

# The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter

**Israel's** security cabinet voted through [a plan to seize control](#) of all of **Gaza** indefinitely. Bezalel Smotrich, the finance minister, said there would be “no withdrawal”, not even in exchange for hostages. Ze’ev Elkin, another minister, said that ramping up the offensive over the next few months would open a “window of opportunity” to secure a ceasefire (negotiations recently collapsed) before Donald Trump’s visit next week.

Israel’s front with the **Houthis** in Yemen was also heating up. Israel’s armed forces said they struck Hodeidah Port and nearby infrastructure, one day after the [Iran-backed rebels](#) fired a missile that landed near Ben Gurion airport in Tel Aviv. Binyamin Netanyahu, Israel’s prime minister, vowed that retaliation “will not happen in one bang, but there will be many bangs”.

**OpenAI**, an artificial-intelligence firm, will allow its non-profit board to retain control over the company [as it transitions](#) to a for-profit model. Recently valued at \$300bn, OpenAI 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 a revolt.

The **Taiwanese dollar** continued to rally, while the American dollar fell by almost 6% against it, the lowest drop since 2022. Taiwan’s central bank denied rumours that America had asked [the island](#) to raise the value of its currency amid speculation that the pair were close to reaching a trade deal. On Friday Taiwan’s dollar leapt to its highest point since 1988.

Donald Trump said he had a “productive” phone call with **Recep Tayyip Erdogan**, [Turkey’s president](#), about foreign policy,

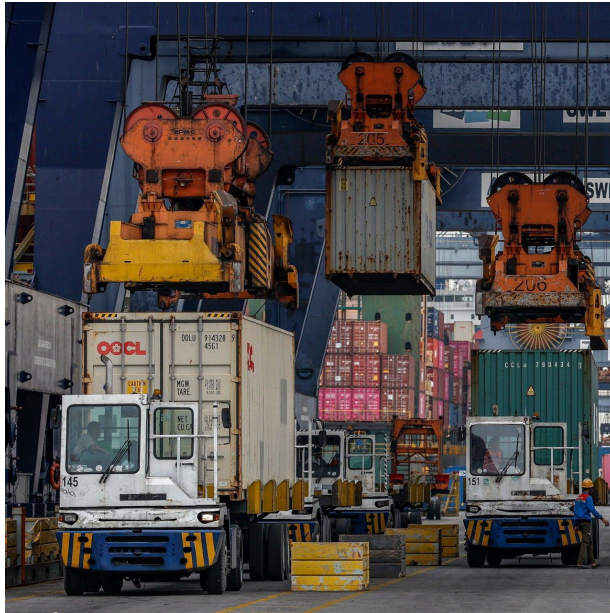
including ending the war in **Ukraine** (“NOW!”). Turkey [has offered to send troops](#) to Ukraine as part of a bigger peacekeeping force in the event of a ceasefire. Mr Erdogan also said Turkey would support a ceasefire in Gaza.

Meanwhile **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 incoming tax and deregulatory incentives, and declared American markets to be “antifragile”. Later Mr Bessent told CNBC that America was “very close” to cutting [trade deals](#) with other countries.

After more than two decades **Skype**, an online telephone service, shut down. At its height Skype had 300m users; in 2011 Microsoft bought it for \$8.5bn. Its business arm remains operational. Skype was one of the earliest internet platforms to offer video and voice calls, but struggled to keep up with [modern competitors](#). Microsoft said remaining users could migrate to its Teams service.

***Correction:*** In Sunday’s newsletter we said that Crin Antonescu was a member of Romania’s Social Democrats. He is actually a member of the National Liberals.

**Figure of the day:** More than 5,500,000%, the increase in Berkshire Hathaway’s market value since 1965. [Read the full story.](#)



Photograph: EPA

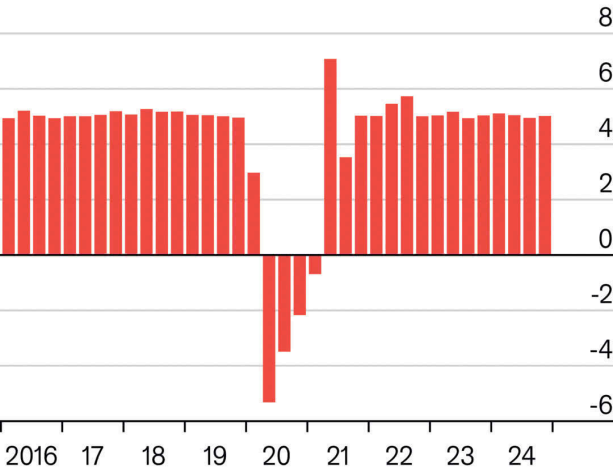
## Indonesia's tepid economy

When Indonesia's stockmarket reopened on April 8th after a long weekend break, it plunged 8% in a day. Investors were processing the news, announced on April 2nd, that Donald Trump would hit Indonesian goods entering America with "reciprocal" tariffs of 32%. Indonesia's currency fell to its lowest level against the dollar since 1998, during the Asian financial crisis. But Indonesia's government got some good news when, the next day, America's president postponed those tariffs until July (a blanket 10% levy remains).

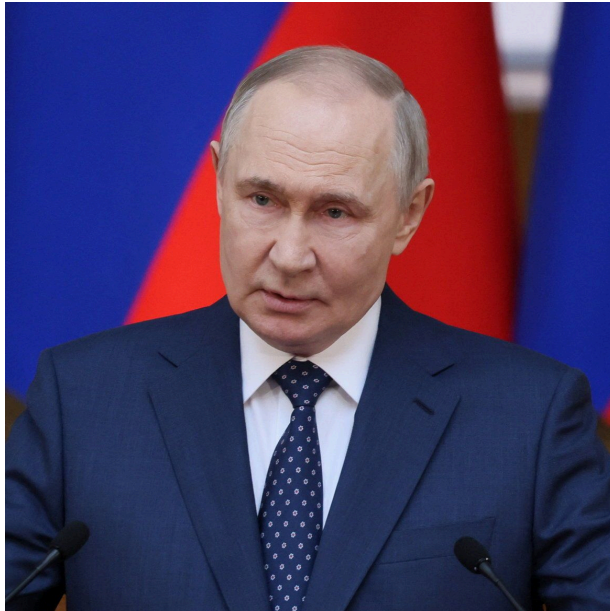
But GDP data for the first quarter of 2025—released on Monday—piled on more misery. Indonesia's economy grew by 4.9% year on year, down from 5% in the previous quarter and below estimates. Indonesia's annual growth rate for most of the past three decades has been around 5%—mediocre, for a middle-income country. President Prabowo Subianto wants to hit 8%. His plan? Spend big, including on a \$28bn free school-lunch scheme. Analysts fear cost overruns. But raising growth will require more than splurging. Deeper changes to Indonesia's economy, such as overhauling state-owned businesses, are needed.

**Invariable rate**

Indonesia, GDP, % change on a year earlier



Source: LSEG Workspace



Photograph: Reuters

## **Putin's short, cynical ceasefire**

On April 28th Vladimir Putin announced a three-day ceasefire in Ukraine, beginning on Thursday. Russia's president insists he is motivated by "humanitarian" reasons. Ukrainians are sceptical. They think the pause is a cynical attempt to persuade America to suspend some sanctions, particularly those that affect civilian aviation, a vital cog in Russia's war machine. Volodymyr Zelensky, Ukraine's president, called it a "theatrical show" and rejected the proposal.

America seems better disposed to Ukraine since Mr Zelensky met his American counterpart, Donald Trump, in the Vatican on April 26th. The terms of a long-touted [mineral deal](#), signed four days later, ended up being more favourable to Ukraine than expected. The White House has approved a \$50m sale of arms to Ukraine, which is perhaps of greater symbolic than material importance. And efforts by Britain and France to persuade Mr Trump to take a tougher line with Mr Putin appear, at least for now, to be paying off.



Photograph: Getty Images

## Europe woos American scientists

Emmanuel Macron, France's president, and Ursula von der Leyen, head of the European Commission, have a pitch for researchers: "Choose Europe for Science". On Monday they will deliver it at a conference at the Sorbonne, in Paris. Although not explicitly addressed those working in America, the idea is clear: scholars who want to be sure of academic freedom are welcome in Europe.

Mr Macron wants to secure more investment in research and innovation to help boost European economic performance. (This was a central recommendation of a report conducted in 2024 by Mario Draghi, a former president of the European Central Bank, into EU competitiveness.) France's president has in recent years focused on luring foreign investors. His new pitch to scientific researchers will come with the possibility of partial state funding. He and Ms von der Leyen are hoping to make a virtue for Europe of Donald Trump's clampdown on American campuses.





Photograph: Getty Images

## **Fashion's big night out**

From ginormous frocks to animal costumes, the Met Gala takes spectacle seriously. So do the millions who tune in to watch celebrities parade down the red carpet. But when the world's glitterati descend on the Metropolitan Museum of Art in Manhattan on Monday, it may be suits that receive the most attention. For the first time in two decades the theme—"Superfine: Tailoring Black Style"—will focus on menswear. It will put a spotlight on the ways in which black men express resistance through fashion.

The gala, which raises funds for the museum, has sometimes been criticised for being out of touch. Last year tickets cost \$75,000. Given the economic uncertainty that has followed Donald Trump's election, such prices seem otherworldly. And the racial politics of this year's theme are stark against the backdrop of the president's attack on diversity policies and attempts to alter discrimination law. Whoever said fashion isn't political?



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.

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



*You need to have discipline in  
order to be truly creative.*

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***Delia Derbyshire***