

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: Reuters

The White House said that **Donald Trump** will decide within two weeks whether to take military action against [Iran](#). It also claimed that Iran has all that it needs to build a nuclear weapon. Meanwhile, Israel vowed to ramp up its attacks after an Iranian strike hit a hospital in southern Israel. The Israeli defence minister, Israel Katz, said that Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, "can no longer be allowed to exist".

Pedro Sanchez, **Spain's** prime minister, dismissed NATO's idea to raise defence spending among its members to 5% of GDP. Mr Sanchez called the plan "unreasonable" and "counterproductive", reducing hopes of a [shared commitment](#) at next week's summit. Meanwhile, Sweden's parliament approved a planned \$31bn loan to raise the country's military spending to 3.5% of GDP by 2032.

Japan's core consumer prices rose by 3.7% in May from a year earlier, the sharpest increase in two years. The country, which has long struggled to escape deflation, now faces the [highest inflation rate](#) in the G7. Prices for [rice](#), the country's most sacred staple, have doubled since last year, causing a political ruckus ahead of an upper house election in July.

Switzerland's central bank cut interest rates to zero, as it grapples with the surge in the value of the safe-haven Swiss Franc, amid [global trade tensions](#). The bank signalled it could adjust rates further. Meanwhile **Norway's** central bank unexpectedly cut rates, from 4.5% to 4.25%; the **Bank of England** held interest rates steady in a widely-expected decision.

The **Democratic Republic of Congo** and **Rwanda** reached a peace deal. It includes provisions to “respect territorial integrity” and the disarmament of “non-state armed groups”. Tensions between the neighbours have risen in recent months after M23, a Rwandan-backed militia, seized [several big cities in eastern Congo](#). The deal will be formally signed next week.

Volodymyr Zelensky, Ukraine's president, appointed Hennadiy Shapovalov as commander of land forces after a deadly Russian strike on a training camp prompted his predecessor's resignation. Brigadier General Shapovalov previously served as a liaison at a NATO co-ordination centre in Germany. Meanwhile, [Ukraine](#) and Russia exchanged sick and injured prisoners of war, the latest swap under a fragile deal brokered in Istanbul.

The **LA Dodgers** said they turned away **Immigration and Customs Enforcement** officials from their stadium ahead of a game on Thursday. The agency said it had sent vehicles to Dodger Stadium “very briefly, unrelated to any operation”. The baseball team has come under pressure from its large Latino fanbase to take a more vocal stand against Donald Trump's [immigration crackdown](#).

Figure of the day: 70%, the drop in car-noise complaints in Manhattan since the introduction of congestion pricing on January 5th. [Read the full story](#).



Photograph: Getty Images

Iran's last-ditch push for a deal

On Friday Abbas Araghchi, Iran's foreign minister, will meet his counterparts from Britain, France and Germany in Geneva. The Europeans have co-ordinated with America, though no American will attend. Iran's goal is straightforward: it wants a ceasefire that [will end Israel's assault](#), now in its second week. But Israel refuses to consider one while large parts of Iran's nuclear programme remain intact. If Mr Araghchi wants a truce, he will need to offer concessions.

Before the war he met Steve Witkoff, Donald Trump's envoy, multiple times to negotiate an agreement that would restrict Iran's nuclear project in exchange for sanctions relief. The main stumbling block was whether Iran could continue to enrich uranium. Iran refused to concede the point. If it has reconsidered, Mr Trump might be willing to discuss a nuclear deal that ends the war. If not, the Geneva talks may be the last bit of diplomacy before Mr Trump orders American strikes on Iran.

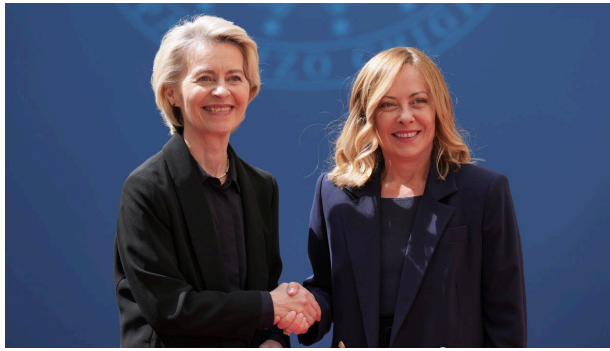


Photograph: Getty Images

Putin talks up Russia's economic and military might

Vladimir Putin will address the St Petersburg International Economic Forum on Friday. The annual get-together aims to boost Russia's image and gin up business investment. Once again the backdrop to the conference is the conflict in Ukraine and its impact, with that of related sanctions, on Russia's economy. Western companies have stayed away; even Russia's allies, other than Indonesia, have reportedly not sent their most senior officials.

Still, Mr Putin will probably project confidence that Russia is doing just fine. The reality is that high interest rates, needed to slow inflation, are [hitting growth and living standards](#) (on Thursday the economy minister admitted Russia was "on the verge" of a recession). Meanwhile Russia's summer offensive is grinding away on multiple fronts with no sign of an imminent breakthrough. But Ukraine is suffering greatly from increasingly regular mass drone and missile attacks on civilian targets. A nine-hour assault on Kyiv on Tuesday killed at least 28 people.



Photograph: Getty Images

Italy tries to sell its plan for Africa

Italy's prime minister, Giorgia Meloni, and Ursula von der Leyen, president of the European Commission, chair a summit on African development in Rome on Friday. Ms Meloni hopes to push Italy's "Mattei Plan", an ambitious strategy to cast Italy as a crucial partner for Africa. Ms Meloni hopes that by helping countries to grow and creating stronger energy ties, the plan will curb irregular migration to Europe—a chief concern for her hard-right Brothers of Italy party. So far 14 African countries have signed up for pilot projects.

Named after Enrico Mattei, the founder of Italy's state-owned energy giant ENI, the plan evokes his 1950s vision of non-exploitative natural-resource sharing. But its initial €5.5bn (\$6bn) commitment, comprising credits and grants, is modest given [Africa's needs](#). The summit aims to link Italy's development plans with the EU's broader programme. But to convince their African partners, the hosts will also have to show they can turn their talk into action.



Photograph: Alamy

Test cricket finds a saviour in India

The Indian men's cricket team are set to begin their first Test since Virat Kohli announced his retirement from the five-day format. Only three batsmen have scored more runs for the team. But India's opponents, England, and every other Test-playing side, also owe Mr Kohli a debt of gratitude. He has championed Test cricket as Twenty20, a much shorter form of the sport, has [grown in popularity](#). This month, when Mr Kohli's Indian Premier League team won the short-form tournament for the first time, he reminded fans that he believed Tests remained the pinnacle of cricket.

Test cricket needs India. Smaller teams, such as Sri Lanka and the West Indies, rely on income from selling broadcast rights of their home matches against India to Indian TV networks. The England and Wales Cricket Board does not need the money as much. But its chief executive, Richard Gould, has said that matches against India are as lucrative as games against England's fiercest rivals, Australia.



Photograph: 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.

Friday: Ceres and Eris are both what kind of body in the solar system?

Thursday: Paul Stanley and Gene Simmons are the two best known members of which exuberant rock band?



Photograph: The Economist

The winners of this week's crossword

Thank you to everyone who took part in our weekly crossword, published in the weekend edition of Espresso. The winners, chosen at random, were:

Gina Antczak, Lymington, Britain

Tom Kestner, Tokyo, Japan

Leonard Appleby, Comox, Canada

They all gave the correct answers of [OpenAI](#), [atomic](#), [export](#), and [Odessa File](#).

*Summer means happy times and
good sunshine.*

Brian Wilson