

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter

The **United Nations** said Israel was still not distributing aid in Gaza, despite the country lifting its [11-week blockade](#) on supplies entering the enclave. The UN'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](#).

Nvidia's boss, Jensen Huang, described America's export controls on artificial-intelligence chips to China as a “failure” that had accelerated the rise of Chinese chipmakers. Mr Huang also praised Mr Trump [for his plans to ditch rules](#) introduced by Joe Biden's administration that would limit the export of chips to countries according to a tier system, with sales to China prohibited.

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.

A court in the **Democratic Republic of Congo** sentenced Augustin Matata Ponyo Mapon, the country's prime minister from 2012 to 2016, to ten years of forced labour on corruption charges. Mr Matata was accused of embezzling \$245m in public funds. A former central bank governor also received five years hard labour. Mr Matata Ponyo said the case was politically motivated and denied wrongdoing.

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".

The world lost 6.7m hectares of **forest** area in 2024, roughly double the amount in 2023, according to new data from Global Forest Watch, a research outfit. Wildfires were the primary cause for the record-breaking destruction of tropical forest. The researchers warned that "rising global temperatures" are causing more fires and that the figures should be a "global red alert".

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

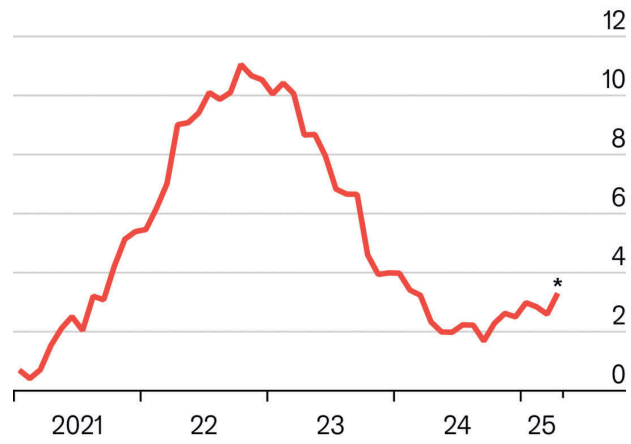
Britain's inflation bump

Data released on Wednesday revealed that Britain's annual inflation rate surged in April, to 3.5%, the highest level in more than a year and up from 2.6% in March. The jump was not entirely surprising. Forecasters had predicted 3.3% factoring in several unusual developments. Top of the list was the rise in employers' national insurance, a payroll tax, that took effect last month. Many firms passed on part of the tax hit in higher prices. The minimum wage also rose sharply last month, as did energy and water bills.

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.

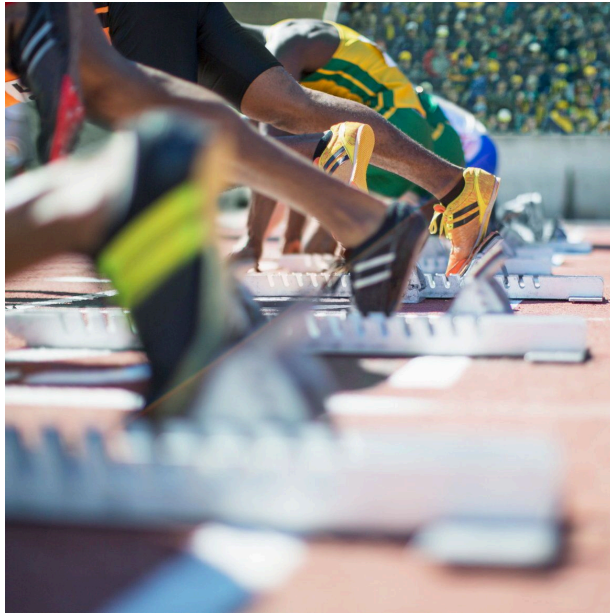
Dragging on

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.*

Andrei Sakharov