

# The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: POOL/AFP via Getty Images

**Israel's** government ratified a **ceasefire** agreement with Hamas. Binyamin Netanyahu, Israel's prime minister, said the way had now been paved “for the release of all the hostages—both the living and the deceased”. Under the first stage of Donald Trump's peace deal, Israeli troops will withdraw from parts of Gaza and Israel will release nearly 2,000 Palestinian prisoners. That might [prove the easy part](#).

A powerful earthquake of magnitude 7.6 struck the Mindanao region of the **Philippines**. The country's seismology agency issued tsunami alerts, warning of “life threatening wave heights” and advising people in coastal towns to immediately evacuate. No deaths have yet been reported. The earthquake comes just two weeks after another one that killed around 70 people in Cebu.

America's **Justice Department** indicted **Letitia James**, New York's Democratic attorney-general, for alleged mortgage fraud. Mr Trump has been seeking revenge on Ms James since she [successfully sued him](#) for fraud at his real-estate business in 2023. The department has also brought a case against another of Mr Trump's bêtes noires, [James Comey](#), a former FBI director. Both Ms James and Mr Comey deny wrongdoing.

**Scott Bessent** said that America had purchased **Argentine pesos** to [prop up](#) the Latin American country's economy and finalised a \$20bn swap line with its central bank. The interventions follow a pledge last month by America's treasury secretary to "do what is needed" to [steady Argentina's currency](#). Mr Trump is due to meet Javier Milei, Argentina's libertarian president, next week.

**Vladimir Putin** said Russia brought down an **Azerbaijan Airlines** jet in December, mistaking it for a Ukrainian drone. The admission of responsibility for [the crash](#), which killed 38 people, was shared at a meeting with Ilham Aliyev, [Azerbaijan's](#) president. Mr Putin said it was Russia's "duty" to provide an "objective assessment" of the incident and "identify the true causes".

**Rishi Sunak**, a former prime minister of Britain and a sitting Conservative MP, was hired as a senior adviser by **Anthropic**, an artificial-intelligence lab, and **Microsoft**. While in office Mr Sunak pushed for Britain to use AI to become "[a science and technology superpower](#)" and announced a £2.5bn investment from Microsoft in British datacentres.

A French court increased the sentence of Husamettin Dogan, the only one of 51 men to appeal against his conviction for the serial rape of **Gisèle Pelicot**. The judge added a year to his original nine-year tariff. Ms Pelicot's husband had drugged her and then invited men to sexually assault her over nine years. The harrowing case has sparked a [broader debate](#) about sexual consent in France.

**Figure of the day: 45,000**, the number of pubs in Britain last year—down from 115,000 in 1870. [Read the full story.](#)



Photograph: Getty Images

## A temperature check for America's economy

Figuring out what's happening to the economy is hard at the best of times. But in America, the government [shutdown](#) has cut off most official data releases. Employment figures due out last week were postponed. If the shutdown continues, next week's inflation figures may not be released either. Pity the policymaker trying to make sense of things.

So, more than usual, economy-watchers are combing through data from the private sector. On Friday, the University of Michigan will release the preliminary reading on its long-running consumer-confidence gauge for October. Sentiment plunged in April, after the "Liberation Day" tariff announcements, and remains soft. Forecasters expect the measure to stay weak.

But despite the grim outlook from households, America's economy appears strong. One closely watched tracker of GDP growth, from the Federal Reserve's branch in Atlanta, is projecting an eye-popping 3.8% annualised growth rate for the third quarter. If actual growth ends up even remotely close to that, households may cheer up, too.



Photograph: Getty Images

## A new beginning for Israel and the Palestinians

The Middle East woke up on Friday with [renewed hopes of peace](#). In the early hours of the day, Israel's cabinet ratified a ceasefire deal proposed by Donald Trump that negotiators brokered with Hamas in Egypt. A number of far-right ministers voted against the deal, but were in the minority.

The [deal](#) gives the Israeli army 24 hours to withdraw to a temporary line outside the main settlements in the Gaza Strip. Hamas will then have 72 hours to release the 20 surviving Israeli hostages held in Gaza, after which Israel will release around 2,000 Palestinian prisoners. Gaza will also start receiving much more aid.

Problems remain. The next phase of the peace plan—including a further Israeli withdrawal, the formation of a technocratic government in Gaza, the arrival of a peacekeeping force and the disarmament of Hamas—will involve another round of talks. But Mr Trump is euphoric. On Sunday he is expected to fly to Jerusalem to celebrate the deal he conceived.



Photograph: AP

## The hermit kingdom's big anniversary

[North Korea](#) is celebrating the 80th anniversary of its ruling Workers' Party. A parade will take place on Friday at the Kim Il Sung Square in Pyongyang. South Korean intelligence has detected rehearsals involving thousands of troops. As part of the pageantry, advanced weapons are expected to be unveiled, possibly including unmanned vehicles and systems that the regime claims are powered by artificial intelligence. Last month Kim Jong Un, North Korea's leader, oversaw a test of a high-thrust solid-fuel engine for the Hwasong-20, the regime's newest intercontinental ballistic missile.

The event also carries diplomatic weight. Bigwigs from [China and Russia](#) have arrived in Pyongyang to attend, reflecting warming ties between the three countries. Their presence follows Mr Kim's appearance at a military parade in Beijing last month, where he stood alongside Xi Jinping, China's leader, and Vladimir Putin, the Russian dictator. His daughter, Kim Ju Ae, joined him, prompting speculation that she may be his preferred successor. Keep an eye out for her again this weekend.



Photograph: Getty Images

## **Russia's economy pays the price for stability**

Not long ago Russian inflation looked out of control. In March prices rose by more than 10% year on year, as huge fiscal stimulus ran up against tight supply, especially of labour. More recently, though, price pressure has ebbed. Figures out on Friday could show that the annual rate of inflation has fallen sharply to around 7% for September.

Good news? Kind of. The central bank has driven the disinflation by running an exceptionally tight monetary policy. In June it started lowering its policy rate from its peak of 21%. But at 17%, it still remains one of the highest in the world. This has raised the incentive to save, and made investment costly.

But while inflation is down, [so is the economy](#). In August GDP rose by just 0.4% year on year. Wage growth is slowing too. The big question is whether the central bank can achieve a “soft landing”, crushing inflation without crushing the economy.





Photograph: Getty Images

## The NBA returns to China

Pre-season NBA games are hardly marquee affairs, but the one taking place on Friday holds [special significance](#). The game marks the return of America's top basketball league to China after nearly six years. In 2019 Daryl Morey, the Houston Rockets manager at the time, infuriated China's leaders by voicing support for Hong Kong's pro-democracy protests on social media. Chinese state broadcasters stopped showing NBA games and sponsors pulled funding. The NBA said losses amounted to hundreds of millions of dollars.

It has taken years to patch up relations, but the return to China is a huge boost for the NBA. The country—home to around 450m basketball fans—is crucial for the league's growth plans. More than that, at a time of geopolitical tension, China's rebound on the NBA sends a message to businesses in America and elsewhere. They are all welcome in China—as long as they play by its rules.



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.

**Friday:** Which luxury car range is Ford's equivalent of General Motors's Cadillac brand?

**Thursday:** At which Greenwich village site in 1969, did a protest against police harassment spark a broader movement for gay rights?





Illustration: The Economist

## The winners of this 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:

**Karamjit Bharti**, Naya Nangal, India

**Peg Brandon**, Ottawa, Canada

**Jo Cameron**, Noosaville, Australia

They all gave the correct answers of Wichita, [Walter Raleigh](#), Romania and healing.

*If you rest, you rust.*

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***Helen Hayes***