

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: Anadolu via Getty Images

Hamas said it would not disarm without the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. Indirect negotiations between the group and **Israel** reportedly stalled last week; Israeli officials have said Israel must control some aspects of the sovereignty of any future Palestinian state, such as the security apparatus. Meanwhile, seven people in Gaza died of [malnutrition](#) over the past day, according to health officials.

India will reportedly continue buying oil from **Russia** despite Donald Trump's threats of penalties. Since the war in Ukraine began, India has emerged as a big [purchaser](#) of discounted crude. Russian oil now accounts for 35% of its supplies. Earlier this week Mr Trump announced tariffs of 25% on Indian goods, along with a yet-to-be-revealed penalty for buying Russian oil and arms.

Berkshire Hathaway, an investment firm run by Warren Buffet, acknowledged the value of its investment in **Kraft Heinz**, a [beleaguered packaged-food company](#), had fallen by \$3.8bn. It is a rare misstep for Mr Buffet, who was a driving force behind the merger that created the firm in 2015. Since then, its shares have fallen by 62%.

Anti-corruption agencies in **Ukraine** said they had uncovered a big bribery scheme, leading to the arrest of an MP and several other officials. The suspects are accused of purchasing drones and electronic-warfare systems at inflated prices. On Thursday the Ukrainian government backed down from its attempt to bring the anti-corruption bodies [under its control](#) after protests.

SABIC, a Saudi Arabian chemical company, announced a net loss of 4bn riyals (\$1bn) for the previous quarter. Analysts had expected the firm, in which Saudi Aramco, the world's biggest oil company, [has a 70% stake](#), to report profits of 500m riyals. Sabic blamed the loss on the need to close a cracking facility in Britain. Weak demand has also hit the chemical industry hard.

Azerbaijan began exporting natural gas to **Syria**. It will move through Turkey, which has become an ally of the fledgling Syrian government, and will be used to restart power plants as [Syria rebuilds](#) after more than a decade of civil war. Azerbaijan's energy minister said the plants being supplied had the capacity to provide power for 5m households per day.

Four astronauts arrived at the **International Space Station** on a [rocket](#) made by **SpaceX**, a company founded by Elon Musk. The crew is expected to spend up to eight months in space. Their departure coincided with the first face-to-face talks between the leaders of the American and Russian space agencies since 2018. They said they discussed continued co-operation in space.

Word of the week: Greenhushing, many businesses are getting on with the job of decarbonisation without making a fuss. [Read the full story.](#)



Photograph: Getty Images

As crime declines, America's cops check in

This weekend the National Fraternal Order of Police, the umbrella organisation for 2,200 of America's police unions, will meet in Miami for a biennial conference. It comes at a time when crime is collapsing across the country after spiking during the pandemic. According to the Real Time Crime Index, which tracks agency-level statistics, murders are down 20% so far this year compared with the same period last year. Some violent cities, such as Baltimore and Philadelphia, are on track for historic lows ([experts are still debating why](#)).

What will the cops talk about? Probably how well they are doing, and how to continue to extract good deals from local governments when crime is down. The era of “defund the police” appears to be over: with most big cities still short of police officers, recent wage increases have been generous. Whether that continues as the crime surge dissipates remains to be seen.



Photograph: Getty Images

OPEC+ swims against the current

On Sunday the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies meet to decide how much they will collectively produce in September. The cartel is expected to announce an increase in output of 548,000 barrels per day, equivalent to 0.5% of global crude supply—the fifth big hike in as many months.

The group will say its decision is justified by growing oil demand, which OPEC+ projects will rise by 1.2% globally next year. Few forecasters are as optimistic. Donald Trump's tariffs are expected to slow economic growth, weakening the world's appetite for oil.

Mr Trump could still help the [cartel](#), though it would mean harming one of its allies. He has threatened hefty “secondary” tariffs on countries that buy oil from Russia. Should importers such as India and China shun Russian barrels, oil prices would jump, pleasing many of OPEC+'s members. But markets are unconvinced that is about to happen. Prices are lingering around \$70 a barrel.



Photograph: Getty Images

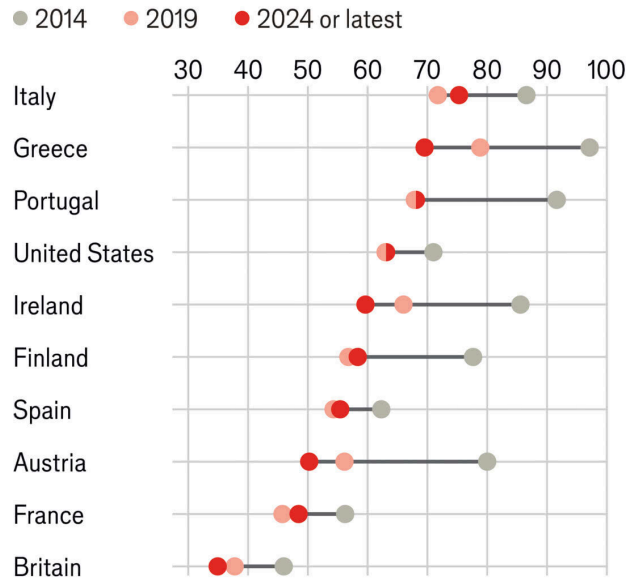
The Catholic Church's Gen Z moment

This weekend some 500,000 youngsters from 146 countries are gathering in Rome for the Jubilee of Youth. The event is part of the Catholic Church's Holy Year—a tradition that happens every 25 years, dating back to 1300. It offers pilgrims the chance to pass through “Holy Doors” symbolising forgiveness, as well as opportunities to receive full remission of punishment for sins. On Sunday Pope Leo XIV will give an address. It is one of the most important moments of his papacy so far: a chance to shape how the Church speaks to a new generation.

The timing is auspicious. The decline of Christianity in the West in recent decades has stalled. Since the pandemic, surveys show [rising interest in religion](#) among Generation Z. Lockdowns, loneliness and uncertainty have left young people searching for meaning and a sense of belonging. For many, religion meets these needs. The Catholic Church will hope to use its Jubilee year to turn that renewed curiosity into lasting conviction.

Geography of belief

Population identifying as Christian, %



Sources: Pew Research Centre; British Election Study;
European Election Studies



Photograph: Getty Images

Fierce competition in the Tour de France Femmes

This year's Tour de France demonstrated the power of [Tadej Pogacar](#), the reigning champion. But his superiority over the rest of the peloton meant the event lacked real drama. The Tour de France Femmes is different. On Sunday, as cyclists head into the final stage, a mountainous climb ending on the Swiss border, the event is close.

Demi Vollering of the Netherlands, the pre-race favourite, remains in contention despite a nasty fall. Her compatriot, Marianne Vos, has shown she is still a force at 38 years old. Kasia Niewiadoma of Poland, who won the event last year, has said that she wants “to win in a way that leaves no doubt, no questions”. Last year's finale was gripping—and close. Ms Niewiadoma held off Ms Vollering to win by just four seconds, the smallest margin of victory in any male or female Tour. The event's organisers will be hoping for a similarly nail-biting finish.



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:

Carlos Flexa Ribeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Cari Porter, West Sacramento, California, America

Jenna Jarvis, Ottawa, Canada

They all gave the correct answers of: Arthur Dent, Sir Grayson Perry, Gordon Lightfoot, Kyle Reese and John Wayne airport. The theme is surnames of Batman characters: Harvey Dent (Two-Face), Dick Grayson (Robin), Commissioner Jim Gordon and Barbara Gordon (Batgirl), Selina Kyle (Catwoman) and Bruce Wayne (Batman).

The questions were:

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

Tuesday: Who is the hapless human protagonist in "The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy" series?

Wednesday: Which Canadian singer-songwriter performed hits such as "If You Could Read My Mind" and "Daylight Katy"?

Thursday: In the original Terminator movie, which character returns from the future to protect Sarah Connor?

Friday: What is the name of the airport in Santa Ana, California?

*Not everything that is faced can
be changed, but nothing can be
changed until it is faced.*

James Baldwin