel projects and cut staff. Tariffs have pushed up the cost of consoles. But the show's host country is still bullish. The Japanese government's "Cool Japan" strategy designates games and anime as "core industries". In 2022 exports of those industries were worth ¥4.7trn (\$30bn). The goal is to reach ¥20trn by 2033. [Nintendo's Switch 2](#) has been a hit. But Japan is not immune from worries: competition from China and other countries is mounting, and its home market is ageing. Its industry may struggle to level up.



Photograph: Apple TV+

## **A new mission for the Slow Horses of MI5**

The fifth season of *Slow Horses* begins streaming on Apple TV+ this week. Based on Mick Herron's novels, the series follows Jackson Lamb (Gary Oldman), a foul-mouthed but seasoned spymaster who runs a misfit branch of MI5. Diana Taverner (Kristin Scott Thomas), the icy deputy director of MI5, has no respect for the outcast team but ends up needing their help anyway.

In the new season a mass shooting in London thrusts the team back into the centre of a national-security crisis. The agents may gripe endlessly about their exile and their boss's abuse, but they are desperate to prove they belong back in the field. The six-part series blends mordant humour with bursts of action and the bureaucratic absurdities of the intelligence world. Its title comes from Mr Herron's novel "London Rules": if "Moscow Rules" means "watch your back", the London variant, more bluntly, means "cover your arse".





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.

**Thursday:** Which territory became a US state in 1907?

**Wednesday:** Which geographical feature covers around 165m square kilometres?



*No grand idea was ever born in a conference, but a lot of foolish ideas have died there.*

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***F. Scott Fitzgerald***