

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter

An Oval Office meeting turned testy when **Donald Trump** showed Cyril Ramaphosa, **South Africa's** president, a video purporting to prove [unfounded claims](#) of “white genocide” in the African country. Mr Ramaphosa tried to dismiss the footage—“this I’ve never seen”—and instead talk about the economy, to little avail. Last week the Trump administration welcomed almost 60 Afrikaners, South Africans of European descent, as refugees.

The United Nations said that no **aid** had reached civilians in **Gaza** on Wednesday, two days after **Israel** said it lifted its 11-week [blockade](#). Though some trucks entered the enclave, supplies stalled at border checkpoints. Britain has frozen trade talks with Israel; the EU says it will review its economic agreement with the country. Meanwhile Palestinian health officials said that Israeli strikes had killed at least 82 people since Tuesday evening.

America’s defence department accepted a Boeing 747 as a gift from the government of Qatar. The **jumbo jet** is intended to serve as Air Force One, the president’s transport. New Boeing jets have been repeatedly delayed, though converting the Qatari plane may not be quicker. Mr Trump has complained that the existing presidential plane is “less impressive” than those of other world leaders.

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.

Gunmen shot dead **Andriy Portnov**, a former aide to Viktor Yanukovich, **Ukraine's** pro-Russian president from 2010 to 2014, outside a school in Madrid. Spanish officials said multiple attackers shot the victim in the head and back before fleeing the scene. Mr Portnov had been under American [sanctions](#) for alleged corruption since 2021.

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 Ponyo 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.

Bitcoin hit a record high of \$109,481 on Wednesday, driven by optimism that the government will soon pass America's first digital-asset regulations. Lawmakers are finalising rules for [stablecoins](#)—tokens pegged to stable assets. Other reasons for the [rally](#) include the easing of America's trade tensions with China and Moody's recent downgrade of America's credit outlook, which boosted demand for alternative assets.

Figure of the day: \$17bn, the amount that Americans spent on pizza deliveries last year. [Read the full story.](#)



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: Rex Shutterstock

Can South Africa win over MAGA?

On Wednesday Cyril Ramaphosa, South Africa's president, is meeting Donald Trump in the Oval Office. 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 celebre among MAGA types, arrived in America as "refugees".

Mr Ramaphosa hopes 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: 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.

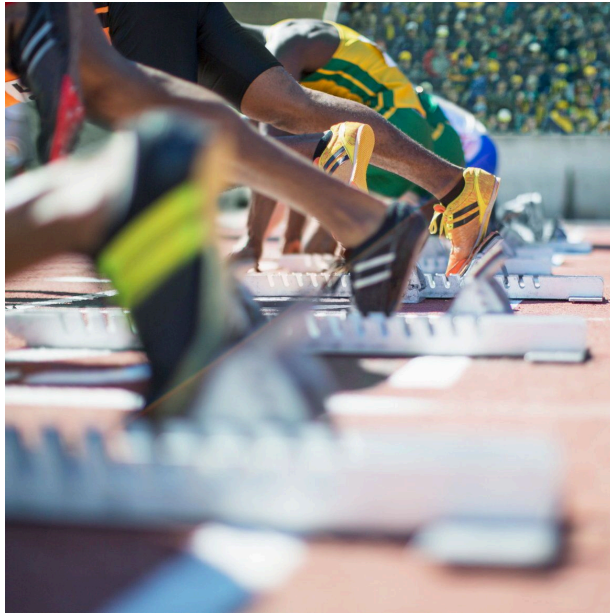
Yet the long-term picture is more concerning than any one bump: because inflation in Britain has been uncomfortably high for nearly four years, people have become more sensitive to price changes. That makes it more likely that any new price increases (like April's) will feed into wage demands and spending behaviour, making the inflation harder to shake off.

Dragging on

Britain, consumer prices,
% increase on a year earlier



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