

# The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: Bloomberg via Getty Images

Ursula von der Leyen, the president of the **European Commission**, said she will meet **Donald Trump** on Sunday in Scotland to discuss trade. A draft deal between America and the European Union would reportedly set tariffs of 15% on the bloc's exports. That is down from the 30% that Mr Trump threatened to impose if the sides failed to reach a deal by August 1st.

Aid agencies and charities sounded the alarm about **starvation in Gaza**. Médecins Sans Frontières, which runs clinics in the **besieged territory**, said that a quarter of children and pregnant women screened at its facilities were malnourished. It accused Israel of using starvation as a “deliberate” weapon. The UN's World Food Programme said a third of Gazans are “not eating for days”.

Marco Rubio said America “strongly rejects” the plan of **France's** president, Emmanuel Macron, **to recognise Palestine** as a state. America's secretary of state called it “a slap in the face” to the victims of Hamas's attack on Israel on October 7th 2023. Israel's prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, also condemned France's decision, saying such a move “rewards terror and risks creating another Iranian proxy”.

**Volkswagen's** profits took a €1.3bn (\$1.5bn) hit in the first half of 2025 as a result of [American tariffs](#). The German carmaker, which owns Audi and Porsche, said profits fell 33% from a year earlier, to €6.7bn. In response, VW's boss promised "huge investments" in America, and the possibility of a carmaking deal with the Trump administration on a "company level".

**Cambodia** called for an immediate ceasefire in its border skirmish with **Thailand**. Earlier Thailand's acting prime minister warned the [clashes](#), which are now in their third day, could "move towards war". A foreign-ministry spokesman signalled an openness to dialogue. Despite the de-escalatory talk, fighting continued. More than 30 people, including civilians, have been killed so far.

**Meta** said it would stop running political advertising in the **European Union** from October. The decision comes before the bloc introduces measures to regulate how online platforms deliver political content, part of a broader push to protect democratic processes and limit disinformation online. Meta, whose platforms include Facebook and Instagram, has been increasingly critical of such regulations.

**Britain's** new age verification rules for **tech platforms** such as X and TikTok came into force. Ofcom, the media regulator, now requires companies to prevent under-18s from accessing "harmful" content, including pornography and material related to self-harm or suicide. Non-compliant companies risk fines of up to £18m (\$24m) or 10% of global turnover, whichever is greater.

**Figure of the day:** \$500bn, OpenAI's planned investments in America alone. [Read the full story](#).



Photograph: EPA

## Pressure and pain in Gaza

The talks seem endless. On Thursday Steve Witkoff, Donald Trump's Middle East envoy, met in Italy with Israeli and Qatari officials. Their goal was to finalise a ceasefire in [Gaza](#). Among the issues left to resolve was the extent of Israel's withdrawal from the territory during the initial 60-day phase of a proposed truce. Mr Witkoff hoped to travel onwards to Doha to seal the deal. But hours after he landed in Italy, Israel's prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, withdrew his negotiators from the Qatari capital. Mr Witkoff later said he would withdraw America's negotiating team because Hamas was not "acting in good faith".

While diplomats gab, [Gazans starve](#). The World Food Programme says one-third of Gaza's 2m population go days at a time without food. Children are dying of hunger. A shadowy foundation backed by Israel and America is delivering woefully insufficient aid to southern Gaza. The United Nations, which handles distributions in the north, cannot do so properly while the war rages.



Photograph: CAMERA PRESS

## Donald Trump packs his clubs

How far would you travel for a round of golf? If you are Donald Trump, the answer is around 6,600km. On Friday America's president will fly to Scotland for a four-day visit to his golf resorts at Turnberry and Menie. It will be Mr Trump's first trip to Britain since his re-election last year. He will return for an official state visit in September.

The White House is calling the trip a private visit, but Mr Trump will find time for business. On Monday he will meet Sir Keir Starmer, Britain's prime minister, to "refine" a [trade deal](#) that they struck in May. John Swinney, Scotland's first minister, will also meet the president, in part to discuss tariffs on Scotch whisky. Mr Swinney has been criticised at home for the cost of security during the visit, which is expected to reach some £3m (\$4m). An expensive round on the links.



Photograph: EPA

## Europe tries to cut a deal with Iran

On Friday Britain, France and Germany will hold another round of nuclear talks with [Iran](#). They want Iran to let the United Nations' nuclear watchdog resume inspections. They also want it to restart talks with America about a nuclear deal to replace the one Donald Trump withdrew from in 2018. But Iran is prevaricating. It will allow a UN team to visit soon, but only to discuss how and when inspections might restart. It is also open to negotiating with America, but has suggested that it will not give up its uranium-enrichment programme.

The Europeans have threatened to invoke a mechanism from the old deal that would restore UN sanctions if Iran does not agree to their demands. Although that provision expires on October 18th, both sides may extend the deadline to keep their negotiations alive. Iran has threatened to leave the Non-Proliferation Treaty if the Europeans do impose sanctions. That would make diplomacy much harder.



Photograph: Getty Images

## Single passengers, beware

Travel writers erupted in outrage two months ago at news that America's big legacy airlines had started charging higher per-person fares for solo travellers (often flying for business, so less price-sensitive) than for multiple-passenger bookings. Amid criticism, Delta and United reportedly scrapped the practice, but American Airlines held firm. All three have refused to comment.

To analyse this pricing, *The Economist* downloaded 19,000 economy-class airfares for all direct domestic routes on a single day, comparing one- and two-passenger prices for one-ways and round-trips.

**We found** that whereas Delta has abandoned the scheme and United has reintroduced it only sparingly, AA's fares are still frequently higher for solo travellers. Those who do not stay at their destination over a weekend—and are thus likely to be business travellers—paid at least 5% more on 57% of its routes, often by margins around 50%. Ironically, the outcry over the practice may have backfired: rather than reducing their fares for singletons, Delta and United simply increased prices for multiple-passenger bookings to match.



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.

**Friday:** Which Seattle-based musician, part of the grunge movement, was often viewed as a spokesman for Generation X?

**Thursday:** Which rock star was known by the nickname “The Lizard King”?





Illustration: 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:

**Sten Faerch-Jensen**, Copenhagen, Denmark

**Leo Varadkar**, Dublin, Ireland

**Osamu Senoo**, Izumo, Japan

They all gave the correct answers of legal, rival, level and [Liverpool](#).



*No man was ever yet a great poet,  
without at the same time being a  
profound philosopher.*

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***Samuel Taylor Coleridge***