

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: AFP via Getty Images

Marco Rubio, America's secretary of state, touted “[arguably the best](#)” [meeting](#) in the entire process of negotiating an end to Russia's war in **Ukraine**, held in Geneva. Andriy Yermak, the chief aide to Ukraine's president, said the parties were “moving forward” to “just and lasting peace”. Going into the meeting the Ukrainians had faced a 28-point plan brandished by the Americans that looked like a Russian wish-list.

Japan confirmed that deployments of missiles [near Taiwan](#) were proceeding as scheduled. The country plans to deploy medium-range surface-to-air missiles on the Japanese island of Yonaguni, about 110 kilometres east of Taiwan. Speaking at a military base on the island on Sunday, Japan's defence minister, Koizumi Shinjiro, said the missiles “can help lower the chance of an armed attack on our country”.

The [cop30 talks](#) concluded with an agreement that made no reference to the use of **fossil fuels**, angering negotiators from countries that wanted a stronger commitment to phase out their use. The final deal was delayed by clashes between the EU, which wanted a firmer resolution, and oil-producing countries. Delegates

from several places, including Colombia, objected to the wording after it had been gavelled.

Russian officials said a **Ukrainian** drone strike hit a major power plant around 120 kilometres east of Moscow on Sunday. The attack on the Shatura Power Station, which supplies around 6% of the electricity to Russia's capital and to its surrounding region, caused a fire and damage to three transformers. Both sides have escalated [attacks on energy infrastructure](#) in recent weeks.

Real Madrid presented plans to sell a 5% stake as part of a long-standing strategy to welcome external investors. The sale will modernise the club's ownership structure, converting thousands of its fee-paying fans (currently owners of a non-profit organisation) into shareholders. Real Madrid reported revenues of €1.1bn (\$1.2bn) last year, making it the world's [highest-earning club](#).

At least 50 of the 303 schoolchildren abducted from a Catholic school in **Nigeria** escaped and were reunited with their families, according to a church group. Gunmen seized the children, along with 12 teachers, on Friday. The attack, the latest of three mass kidnappings in Nigeria over the past week, has prompted school closures and fuelled exaggerated claims of a "[Christian genocide](#)" in Nigeria by conservative circles in America.

The death toll from **flooding** in central **Vietnam** rose to at least 90, following days of landslides and ceaseless rain. More than two-thirds of known fatalities were in the mountainous Dak Lak province. Around 235,000 homes have been flooded and nearly 80,000 hectares of crops damaged, the country's disaster agency said. The government estimates the damage to have cost 8.98trn dong (\$341m).

Word of the week: *Benshengzhuan*, a pathway through which university graduates in China can go on to secure vocational training. [Read the full story](#).



Photograph: AP

South Africa's Trump-less G20

At the G20 leaders' meeting this weekend in Johannesburg, South Africa's commercial capital, there were some notable absences. China's leader, Xi Jinping, and Russia's president, Vladimir Putin, gave it a miss. Donald Trump, who [baselessly claims](#) that white people are being "slaughtered" in South Africa, also snubbed the event. On Thursday Cyril Ramaphosa, South Africa's president, suggested that Mr Trump might change his mind. The White House called the claim "fake news".

It is tempting to believe that America's refusal to participate will weaken the international co-operation that the group hopes to promote. South Africa thinks otherwise. Mr Ramaphosa insists that his country "will not be bullied". He expects delegates to find enough common ground on subjects like African debt, climate finance and the reform of international financial institutions to agree on a joint declaration. Mr Trump wanted to undermine the hosts. They may still pull off a diplomatic coup.



Photograph: Getty Images

Markets brace for another bumpy week

Since their peaks in October, America's s&p 500 share index has fallen by 5% and Japan's Nikkei 225 by 7%. The value of Nvidia, the world's biggest company, has dropped by 16%. So far, the selloff has been mild compared with the storming bull market that preceded it. But traders are on high alert for [signs of a crash](#).

Nvidia's share price fell despite reporting barnstorming financial results last Wednesday, suggesting that even good news can no longer drive markets much higher. [Gold](#), normally a refuge in turbulent times, failed to rally during last week's jitters and has also slipped from its October high. In Japan, the combination of a weakening yen, rising government-bond yields and falling equities looks uncomfortably like the pattern seen in emerging-market crises, suggesting some investors are already spooked. Markets have only wobbled so far. But with sentiment fragile, the week ahead could prove even more eventful.



Photograph: Getty Images

Tennis's Davis Cup struggles for relevance

The Davis Cup, first played in 1900, is one of the oldest tournaments in [tennis](#). Known as the World Cup of tennis, it pits countries against each other every year. The competition has endured because it offers players a rare dose of team spirit in an otherwise individual game. It also gives them the chance to represent their countries. On Sunday Spain and Italy will face off in the final.

But the competition is losing its allure. Crammed into an already busy calendar, it has become a burden for many top players. In 2019, in an attempt to address this, the organisers streamlined the event. The quarter-finals, semi-finals and final are now played in a single venue over the course of a week. But the overhaul has not revived its status. This year's edition has featured only one top-ten player, Germany's Alexander Zverev. Neither Carlos Alcaraz nor Jannik Sinner—the season's brightest stars—took part.



Photograph: Netflix

“Stranger Things” bows out on the big screen

The fifth and final season of one of Netflix’s most popular series starts on Wednesday. “Stranger Things”, a [paranormal coming-of-age adventure](#) set in 1980s Indiana, was one of the streaming platform’s first original hits and has now been sending shivers down spines for nearly a decade. Analysts believe that in the past five years it has driven more than \$1bn in subscription revenue for Netflix.

The final episode is being held back until New Year’s Eve, when it will be released in cinemas as well as at home. Netflix has tended to bypass the box office, but now seems to believe that an outing on the big screen can whip up excitement among superfans. “KPop Demon Hunters”, released on Netflix in June, was given follow-up cinematic runs in August and over Halloween. Theatrical release used to mark the launch of a new film or show. Now it can also act as a victory lap.



Illustration: The Economist

The winners of this week's quiz

Thank you to everyone who took part in this week's quiz. The winners, chosen at random, were:

Marco Radnic, Punta del Este, Uruguay

Amitai Wagner, Zikhron Ya'akov, Israel

Kathryn Voegeli, Uetikon am See, Switzerland

They all gave the correct answers of: a monk, Charlie's Angels, a clown, Cat Stevens and gold. The theme is types of fish: monkfish, angel fish, clownfish, catfish and goldfish.

The questions were:

Monday: A man who decided to become a Cistercian or Carthusian would have chosen what profession?

Tuesday: Farrah Fawcett, Kate Jackson and Jaclyn Smith were the original cast members of which TV show?

Wednesday: The childkiller in Stephen King's novel "It" usually appears in what form?

Thursday: The singer-songwriter Yusuf Islam is also known by which stage name?

Friday: White, rose and yellow are the most common colours for which precious metal when used in jewellery?



Illustration: The Economist

Mini crossword

We publish a new interactive edition of our crossword daily, allowing you to enter and check the answers and see explanations. Try it [here](#). Or, if you prefer, use the grid below.

Cryptic clues

1 across - No good hint about an absence of anything (7)

2 across - Country in the bottom left-hand corner of paradise (6)

3 across - Births concealed by audio rig in studio (7)

1 down - Disturbed, unsocial or mad: Latin leader in trouble? (7,6)

Straight clues

1 across - What Donald Trump says Mohammad bin Salman knew about the killing of Jamal Khashoggi (7)

2 across - Country that in 2023 banned digital tools for young children (6)

3 across - What Nike had in the running tracks of Oregon in the 1960s (7)

1 down - Leader accused of directing the Cartel de las Soles (7,6)

*It is a narrow mind which cannot
look at a subject from various
points of view.*

George Eliot