

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: AFP

The Israeli army said it would temporarily cease operations in parts of **Gaza** to allow in humanitarian aid. It said the “tactical pause” would take effect in Al-Mawasi, Deir al-Balah, and Gaza City every day between 10am and 8pm until further notice. Israel has come under [intense pressure](#) following widespread reports of starvation in the territory. It denies there is much hunger.

Donald Trump said that **Cambodia** and **Thailand** had agreed to immediate ceasefire talks. Nonetheless shelling continued across the countries’ shared border as the [conflict](#) moved into its fourth day. Both sides thanked the American president for his intervention. Cambodia has also called for a ceasefire. Thailand’s acting prime minister said he wanted to see “sincere intention” from Cambodia before his country lays down arms.

Allianz Life said that the personal information of the majority of its customers had been stolen in a cyber-attack. The American life-insurance company, which shared some details of the breach with TechCrunch, a technology website, revealed that the attack took place on July 16th. It was discovered a day later. Allianz Life has yet to reveal if it received a ransom demand.

Iran executed two members of MEK, a banned opposition group, for attacking “administrative facilities, educational and charity centres”, among other sites. They were convicted of *moharebeh*—waging war against God. The men were arrested in 2022. Amnesty International said they were tortured and denied a fair trial. Iran’s execution rate is rising: over 900 executions were carried out in 2024, the highest since 2015.

Lai Ching-te, **Taiwan’s** independence-minded president, suffered a setback when recall votes of 24 opposition Kuomintang lawmakers all failed. Successful recalls could have helped Mr Lai’s Democratic Progressive Party claw back its legislative majority at subsequent by-elections. The island’s political gridlock, which has seen the China-friendly KMT push through cuts and freezes to Mr Lai’s defence budget, is set to remain.

Profits at **China’s** big industrial firms fell for a second straight month in June, according to data from the National Bureau of Statistics. Earnings dropped by 4.3%, compared with a year earlier. In May they plummeted by 9.1%. The government is trying to crack down on unbridled competition and spiralling price wars between firms, which it has dubbed “[involution](#)”.

Residents of one of **Athens’s** northern suburbs were told to evacuate as **wildfire** approached their homes. Some houses are already burning in Kryoneri, just 20km (12.5 miles) from the centre of the Greek capital, and temperatures in excess of 38°C and high winds are fanning the flames. Greece has suffered from substantial wildfires in recent years, with the capital itself threatened on several occasions.

Word of the week: *Tongzhi*, the Chinese word for “comrade” (which is now used as slang by gay people to refer to themselves). [Read the whole story.](#)

In a turbulent week of news, have you kept up with the headlines? Play this week's [pint-sized news quiz](#) and find out what you may have missed.



Photograph: Getty Images

The blame game as Gaza ceasefire talks break down

After nearly three weeks of indirect talks between Israel and Hamas, the [negotiations](#) for a ceasefire to end the war in Gaza have broken down. On Thursday Israel and America announced they were recalling their teams from Doha. The American envoy, Steve Witkoff, blamed Hamas and said America “will now consider alternative options”. Hamas had insisted that in the interim 60-day truce period Israel retreat to a narrow band of territory on Gaza’s borders, in exchange for the release of half of the remaining Israeli hostages it has been holding for over 21 months.

Israeli diplomats say Hamas has toughened its demands because of the international condemnation of Israel over reports of [starvation in Gaza](#). Hamas, they say, feels it now has the diplomatic upper-hand. They warn that Hamas will only be further emboldened by France’s forthcoming recognition of a Palestinian state, the first G7 state to do so. The move has already been condemned by America and Israel.



Photograph: Getty Images

Farewell to the closing bell

Stock exchanges are getting ready to [trade all night](#). The New York Stock Exchange and the Nasdaq have both applied for regulatory permission to do so; the London Stock Exchange is reportedly considering something similar. Nasdaq expects to be open around the clock by the second half of 2026.

They are late to the party. Currencies, American Treasury bonds and crypto assets have been traded through the night for years. Online stockbrokers, meanwhile, have already started to let clients execute orders outside of exchanges' opening hours, through alternative platforms.

But open-all-hours exchanges will be a logistical nightmare. The witching hours are currently when all manner of dull, yet vital, post-trade processes take place, from settlement and valuation to the reconciliation of mistakes. With no pause to trading, there will be no time for the financial plumbing to clear—nor for traders to rest in the knowledge that the market is resting with them. The old-fashioned trading day will be much missed.



Photograph: Alamy

Women's football triumphs in Switzerland

The Women's European Championships, which conclude on Sunday with the final between Spain and England, have been a huge [success](#). Switzerland was a smart choice of host: mid-sized stadiums have been full of fans and atmosphere. Logistics have been stereotypically smooth. The number of tickets sold, more than 600,000, breezed past the record of 574,000 set at the 2022 tournament in England. Administrators have remained behind the scenes, as they failed to do at the recent gaudy Club World Cup for the men, held in America.

The final pits the two best teams against each other. Of the rest, only Italy exceeded expectations. But there have been none of the drubbings that occurred in previous championships, when there was less talent in women's football. What the game needs now is for second-tier sides, such as Portugal and Belgium, to give their women's teams the excellent infrastructure they have for men's football—and put the squeeze on the established giants.



Photograph: Getty Images

AI-ndiana Jones

Unlike Indiana Jones, real archaeologists rarely wield bullwhips or run into Nazis. But technology undreamt-of by Jones will now make their jobs more exciting. Aeneas, an AI model from Google DeepMind and the University of Nottingham, can pinpoint to within 13 years the actual date that Latin text was inscribed onto stone or tablets. Even more enticingly, it can act as a sort of compendium of Latin literature, suggesting how disparate texts could be linked.

Meanwhile, at the University of Bologna researchers used AI to identify four previously unknown archaeological sites in Mesopotamia. They trained an AI model on declassified military-satellite imagery from the 1960s, when many digs in the same area were still visible before being trampled by development. The scientists then asked the AI to identify similar, potentially fruitful sites today. Without AI, the researchers say, the sites would have been overlooked.



Illustration: The Economist

The winners of this week's quiz

Thank you to everyone who took part in this week's quiz. The winners, chosen at random, were:

Hélène Tremblay, Gatlineau, Canada

Felipe Silva Mendez, Santiago, Chile

Avinash Subramaniam, Chennai, India

They all gave the correct answers of: Brian Jones, Jimi Hendrix, Amy Winehouse, Jim Morrison and Kurt Cobain. The theme is that they are all members of the "27 club", the informal name for rock stars who died at that age.

*I don't feel old. I don't feel
anything till noon. That's when it's
time for my nap.*

Bob Hope