

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: Getty Images

A federal judge temporarily blocked **Donald Trump** from [restricting birthright citizenship](#). In February a district court issued a nationwide hold on Mr Trump's attempt to revoke [the policy](#). Last month the [Supreme Court](#) in effect sided with Mr Trump, saying that lower courts could not issue such universal holds. In response, activists filed a class-action lawsuit that applies to babies who would have been denied citizenship.

The **European Union** struck a deal with **Israel** to expand humanitarian aid to **Gaza**, including a “substantial increase” in food trucks entering the enclave. Earlier an Israeli air strike killed at least 15 people who had been waiting for medical supplies near a clinic in [Gaza](#). Israel said it had been targeting a militant and that it was reviewing the incident.

Britain and **France** announced they would pilot a programme that aims to deter [migrants](#) from entering Britain illegally. Under the scheme, Britain would return to France migrants who attempt to cross the English Channel in [small boats](#); in return it would grant an equal number of people asylum via “a safe route”. The [two countries](#) also agreed to co-ordinate the use of their nuclear weapons.

Ursula von der Leyen, the president of the **European Commission**, survived a no-confidence vote put forward by the hard-right in the European parliament. The motion was expected to fail. It garnered 185 votes—182 short of the two-thirds majority required. Still, the vote exposed fractures in Ms von der Leyen’s [fragile coalition](#), with liberal and socialist MEPs threatening to abstain before eventually backing her.

Armenian police arrested seven members of a pro-Russian opposition party on suspicion of terrorism. The government, which has shifted [closer to the West](#), has cracked down on several political rivals recently. Opposition groups said the investigations were politically motivated. Meanwhile, the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan held talks in Dubai over a deal to end decades of conflict.

Russian strikes on **Ukraine** killed at least two people and injured 23 more on Thursday. Russia has intensified its assaults: on Tuesday it launched nearly 730 drones and around a dozen ballistic and cruise missiles in its largest-ever aerial attack on Ukraine. Russia’s ground offensive is progressing at its fastest pace in two years—[but at a terrible human cost](#).

Portugal’s government said it would put a 49.9% stake in TAP, the national airline, up for sale. The airline was bailed out during the pandemic after heavy losses. The long-planned privatisation, proposed in 2022 after the flag carrier returned to profitability for the first time in five years, has drawn interest from major European airlines including Air France-KLM, IAG, and Lufthansa.

Figure of the day: 6.4%, the year-on-year growth in Chinese retail sales in May—the fastest pace since December 2023. [Read the full story.](#)



Photograph: Getty Images

Trump's special tariff delivery

America's trading partners await the postman with trepidation. Three months after his "Liberation Day" tariffs, Donald Trump is posting more threats. On Monday he sent 14 letters to America's trading partners, inviting them to "participate in the extraordinary Economy of the United States" while threatening more tariffs from August 1st. Japan and South Korea face rates of 25%, Indonesia 32%, Cambodia 36%. More letters followed on Wednesday, bringing the total to 22, including a 50% tariff threat on Brazil for how the country had "treated former President Bolsonaro."

Markets remain calm. Mr Trump's threats [are often bluster](#), and many countries are expected to make concessions. But his demands are harder this time. Removing non-tariff barriers on food, safety and digital rules will not be easy, nor will opening sensitive markets like cars and agriculture. And more sectoral levies loom. On Tuesday Mr Trump threatened 50% tariffs on copper and 200% on pharmaceuticals. Whatever comes of the talks, America faces its steepest tariffs since the 1930s.



Photograph: ROPI

Keeping Ukraine in the fight

On Thursday Britain's prime minister, Sir Keir Starmer, and France's president, Emmanuel Macron, will gather the "coalition of the willing", countries that support Ukraine, at Northwood, a NATO base near London. Formed to plan a European-led (albeit American-supported) force to supervise a proposed ceasefire, the coalition's purpose has changed. Vladimir Putin's refusal to contemplate any truce in which Ukraine maintains its sovereignty means that the focus must now be on doing everything possible to keep Ukraine in the fight.

Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelensky, will address the meeting by video from Rome, where he is attending the Ukraine Recovery Conference to drum up investment for rebuilding the country's battered infrastructure. Mr Zelensky will try to persuade his supporters to strike energy deals and back its innovative defence industry. While the war grinds on, what Ukraine needs most is money to buy American Patriot air-defence missiles ([if Donald Trump will sell them](#)) and to underwrite its soaring drone production.

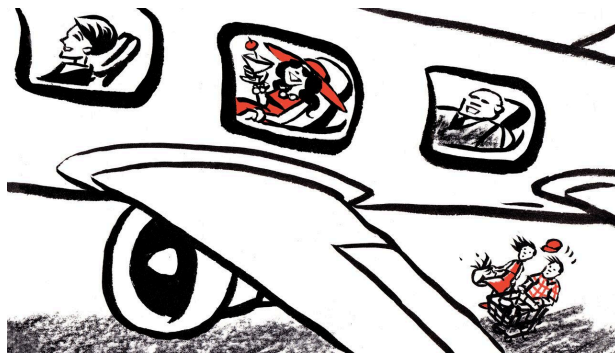


Illustration: David Simonds

The skies clear for Delta

Delta Air Lines reported stronger-than-expected second-quarter earnings on Thursday. Net income rose 63% year on year to \$2.1bn. Shares rallied by 10% on the news, as investors breathed a sigh of relief. In January the American airline had predicted record annual profits, but withdrew that outlook in April, citing weaker consumer demand and growing uncertainty linked to Donald Trump's tariffs.

Air travel is one of the first things that consumers and businesses cut back on when they lose economic confidence. Delta responded by cutting investment plans and freezing capacity growth. Meanwhile, the split between mass-market and premium consumers, who are less sensitive to economic pressure, continued to widen. In the second quarter loyalty income from credit card partnerships grew. Meanwhile, demand for non-premium seats fell. Delta's plan to focus on high-margin passengers appears to be paying off.



Photograph: Getty Images

A centenarian's mixed legacy

Mahathir Mohamad, Malaysia's most enduring politician, turned 100 on Thursday. Prime minister for 24 of the past 44 years, Dr M, as he is commonly known, presided over breakneck economic growth and impressive infrastructure projects. GDP per person rose substantially during his tenure.

But politically, Mr Mahathir, left a more toxic mark. His brand of race-based politics favoured ethnic Malays at the expense of others. Affirmative-action policies under his rule **entrenched patronage and cronyism** long after he stepped down, culminating in the 1MDB scandal in which billions of dollars were stolen from Malaysia's sovereign wealth fund.

At 92, Mr Mahathir mounted a stunning comeback, toppling the very party he once led. He lost his seat in 2022. Though retired, he still snipes from the sidelines, pushing his vision for the country. Old as he is, Dr M persists in building a divisive legacy.



Photograph: Reuters

A chance to bag the first Birkin

If a Birkin bag brings cachet to its owner, the first one ever made must confer extra prestige. On Thursday Sotheby's sold that very item at an auction in Paris for a whopping 7m euros (\$8.2m). One reason for the Birkin's mystique is its origin story, which melds glamour and practicality. On a flight from Paris to London in 1983 Jane Birkin, an Anglo-French singer and actress, spilled the contents of her straw bag. Her seatmate was Jean-Louis Dumas, the boss of Hermès, a French luxury-goods company, who helped Birkin gather up her things and design a better receptacle.

Hermès has probably sold [more than a million bags](#) based on the sketch. Still, it has managed to persuade buyers that they're rarities worth five-figure prices. The original Birkin, which Dumas gave to the singer a couple of years after their flight, differs from its successors: it has a shoulder strap, for example. That makes it enticingly unique, Sotheby's suggests, not the prototype of an obsolete model.



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.

Thursday: In Arthurian legend, Sir Galahad finds which sacred object?

Wednesday: Which Scottish actor has portrayed both Hannibal Lecter and Logan Roy?

*Tell me, I forget, show me, I
remember, involve me, I
understand.*

Carl Orff