

# The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter

The UN said Israel was still not distributing aid in Gaza, despite the country lifting its [11-week blockade](#) on supplies entering the enclave. The agency's humanitarian chief warned that 14,000 babies could die should they not receive food soon. Meanwhile international pressure mounted on Israel to halt its escalating assault. The EU said it was reviewing its trade agreement with Israel, following Britain's decision to suspend trade talks.

**Donald Trump** vowed to finish building a “**Golden Dome**” missile-defence shield before the end of his term. America's president said the system would cost \$175bn, of which \$25bn has been included in the budget bill that awaits approval by Congress. Mr Trump urged Republicans to pass his “big, beautiful bill”, which also includes tax cuts worth trillions of dollars—and [risks stoking a bond crisis](#).

**Britain** and the EU imposed new sanctions on Russia, targeting its shadow oil fleet and financial intermediaries. The move followed [Mr Trump's call with Vladimir Putin](#) on Monday, which failed to produce progress on the war in Ukraine. European leaders urged America to follow suit, but Mr Trump has yet to act. Russia insisted it would not bow to ultimatums.

**Google** launched an **artificial-intelligence** feature in its search engine. Sundar Pichai, the head of Alphabet, Google's [parent company](#), called the change a “total reimagining of search”. It will allow users to interact with Google the same way they do with chatbots offered by OpenAI and other AI startups. Alphabet also announced plans to launch AI-powered glasses.

Gunmen killed two members of the mayor of **Mexico City's** staff. Clara Brugada's personal secretary and an adviser were shot in broad daylight on a main road by two men on a motorbike. Though such [political assassinations](#) are common in Mexico, they are rare in the capital. The motive is unclear, but Claudia Sheinbaum, the president, promised "there will be justice".

During a speech marking a year in office Lai Ching-te, **Taiwan's** president, said that the island was "committed to peace" [with China](#), but that it would continue to strengthen its defences. China, which does not recognise Taiwan's sovereignty, called his remarks a "waste of effort". In March Mr Lai proposed a controversial crackdown on Chinese infiltrators, declaring the country a "foreign hostile force".

**Elon Musk** said he would reduce his political spending in America since he had "done enough". The world's richest man was the Republican Party's top donor last year, contributing more than \$290m. But his [presence in the White House](#) has prompted backlash against Tesla, his electric-vehicle company. He said he intends to remain in charge of the firm for another five years.

**Figure of the day:** \$17bn, the amount that Americans spent on pizza deliveries last year. [Read the full story.](#)



Photograph: Rex Shutterstock

## **Can South Africa win over MAGA?**

Cyril Ramaphosa, South Africa's president, may be apprehensive about his meeting with Donald Trump in the Oval Office on Wednesday. America's president has singled out South Africa for its ties to American adversaries such as China and Iran, as well as for its racially biased laws that are meant to counter the effects of centuries of white rule. Last week dozens of Afrikaners, white South Africans whose ostensible persecution has become a cause célèbre among MAGA types, arrived in America as “refugees”.

Mr Ramaphosa will try to charm and deflect, hoping to limit the damage of aid cuts and tariffs on his country. He hopes that, like Ukraine and the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Africa can use its mineral resources as bargaining chips. But Mr Ramaphosa's efforts will probably count for little so long as South Africa is chummy with America's foes, and seen by Team Trump as DEI in [the form of a sovereign state](#).



Photograph: Getty Images

## Trump decides the fate of US Steel

The results of a government review of a proposed takeover of US Steel by Nippon Steel, a Japanese rival, could come as early as Wednesday. Joe Biden [blocked the deal](#) in the final weeks of his presidency, citing national-security concerns. Donald Trump has signalled more openness. Metal manufacturing accounts for around 0.5% of America's GDP. But Mr Trump's decision on the takeover may provide clues about his approach to foreign investment more broadly.

He says he wants foreign companies to invest in America. In fact, encouraging such investment is probably one of the few ways that countries can earn the right to tariff-free trade with the world's largest economy. But the sale of a strategic American asset to a Japanese rival could clash with the protectionist instincts of Mr Trump's base. If he approves it, he will pay a political price.



Photograph: Alamy

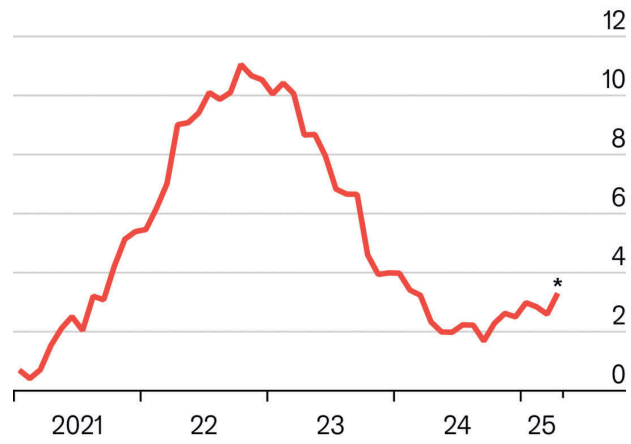
## **Britain's inflation bump**

Several unusual factors will influence Britain's inflation figures for April, due on Wednesday. Top of the list is the rise in employers' national insurance, a payroll tax, that took effect last month. Many firms will pass on part of the tax hit in higher prices. The minimum wage also rose sharply last month, as did energy and water bills.

The combined effect, forecasters reckon, will be to push the annual inflation rate up to 3.3%, from 2.6% in March. Core inflation, which excludes volatile food and energy prices, is projected to hit 3.6%. Yet the long-term picture is more concerning than any one bump: because inflation in Britain has been uncomfortably high for nearly four years, people have become more sensitive to price changes. That makes it more likely that any new price increases (like April's) will feed into wage demands and spending behaviour, making the inflation harder to shake off.

## Dragging on

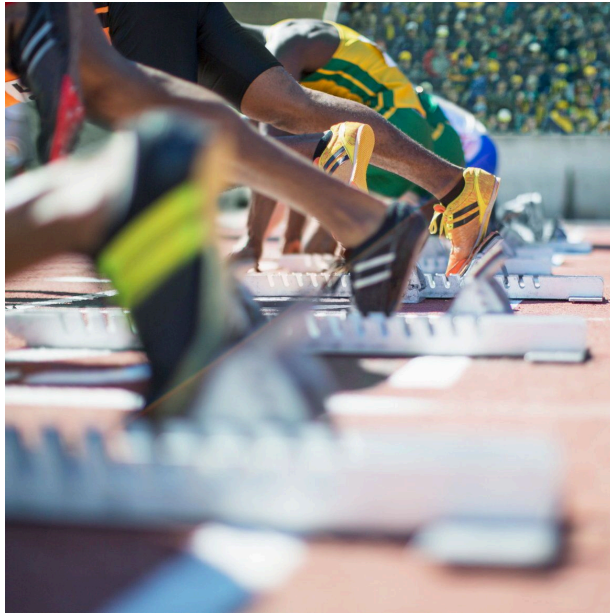
Britain, consumer prices,  
% increase on a year earlier



\*Forecast

Source: Haver Analytics





Photograph: Alamy

## **“Enhanced Games” stir controversy**

On Wednesday the Enhanced Games will announce the host city and competition dates for its inaugural events. The games will be the first to encourage the use of [performance-enhancing drugs](#). Athletes—both “enhanced” and “natural”—will compete in track, field, swimming and strength events for large cash prizes. The announcement is expected to set out the games’ enhancement protocols, the medical checks that will be used to lower the risks to athletes and details of the prizes.

Investors in the games include Peter Thiel, a tech billionaire, and Donald Trump junior, son of America’s president. The project aims to challenge the norms of elite sport. The sporting establishment has denounced it. Critics include Sebastian Coe, president of World Athletics, and the International Olympic Committee. They warn of risks to health and say that the event undermines the spirit of fair play. Some also worry that the normalisation of drug use might have effects beyond elite sport, influencing young people and society more generally.



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.

**Wednesday:** What was the name of the “paranoid android” in “The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy” series?

**Tuesday:** Who was the first African-American to win the “most valuable player” award in Major League Baseball?



*Do not trust governments more  
than governments trust their own  
people.*

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***Andrei Sakharov***