

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: AP

At least 622 people were killed and 1,500 injured when a magnitude 6.0 earthquake struck eastern **Afghanistan**. Three villages were destroyed in Kunar province, with many others significantly damaged, according to the country's health ministry. Access to the region is limited. The disaster will further stretch the country's resources, which have suffered from Western countries' cuts to aid.

Xi Jinping, China's leader, and **Narendra Modi**, his Indian counterpart, described themselves as "partners, not rivals". They met ahead of the [Shanghai Co-operation Organisation](#) leaders' summit, which began on Monday in the Chinese city of Tianjin. More than 20 world leaders are attending, including Vladimir Putin, Russia's president. Mr Putin said beforehand that the sco would help shape a "fairer multipolar world order".

Ukraine vowed to retaliate with "deep strikes" after **Russian** drones targeted the country's energy infrastructure over the weekend. The attacks cut power to 30,000 homes in the northern region of Chernihiv and 29,000 near Odessa, a city in the south. Separately, a suspect was arrested after **Andriy Parubiy**, a former

speaker of parliament and a prominent figure in Ukraine's pro-EU Maidan revolution of 2014, was shot dead.

Christine Lagarde, the president of the European Central Bank, said that **France** is not yet in a position that requires the IMF to intervene, but that the risk of its government collapsing is “worrying”. France's bond markets have wobbled since [François Bayrou](#), the prime minister, announced last week that he would call a vote of confidence for his minority government.

Israel is reportedly considering annexing parts of the occupied **West Bank** in response to several countries' [plan to recognise](#) a Palestinian state at the UN General Assembly in New York this month. On Friday America's State Department said it would not issue visas for senior Palestinian officials to attend. Meanwhile Israel's defence minister said that the armed forces had killed Abu Obeida, a **Hamas** spokesman.

Novo Nordisk, a Danish drugmaker, found its weight-loss drug, Wegovy, cut obese patients' risk of heart attack, stroke and cardiovascular-related death by 57% compared with Zepbound, an alternative made by its American competitor, Eli Lilly. The findings may boost Novo, which in May slashed its [sales forecast](#) for 2025, citing “lower-than-planned” growth in weight-loss drugs. The study was not a randomised controlled trial.

A report commissioned by **Australia's** government found that software that relies on selfies to verify users' ages was broadly accurate, but that there was a “buffer zone” of two to three years either side for those aged 16. In December Australia will [ban all under-16s](#) from using social media, with many tech firms likely to employ the verification technology.

Figure of the day: More than 40, the number of times that Donald Trump has boasted that he brought peace to Kashmir. [Read the full story](#).

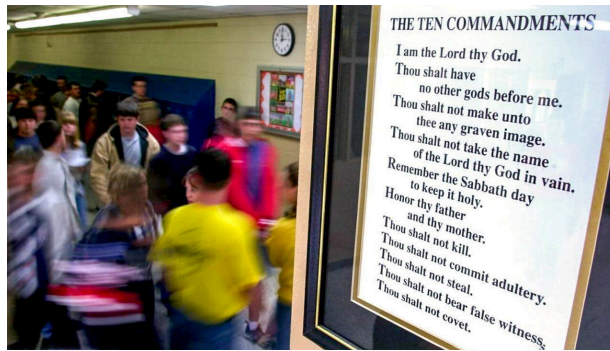


Photograph: AP

The IDF masses on Gaza city

The end of the daily “tactical pauses” that allowed limited food supplies into Gaza city, which Israel’s army announced on August 29th, marked a new phase in Israel’s offensive. Half of the Gaza Strip’s 2.1m people are huddled, many starving, in and around the city. Israel is trying to force them southwards before advancing beyond the outskirts. The International Red Cross says a mass evacuation is “unfeasible”.

Binyamin Netanyahu, Israel’s prime minister, is determined to push on. The operation, he claims, will “topple” Hamas, the Islamist movement that attacked Israel nearly two years ago. Even his own generals are sceptical. Donald Trump, America’s president, wants to see a “conclusive ending” to the war in “two to three weeks”. That is unrealistic, but adds urgency to Mr Netanyahu’s already haphazard approach. The conflict has killed over 60,000 already. It is hard to see what will prevent another bloodbath.



Photograph: TNS

From Mount Sinai to Mount Pleasant

On Monday the word of God comes to many of Texas's public schools. A law mandating that each classroom should display the Ten Commandments comes into force. Similar laws have been passed in neighbouring Louisiana and Arkansas.

Families of pupils have filed lawsuits in all three states, claiming that the laws are an insidious and unconstitutional violation of the First Amendment's separation of church and state. But defenders claim that the Ten Commandments are part of America's history, much like the Declaration of Independence, and so deserve a place in the classroom.

A federal appeals court has struck down Louisiana's law, while district court judges have blocked its enforcement in four school districts in Arkansas and 11 in Texas that were sued. Litigation will continue. But in the meantime, since Arkansas has 237 school districts and Texas has more than 1,200, most of their pupils will start the year with the laws God gave to Moses next to their ABCs.



Photograph: Reuters

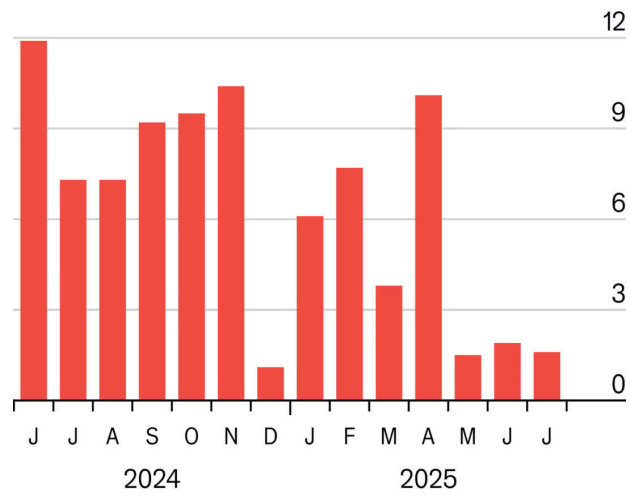
Are Spain's beaches play'd out?

In July 11m international tourists arrived in Spain according to figures released on Monday. That is a record for the month and marks a 1.6% increase from the same month last year. But the upward trend is slowing: in the first six months of the year 44.5m tourists arrived, a 5% increase year on year. That may be because climate change is prompting northern Europeans to take their holidays earlier or later to avoid the baking heat of July and August.

Spain's hospitality industry risks falling victim to its success. The cost of a Spanish holiday is spiralling. Average hotel rates are 50% more expensive than in 2021. Those in the industry report that in July tourists came to the Balearic Islands for fewer days and spent less, leaving restaurant terraces half empty. Fewer visitors might be better for towns groaning with [overtourism](#). But only if they spend more.

Going into holiday mode

Spain, international traveller arrivals*,
% increase on a year earlier



*At main access points on roads and
at airports, ports and railways

Source: National Statistics Institute



Photograph: Getty Images

Will Guyana stick with Irfaan Ali?

Guyanese will elect a new president, vice-president and all 65 members of the National Assembly on Monday. Observers hope it will be more straightforward than in 2020, when the vote was marred by attempted fraud. Irfaan Ali, the current president, faces two other candidates. Both are polling fairly well, but Mr Ali is favoured to win a second five-year term. He is popular for having increased cash transfers and social spending, including making universities free.

Good stewardship matters. Guyana has only 800,000 people, but is tremendously wealthy thanks to relatively recent discoveries of oil deposits. Oil production is rising, and GDP is projected to grow by double digits again this year. Yet despite impressive gains in some areas, such as education, Guyana's poverty rate remains high. And whoever wins will have to manage Nicolás Maduro, Venezuela's dictator, who is threatening to snatch the oil-rich Essequibo region.



Photograph: Liverpool FC via Getty Images

English football clubs pound the competition

European football clubs have until Monday night to sign new players. Even before any last-minute panic-buying, the trend of the summer was clear: English clubs made eight of the ten biggest purchases, compared with six two years ago. Of the 28 players who commanded transfer fees of £40m and above, 11 were bought and sold between English clubs.

English clubs have so much purchasing muscle because of the English Premier League's prowess at selling overseas broadcasting rights to its matches. Sporting Intelligence, a newsletter, has calculated that these deals are worth almost £2.2bn to the Premier League each year. By contrast La Liga (Spain) earns £800m, Serie A (Italy) £600m, the Bundesliga (Germany) £200m and Ligue 1 (France) £120m. The discrepancy is so great that Everton, who finished 13th in the Premier League in 2024/25, has spent more on net this summer than the combined total of the three highest-finishing Italian clubs.



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.

Monday: Which colour, generated from a dye made from sea snails, became associated with Roman emperors?

*One can easily touch a living soul
through the most grave vices and
crimes, but vulgarity is
impassable.*

François Mauriac