

# The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter

A Hamas official reportedly said that there is “no sense in engaging” in ceasefire talks, after **Israel’s** security cabinet voted through a [plan to seize control](#) of all of **Gaza** indefinitely. Israeli officials had said the offensive would start after Donald Trump’s visit to the region next week, giving them a “window of opportunity” to secure a truce.

**Friedrich Merz** failed to secure enough votes to be confirmed as Germany’s chancellor. The leader of the [Christian Democratic Union](#), which won Germany’s federal election on February 23rd, was short six votes. Several members of his own coalition turned on him. A second round of voting will be held in the next 14 days.

**OpenAI** will allow its non-profit board to retain control over the company as it moves to a for-profit model. The artificial-intelligence firm, which was recently valued at \$300bn, was [founded as a non-profit](#) in 2015 and later added a for-profit subsidiary. The non-profit board ousted Sam Altman, the CEO and co-founder, in 2023, only to re-hire him after an investor revolt.

Russia said Ukraine had launched a **drone attack** on **Moscow** for a second consecutive night. Officials temporarily closed all four airports in Russia’s capital and said that there were no casualties. The mayor of Kharkiv, a city in Ukraine, said Russia had also carried out drone strikes overnight. The war is increasingly becoming [a battle of the drones](#).

Linda McMahon, America’s education secretary, said that **Harvard** would no longer be eligible for federal grants. In a coruscating letter to its president, Ms McMahon accused the [university](#) of “ugly racism” in its admission policy and of inviting foreign students to

its campus “who engage in violent behaviour”, among many other complaints. She said that Harvard should now operate as a privately funded institution.

**Scott Bessent**, America’s treasury secretary, sought to persuade the world’s wealthiest [investors](#) to continue betting on America. Speaking at the Milken Conference in California, Mr Bessent touted future tax cuts and said that Mr Trump did not only want to “drill, baby, drill” but also to “build, baby, build” by embracing “an ambitious deregulation agenda”. Later Mr Bessent suggested America was “very close” to cutting trade deals with other countries.

**Zhao Xintong** became the first Chinese player to win the world **snooker** championship. China is increasingly embracing—and giving zip to—the [fusty British game](#). Mr Zhao and many of his compatriots base themselves in Sheffield, considered the sport’s home. It was reported that 150m people in China tuned in to watch the 28-year-old beat Mark Williams, a Welshman and three-time champion.

**Figure of the day:** More than \$19m. The collective value of wagers on Polymarket, Kalshi and Betfair—three prediction markets—on identifying the next pope. [See who’s the favourite.](#)

*We update The world in brief on our app and website as news happens. Check back throughout the day for our latest analysis.*

*In a turbulent week of news, have you kept up with the headlines? Play this week’s [pint-sized news quiz](#) and find out what you may have missed.*



Photograph: Reuters

## Carney meets Trump

“President Trump is trying to break us so that America can own us,” declared Mark Carney, Canada’s new prime minister, in his victory speech last week. “That will never, ever happen,” he pledged. Anti-Trump rhetoric may have scored Mr Carney points on the campaign trail. But it will now make his job that much harder as he visits the White House on Tuesday to meet the man he accuses of “betrayal”.

Mr Carney must persuade America—which buys three-quarters of Canadian exports—to cut his country some slack on tariffs. Canada’s economy is looking fragile. In February GDP shrank; productivity looks weak. Trade figures for March, released on Tuesday, are expected to show a widening deficit. In February, exports fell by more than 5%—including steep drops in cars, lumber and steel. Mr Carney wants to diversify to Asia and Europe, but re-routing oil and other goods is costly. Still, as America’s biggest customer, a major energy supplier and a potential source of critical minerals, Canada has leverage. Mr Carney needs every bit of it.



Photograph: EPA

## **A shock vote against Merz in Germany**

The Bundestag was due to elect Friedrich Merz as Germany's tenth postwar chancellor on Tuesday. In a shock turn of events, it did not. Mr Merz failed to secure enough votes, with several in his own ranks turning against him. Further rounds of voting will follow, and Mr Merz will probably scrape through. But even then Mr Merz, whose Christian Democrats won elections in February, will take office facing widespread scepticism. Just 38% of Germans are happy to see him as chancellor.

Abroad, expectations had been higher. Mr Merz's rapid post-election move to [open the spending taps](#) for defence was welcomed by Germany's allies. He promises to [ditch the torpor](#) that characterised the European policy of his predecessor, Olaf Scholz. Mr Merz was due to spend his first week in various summits in Europe. With the world watching, Mr Merz must now convince the country that elected him.

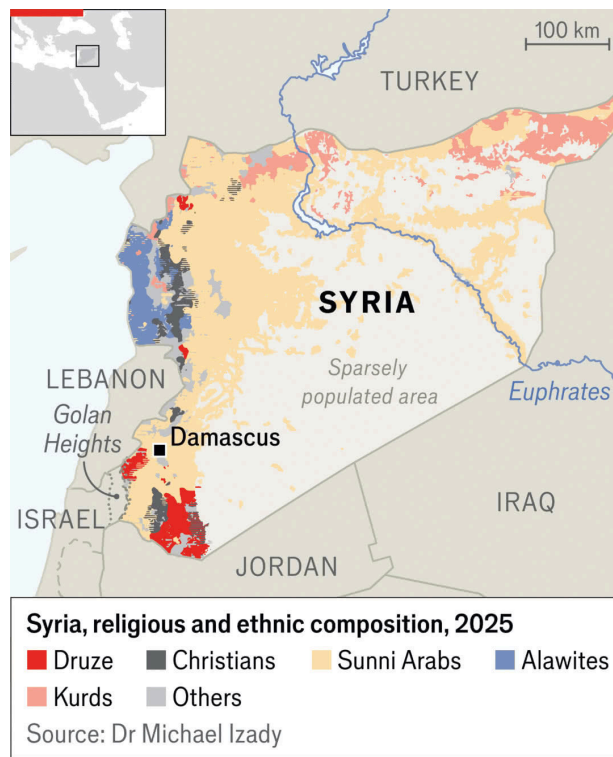


Photograph: Reuters

## The Druze dilemma

The violence has ebbed, but the fear remains. More than 100 people have been killed in days of sectarian bloodshed in Syria. It began over a brief audio recording of a Druze cleric allegedly insulting the Prophet Muhammad. (The cleric in question says it was not his voice in the clip.) That sparked days of attacks by Sunni radicals, many of them with ties to Syria's new government.

Security forces have since restored calm. But [the Druze](#)—adherents of a small, esoteric faith—feel stuck. The group is segregated (marriage with outsiders is forbidden) but politically pragmatic. Many distrust Syria's Islamist rulers, who took power after Bashar al-Assad was overthrown in December. But they are torn about whether to seek support from Israel, which has appointed itself the protector of the Syrian Druze: it carried out several rounds of air strikes in recent days, including one near the presidential palace in Damascus. Some welcome Israel's help. Others fear it makes them a bigger target.







Photograph: EPA

## Trump's immigration policy in the spotlight

[Kristi Noem](#), the secretary of homeland security (pictured), will testify in front of Congress for the first time since her confirmation hearings earlier this year. Expect tame questions in the Senate—certainly when compared with the grilling she can expect from the House about the Trump administration's immigration policy.

Until now Ms Noem has largely stuck to friendly media interviews. Tuesday's interrogation will offer the first opportunity for serious questioning about the legality of the administration's [deportation policy](#). Days before the hearing a Trump-appointed judge blocked the administration from further deportations under the Alien Enemies Act of 1798. The case of Kilmar Abrego Garcia, who was wrongly deported to El Salvador and whom the administration refuses to return to America, will also likely come up. Although Republicans are generally supportive of Mr Trump and his nominees, those of them unhappy with the pace of deportations may also ask Ms Noem some hard questions.



Photograph: Eyevine

## **A restaurant guru's regretful read**

Keith McNally's restaurants are all unique, but instantly recognisable. The lighting is warm, the walls yellowish, and the mirrors copious and large: not Parisian so much as an American's Parisian fantasy. They are fantastically successful, attracting celebrities and star-gazers, the well-heeled and the aspirational. The food will be perfectly prepared, unchallenging as bistro fare, but elevated by a whiff of luxury.

Now 73, Mr McNally has gone from a working-class London upbringing to Manhattan celebrity status. He has become an entertainingly scabrous presence on social media, calling James Corden, for instance, a "tiny cretin of a man". Despite the promise of those rich raw materials online, his new memoir, "I Regret Almost Everything", is decidedly half-baked. Meandering, navel-gazing and superficial, it has the self-deprecating yet self-aggrandising tone of a Brit who's made good. The book's editor should have prodded Mr McNally to get past what happened to why and how. Alas. Read him on Instagram, and choose a different book.





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.

**Tuesday:** What deadly game does Christopher Walken play in a memorable scene in *The Deer Hunter*?

**Monday:** Which TV show starred Ricardo Montalban as Mr Roarke and Herve Villechaize as his assistant, Tattoo?



Illustration: The Economist

## Mini crossword

We now publish an interactive edition of our crossword twice a week, allowing you to enter and check the answers, and see explanations, instantly. [Try it here](#). Or, if you prefer to do things the old-fashioned way, use the grid below.

Our crossword has two sets of clues, one for seasoned cruciverbalists and the other for less experienced solvers. Both give the same answers, all of which feature in articles in this week's edition of *The Economist*:

### Cryptic clues

*1 across* Sounds like you glance at an African country (6)

*2 across* A maker of graphics cards: initially artificial intelligence demanded its video-game nicknacks, repurposing them (6)

*3 across* An espresso, Vietnamese-style, involves a communist (6)

*1 down* Tainted unions messed up global organisation (6, 7)

**Factual clues**

*1 across* Kampala is the capital of this African country (6)

*2 across* This semiconductor superstar is having trouble doing business in China (5)

*3 across* The Russian word for a workers’ council (6)

*1 down* Founded 80 years ago, this bloc is facing a cash crunch (6,7)

Email all four answers, along with your home city and country, by 9am BST on Monday to [\[email protected\]](#). We will pick randomly from those with the right answers and crown three winners in next week’s edition.

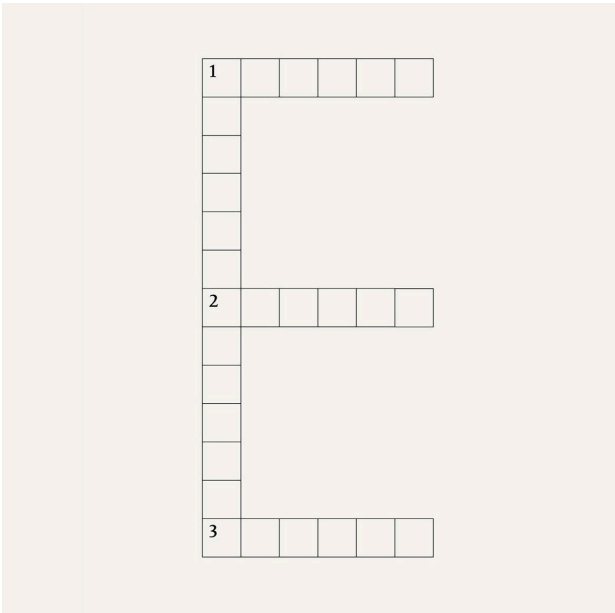


Image: .

*Civilisation began the first time  
an angry person cast a word  
instead of a rock.*

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***Sigmund Freud***