

# The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: Getty Images

**Donald Trump** said that the person suspected of killing **Charlie Kirk** was in custody. Mr Kirk, a right-wing activist, was [shot dead](#) at a university event in Utah on Wednesday. Speaking to Fox and Friends, America's president said that "somebody that was very close" to the suspect turned him in. Mr Trump said he hoped the killer would be sentenced to death. Earlier J.D. Vance, the vice-president, travelled to Utah to collect Mr Kirk's casket.

**Marco Rubio**, America's secretary of state, said that the Trump administration would "respond accordingly" to the "witch hunt" against **Jair Bolsonaro**. Brazil's supreme court sentenced Mr Bolsonaro, a former president and a Trump ally, to more than 27 years in prison for [plotting a coup](#) after he lost an election in 2022. [Alexandre de Moraes](#), the judge leading the case, accused Mr Bolsonaro of trying to return Brazil to dictatorship.

**Poland** described an [incursion of drones](#) in its airspace as "a deliberate Russian attack", contradicting Mr Trump's suggestion on Thursday that "it could have been a mistake". Poland shot down some of the Russian drones with help from Dutch fighter jets. European leaders condemned the incident and demanded new

sanctions against Russia. The United Nations will hold an emergency meeting to discuss the event.

**Britain's** economy [did not grow](#) at all in July, according to the latest data, following monthly growth of 0.4% in June. Production output, which includes manufacturing, declined by nearly 1% in July. The figures will put pressure on the **Bank of England**, which is expected to hold interest rates next week as Britain's economy faces weak growth and persistent inflation.

The Trump administration asked an American appeals court to allow the president to sack **Lisa Cook**, a Federal Reserve governor, before the bank's meeting next week. The Justice Department is attempting to overturn a lower court's temporary halt on Mr Trump's attempt to fire [Ms Cook](#). The president has for months insisted that the Fed should cut rates; on September 17th it is expected to do so.

The death toll in **Nepal's** anti-government protests passed 50. Nepal's army is in talks with representatives from the protest movement that toppled the government this week to find an interim government. Reports suggest that Nepal's former chief justice, Sushila Karki, is likely to be appointed interim prime minister. The army has restored order, but [huge political uncertainty remains](#).

**Giorgio Armani's** wills, outlining his wishes for his fashion empire, were made public. The documents instruct his heirs to sell stakes in his luxury group to one of three larger rivals: LVMH, EssilorLuxottica and L'Oréal. While he was alive, Armani resisted takeover attempts. The Italian designer, who drafted the wills earlier this year, [died aged 91](#) on September 4th.

**Figure of the day:** 17, the age of Gout Gout, the sprinter who may be athletics' new mega-star. [Read the full story](#).

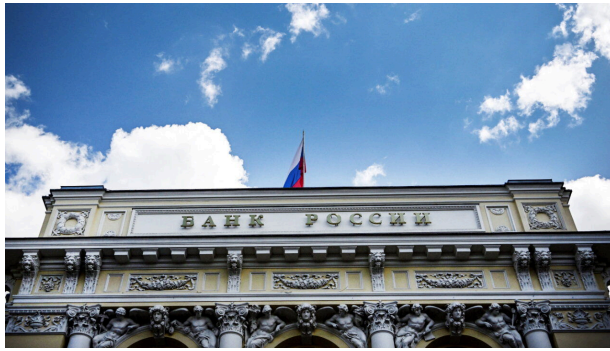


Photograph: Anadolu Agency via Getty Images

## War games put NATO on edge

NATO members, [especially Poland](#), will be on alert on Friday as Russia launched its *Zapad* (“West”) military exercise in Belarus. Officially, some 13,000 troops are meant to take part in the drills, which are scheduled to end on Tuesday. The actual number is expected to be much higher.

The manoeuvres had Poland on edge even before 19 Russian drones [breached the country’s airspace](#) on Tuesday night. It was the biggest such incursion into NATO skies since the alliance formed in 1949. Hours before the drones appeared, Poland announced it would close its border with Belarus ahead of the *Zapad* drills. Following the incursion, which Poland described as an act of aggression, the country announced it would deploy 40,000 soldiers to its eastern border. The *Zapad* exercises are defensive in name only. The last ones took place in the autumn of 2021. Russia invaded Ukraine five months later.



Photograph: AFP via Getty Images

## The convictions of Russia's central bank

On Friday Russia's central bank will make an interest-rate decision. In 2023 and 2024 it raised its benchmark rate as high as 21% as it tried to quell surging inflation, linked to labour shortages and the enormous fiscal stimulus provided by government war spending. That made the bank unpopular in some quarters. Russia's economy minister recently blamed high borrowing costs for [the slowing economy](#). Consumer confidence has dropped in recent months.

Yet while in most autocracies the central bank is in the pocket of politicians, in Russia it is a different story. President Vladimir Putin delegates monetary management to experts. For a long time the rate-setters held off on cutting, hoping for inflation to fall first. That is now happening: the annual inflation rate has fallen from a recent peak of more than 10% to 8.8%. The bank's mandarins have lowered rates by three percentage points since the spring. Don't be surprised if they cut again.



Photograph: AFP via Getty Images

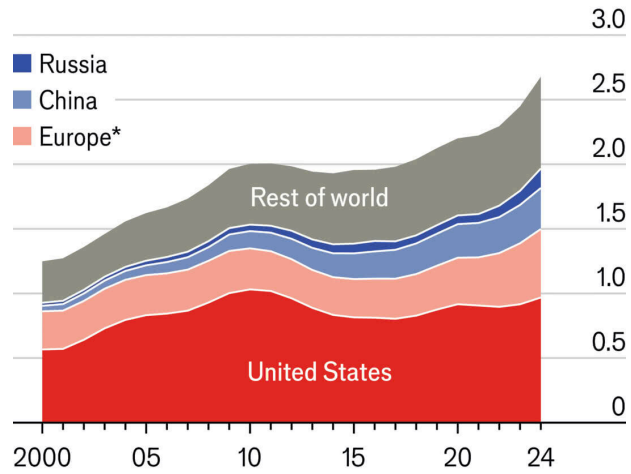
## Britain's bombs bazaar

On Friday DSEI UK, a giant arms show, wraps up in London. More than 1,600 exhibitors are attending. Weapons dealers are prospering: global military spending rose by nearly 10% last year, to a record \$2.7trn. With that growth comes controversy. Protest groups such as “Shut the System” have thrown red paint, cut internet cables and scuffled with police. Much of their ire is aimed at Israeli arms makers. (Britain's government banned Israeli officials from the show because of the war in Gaza.)

Another big subject at the expo is Europe's vulnerability. Despite Russia's growing bellicosity, Europe still relies for protection on an increasingly hesitant America. [European armies](#) are especially short of air defences, longer-range strike systems, reconnaissance aircraft and satellites. European countries have launched fewer satellite-bearing rockets in the past decade than SpaceX, an American firm, put up in the first half of this year alone.

## Here comes the boom

World, military spending, 2023 prices, \$trn



Source: SIPRI

\*Excluding Russia



Photograph: Rory Mulvey / FOCUS FEATURES

## A final chapter for Downton Abbey

Hugh Bonneville, Laura Carmichael, Jim Carter and other original “Downton Abbey” actors close out their characters’ stories in the final film of the trilogy spun off from the hit television show. “Downton Abbey: The Grand Finale”, out on Friday, follows the Crawley family and their staff as they enter the 1930s and cope with divorce, financial trouble and social disgrace.

Studios reckon that remakes, spin-offs and sequels are a more certain path to commercial success than work based on new ideas. The Downton trilogy shows that the tactic doesn’t always work. The first spin-off film, “Downton Abbey”, released in 2019, grossed \$195m. Its sequel, “Downton Abbey: A New Era”, which came out in 2022, took in less than half as much, perhaps in part because of the covid-19 pandemic. Still, fans of the franchise will no doubt enjoy the final instalment. As an astute chronicler of class in England, [Julian Fellowes](#), Downton’s creator, deftly balances upstairs and downstairs plots with historical events and the challenges of everyday life.





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 New York congresswoman was nominated by President Donald Trump to be ambassador to the United Nations, only for her nomination to be withdrawn?

**Thursday:** Which film was really awarded the Oscar for best movie in 2017, after the presenters mistakenly announced the winner as La La Land?





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:

**Caron O'Hara**, Harare, Zimbabwe

**Kariem Abdellatif**, Uebersyren, Luxembourg

**Sonja Horte**, London, Britain

They all gave the correct answers of Xanadu, Nordic, growth and [Xi Jinping](#).

*It all goes so fast, and character  
makes the difference when it's  
close.*

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***Jesse Owens***