

# 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. The [Iranian-backed rebels](#) vowed a “comprehensive” aerial blockade by attacking Israel’s airports, after one of their missiles landed near Ben Gurion airport in Tel Aviv on Sunday—a rare feat against Israel’s powerful anti-missile systems. Binyamin Netanyahu, Israel’s prime minister, vowed to retaliate: “It will not happen in one bang, but there will be many bangs.”

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.

Mr 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.

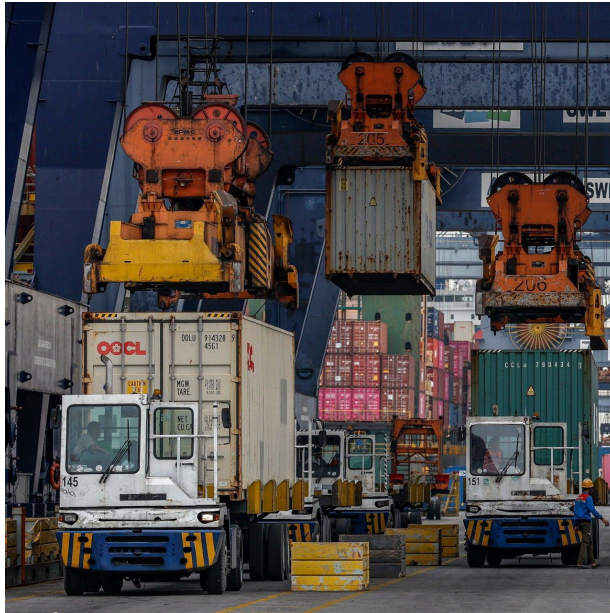
Meanwhile **Scott Bessent**, America's treasury secretary, sought to persuade the world's wealthiest [investors](#) to continue betting on America. Speaking at the Milken Conference in California, Mr Bessent touted incoming tax and deregulatory incentives, and declared American markets to be “antifragile”. Later Mr Bessent told [CNBC](#) that America was “very close” to cutting [trade deals](#) with other countries.

**Oil prices** plunged after the [OPEC+](#) oil cartel announced a second consecutive monthly increase in output—adding to fears of a supply glut. Brent crude, a global benchmark, fell by 4% to below \$59 per barrel, near a four-year low. Tensions within [OPEC+](#) have grown recently as some members, such as Kazakhstan and Iraq, have [pumped above their quotas](#).

**George Simion**, [a hard-right populist](#), won the first round of **Romania's** presidential election with 41% of the vote. The country's constitutional court annulled the previous election, held last year, after Calin Georgescu, another hard-right populist, unexpectedly won the first round—allegedly thanks to Russian interference. Mr Simion will face Nicusor Dan, the independent mayor of Bucharest, in a run-off on May 18th.

***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

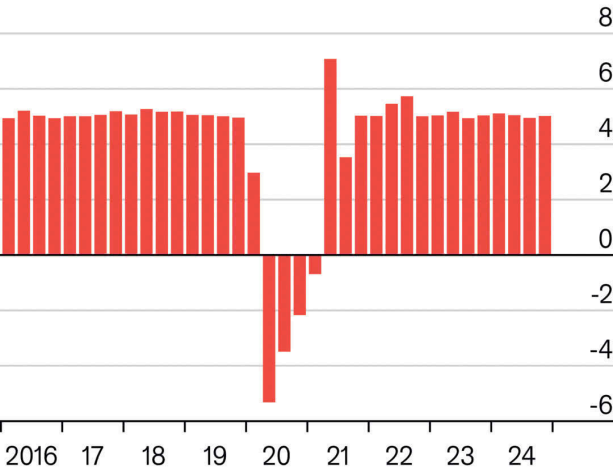
## Indonesia's tepid economy

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).

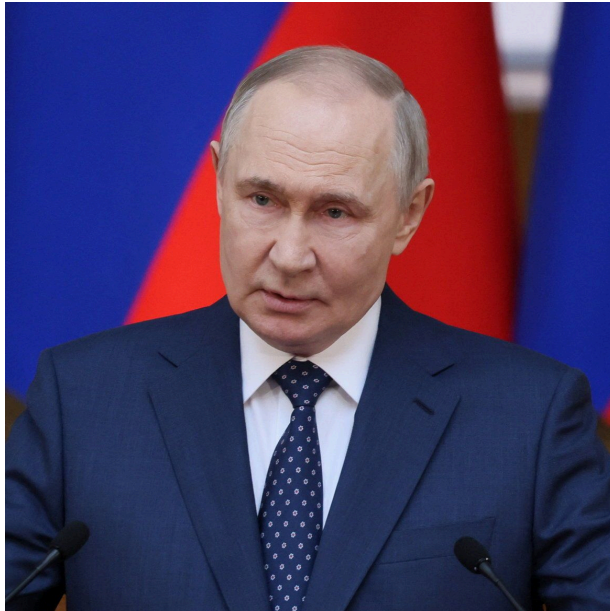
But GDP data for the first quarter of 2025—released on Monday—piled on more misery. Indonesia's economy grew by 4.9% year on year, down from 5% in the previous quarter and below estimates. Indonesia's annual growth rate for most of the past three decades has been around 5%—mediocre, for a middle-income 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***