

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: dpa

France's prime minister, François Bayrou, said the European Union's **trade deal** with America marked a “dark day” for the bloc. **Germany's** chancellor, Friedrich Merz, said the agreement would “substantially damage” his country's economy. But several other countries acknowledged that the deal—under which the EU will face a 15% **tariff** on most goods, including cars—was better than a full-blown trade war.

A **gunman** killed four people, including a police officer, and then himself in **New York**. The shooting took place in a skyscraper in Midtown Manhattan housing financial firms including Blackstone and also the NFL's headquarters. Police said the suspect, a 27-year-old from Las Vegas, acted alone. They are yet to determine a motive.

The Trump administration declined to give **Taiwan's** president, Lai Ching-te, permission to transit through New York and Dallas. Taiwanese presidents **sometimes meet** American politicians on such non-official visits. Donald Trump does not want to jeopardise a possible trade summit with Xi Jinping later this year. The path to that meeting is being smoothed in Sweden, where Chinese and American officials met on Monday.

Mr Trump said there is “real starvation” in **Gaza** and that America would set up food centres. Binyamin Netanyahu earlier said claims of mass hunger were “a lie”. Meanwhile Mr Merz said Germany would begin humanitarian airlifts. Local officials report that over 100 people died of starvation in the past few weeks. In addition, collecting food aid has become [a deadly pursuit](#) for Palestinians.

Thai and **Cambodian** commanders held talks, despite Thailand accusing Cambodia of launching attacks in several areas, violating a ceasefire that had taken effect just hours earlier. The truce, agreed on Monday following talks in Malaysia, was to have ended [five days of violence](#) over a long-running border dispute. The conflict has killed at least 38 people and displaced 300,000.

A **Russian** air strike on a prison in Zaporizhia, a region in eastern **Ukraine**, killed 17 people and wounded around 40. Ivan Fedorov, Zaporizhia’s governor, said Russia launched eight strikes using [glide bombs](#), which are hard for air-defence systems to intercept. Although Russia unilaterally claimed Zaporizhia in 2022, it is still mostly controlled by Ukraine.

Mr Trump’s lawyers asked a court to depose **Rupert Murdoch** within 15 days because of his age. The president is [suing the 94-year-old billionaire](#) and News Corp, his media company, for libel. One of his papers, the *Wall Street Journal*, reported on July 17th that Mr Trump wrote a birthday note for Jeffrey Epstein, a convicted child molester. Mr Trump denies the story.

Figure of the day: 25m, the number of subscribers that Khan Sir, one of India’s most popular civil-service exam coaches, has on YouTube. [Read the full story.](#)



Photograph: Getty Images

Anything but Epstein

On Sunday Donald Trump struck a trade agreement with the European Union. Afterwards the president, pleased with his deal, took a question from a reporter: did he rush to make an agreement to “knock the Jeffrey Epstein story out”? Mr Trump’s mood changed. “You’ve got to be kidding me,” he said.

[The story](#) is still on its feet, weeks after the Department of Justice [enraged](#) some of Mr Trump’s conspiracy-minded supporters by deciding there were no documents about Epstein, a convicted child molester who died in 2019, to be released. Some Republicans tried to force the DOJ to unseal them, creating intra-party conflict in the House of Representatives. Administration officials are trying to save face by digging out fresh information. The DOJ has asked three federal judges to make public grand-jury testimony from old investigations. Two judges in New York gave the government until Tuesday to specify what testimony they wanted. The other, in Florida, swiftly denied the request.



Photograph: Reuters

AstraZeneca's American remedy

AstraZeneca, Britain's biggest drugmaker, reported strong half-year results on Tuesday. Second-quarter revenues rose by 11% compared with a year earlier, beating analysts' expectations. But more attention is on its corporate future. Pascal Soriot (pictured), the firm's boss, is reportedly considering shifting its stockmarket listing from London to New York. Mr Soriot is frustrated by Britain's commercial environment, particularly on the pricing and approval process for drugs.

Still, America brings challenges of its own. Donald Trump [wants to cap drug prices](#) at levels charged in other rich countries and has threatened tariffs as high as 200% on medicines made abroad. AstraZeneca is already adapting. Last week it pledged to invest \$50bn in America by 2030, expanding its manufacturing and research operations. A new plant in Virginia will be its biggest investment in a manufacturing facility globally. AstraZeneca wants to reach \$80bn in total revenue by the end of the decade, with half of that coming from America. The success of its latest investments will be critical.



Photograph: Alamy

The sky looks brighter for Boeing

Boeing's second-quarter results, out on Tuesday, should show that the American aerospace giant is finally getting [back on course](#) after a difficult stretch. Revenues may grow and, although the firm will probably report a quarterly loss, it looks set for its first annual operating profit for several years.

Kelly Ortberg, Boeing's boss since August 2024, is trying to restore Boeing's reputation for engineering excellence. Production of both single aisle and long-haul passenger planes is picking up and orders are rolling in. Boeing's defence arm also got a boost with its selection by the Pentagon to develop the F-47, the next generation of military jet.

Donald Trump's trade deals often include an order for Boeing passenger jets for countries winning favourable terms. But the firm still faces American tariffs on imported components, and foreign tariffs on finished jets if other countries retaliate against America. That makes plotting its ascent all the tougher.



Photograph: eyevine

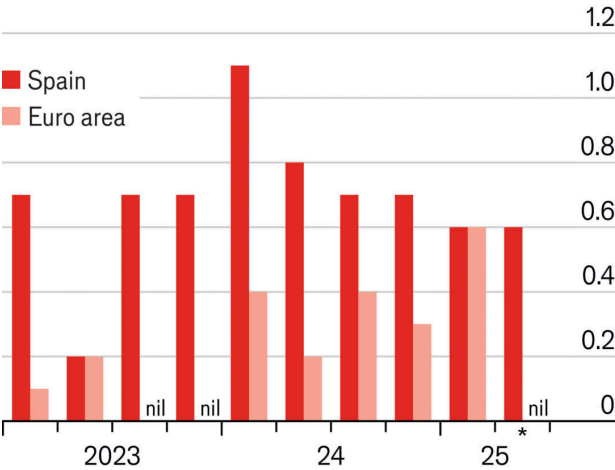
The good times roll for Spain's economy

Pedro Sánchez, Spain's prime minister, is [struggling politically](#) as his Socialist Party has become embroiled in corruption scandals. Still, the country's economic health may provide some comfort. Preliminary data released on Tuesday showed that Spain's GDP grew by 0.7% in April-June, compared with 0.6% during the previous three months. That will probably be significantly more than the figure for the whole euro area. The Spanish uplift comes from private consumption, booming tourist arrivals and a growing labour force, helped in part by immigration.

Nonetheless, the numbers show a gentle slowdown from last year's growth of 3.2%. There are headwinds in the longer-range forecast: European post-pandemic funds must be spent by August 2026; America's tariffs will hurt exports. And pressure is growing to cut public debt—still above 100% of GDP—more aggressively, while the good times last.

Ahead of the pack

GDP, % increase on previous quarter



Source: LSEG Workspace

*Estimate



Photograph: WWE/Courtesy of Netflix

The writers behind the wrestlers

Vince McMahon, who co-founded World Wrestling Entertainment, is one of Donald Trump's closest friends. His co-founder and estranged wife, [Linda McMahon](#), is Mr Trump's secretary of education. America's president has appeared in WWE events, once shaving Mr McMahon's head in the ring, and often seems to run his administration on wrestling's central dictum: attention is everything. Cognoscenti long sneered at the "sport" because it is "fake". Yet that misses the point. Scripted television dramas that do not involve giants in singlets hurling each other around are fake too, but still compelling.

On Tuesday, five days after the death of WWE's greatest star, Terry "Hulk Hogan" Bollea, Netflix premieres "WWE: Unreal", a series that takes viewers into the writers' room. Even non-fans will enjoy seeing how the writers build and adapt storylines and stars. It is the story of a specific type of dramatic production—and it may enhance viewers' understanding of the most powerful man in the world.



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.

Tuesday: Who is the hapless human protagonist in “The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy” series?

Monday: Which British potter and artist is fond of cross-dressing?

Yesterday’s edition did not include a quiz question because of a production error. Sorry. You can see Monday’s question above. Thanks to all our loyal players who wrote in.

*Find things beautiful as much as
you can, most people find too
little beautiful.*

Vincent van Gogh