

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: AP

Rescue efforts resumed in **Afghanistan** after more than 800 people were killed and nearly 3,000 injured by a magnitude 6.0 **earthquake** that struck the east of the country on Monday. Entire villages were razed in Kunar province. Landslides and heavy rain hampered rescuers. The Taliban administration appealed for foreign help; Afghanistan has been hit hard by Western countries' [cuts to aid](#).

Vladimir Putin said he had reached “understandings” with **Donald Trump** in Alaska last month on [ending the war](#) in Ukraine, but stopped short of confirming peace talks with Volodymyr Zelensky. Speaking at a summit in China alongside Xi Jinping and Narendra Modi, Mr Putin again blamed the West for the conflict. Meanwhile North Korea’s leader, Kim Jong Un, crossed the border into China to attend a military parade with other leaders on Wednesday.

Nestlé fired Laurent Freixe, its chief executive. An internal probe concluded that he had pursued an undisclosed romantic relationship with a subordinate, breaching the Swiss foodmaker’s rules. Mr Freixe had worked at Nestlé for nearly 40 years. The firm

immediately appointed Philipp Navratil, a long-time executive who previously ran its Nespresso business, as his successor.

The price of **gold** reached an all-time high during early trading in Asia, rising by nearly 1% to \$3,508 an ounce. The increase was largely driven by an expectation that America's central bank will lower interest rates this month. The metal's price [has leapt](#) by more than 30% this year as investors flocked to the safe-haven asset amid rising geopolitical tensions and economic uncertainty.

The International Association of Genocide Scholars, the largest academic body in the field, voted to declare that **Israel's** actions in **Gaza** meet the legal definition of [genocide](#). Eighty-six per cent of members who cast ballots backed the resolution. Israel called the statement disgraceful and said it was based on " Hamas lies". Meanwhile, Gaza's health ministry said the conflict had killed more than 100 people over the past day, including nine from [hunger](#).

Britain's government said it would suspend applications by asylum-seekers to bring family members to the country. It said it wanted to ease pressure on councils, which house [asylum-seekers](#), and deter gangs that bring them to Britain. Meanwhile, Sir Keir Starmer, Britain's unpopular prime minister, shook up his staff, appointing a new chief secretary, economic adviser and head of communications.

Russian jammers disrupted a flight carrying the head of the European Commission, **Ursula von der Leyen**, according to Bulgarian officials. The jet's GPS appears to have been disabled as it prepared to land in Plovdiv in Bulgaria, forcing the crew to use paper maps to land safely. Such [interference](#) with planes has become common in recent years.

Figure of the day: 2.5m. The forecast reduction in the number of people moving to America this year compared with 2024. [Read the](#)

full story.



Photograph: AP

European inflation settles near target

As Europe returns from its holiday season to offices and shop floors, the outlook for inflation and the economy is brightening. Despite American tariffs, sentiment among manufacturing businesses in the euro zone is at a 41-month high. Data for August, to be published on Tuesday, are expected to show that annual inflation was 2%, meeting the European Central Bank's target for the third consecutive month.

That would be a victory in the ECB's four-year fight against inflation. But there remain some outliers. Austria's inflation rate is 3.7%. Inflation in central and eastern Europe is higher—as expected when economies catch up—than the average in richer western countries.

Past wage increases have kept inflation in services prices above 3%. But if the ECB's wage tracker is any guide, negotiated wage increases will dip below 2% in the last quarter of 2025. If that coincides with an [economic recovery](#), the mood in Europe may stay sunny.

Cooling down

Euro area, consumer prices,
% increase on a year earlier



Source: Haver Analytics



Photograph: AP

Brazil's extraordinary trial

Jair Bolsonaro, Brazil's hard-right former president, and seven of his closest associates will be put on trial on Tuesday. They are accused of masterminding a coup attempt to remain in power after losing an election in 2022. [The prosecution is an extraordinary moment.](#) Brazil has a long history of coups, but this is the first time someone has been put on trial for attempting one. Many expect the defendants to be found guilty; several could face decades in prison. The trial could wrap up as early as mid-September, though it can be extended until the end of the year.

Donald Trump, Mr Bolsonaro's idol, has [called the trial a "witch-hunt"](#) and slapped tariffs of 50% on many Brazilian goods, as well as sanctions on Alexandre de Moraes, the Supreme Court judge who has led the prosecution of Mr Bolsonaro, often with a heavy hand. Mr Trump could intensify the fight—but at home, many Brazilians are growing weary of the Bolsonaro circle.



Photograph: Getty Images

Ishiba treats Japan's war commemoration with caution

On September 2nd 1945, Japan signed the Instrument of Surrender on the *USS Missouri*, formally ending the second world war. In many countries, the day is celebrated as VJ (Victory Over Japan) Day. In Japan remembrance of the war remains politically fraught. Ishiba Shigeru, the prime minister who is a liberal within the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, has expressed a desire to confront his country's wartime aggression more directly than his predecessors. But ahead of the 80th anniversary on Tuesday, he reportedly decided to hold back a statement outlining Japan's role in the war—probably to avoid antagonising the party's right wing.

The political situation allows little room for that. At an [upper house election in July](#), the LDP lost its majority. On Tuesday the party is holding a post-mortem to analyse the election battering. The outcome may determine whether the party calls a leadership contest, in effect removing Mr Ishiba. With his position already shaky, he seems to have judged that reflecting on history is less urgent than keeping his job.



Photograph: Getty Images

Can Congress keep America's government open?

Congress returns from its summer break on Tuesday and must solve an urgent problem. The federal government is only funded until September 30th. If the two parties cannot agree to raise more money, it will shut down.

Democrats are tempted to use the ticking clock to stand up to Republicans. Many were furious when their leadership supported a spending bill in March to avert a shutdown, amid the administration's bonfire of the federal government. Since then Republicans forced through the [One Big Beautiful Bill Act](#), slashing funding for Democratic priorities such as Medicaid and the social safety-net. And Donald Trump cancelled some spending Congress approved. Although potentially illegal, he may again.

Some Democrats wonder why they should strike a deal if the president will defund whatever they get out of it. But they also baulk at the idea of a shutdown, which Republicans would blame on them. That could make the Democrats lose their nerve.



Photograph: Getty Images

NatCon meets in Washington, DC

From Tuesday to Thursday the biggest-ever National Conservatism conference will take place in Washington, DC. Speakers include Tulsi Gabbard, America's director of national intelligence, and Thomas Homan, Donald Trump's "border czar".

One attendee stands out: Nigel Farage, leader of Britain's hard-right Reform UK, the only British politician currently confirmed to speak. When NatCon was held in London in 2023, it was dominated by Britain's Conservative Party. The party's absence from this year's event underlines Mr Farage's dominance of Britain's right. Mr Farage's speech will focus on mass deportation. Last week Reform said it would create detention facilities to remove 24,000 people from Britain every month if it wins the next election that is expected by 2029, [echoing Mr Trump's ambitions](#). His party leads national polls. Whether Mr Farage's alignment with Mr Trump will help him domestically is uncertain. Such perceived ties didn't do much for politicians in [Australia](#) or [Canada](#), who lost recent elections.



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: Which birds are sometimes released at weddings and funerals as signs of love and peace?

Monday: Which colour, generated from a dye made from sea snails, became associated with Roman emperors?

I always in writing start with a name. Give me a name and it produces a story, not the other way about normally.

J.R.R. Tolkein