

# The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter

**Donald Trump** ousted **Mike Waltz** as America's national security adviser and temporarily replaced him with **Marco Rubio**, the secretary of state. Mr Waltz came under intense media scrutiny after he **mistakenly added** the editor of the *Atlantic* to a chat on Signal, a messaging app, in which officials discussed plans for air strikes in Yemen. Mr Trump said Mr Waltz “worked hard” and nominated him to be America's next UN ambassador.

**Reform UK** beat Britain's ruling **Labour Party** by just six votes in a by-election in Runcorn and Helsby—one of the closest parliamentary elections ever. Labour had held a huge majority in the northern constituency. It is a big win for Reform, a hard-right party led by **Nigel Farage**, a cheerleader for Brexit. Meanwhile the Conservative Party looked set for big losses in local council elections in England.

**China's** commerce ministry said it was “evaluating” recent proposals from American officials to start **trade talks**. The ministry said that if America “wants to talk, it should show its sincerity and be prepared to correct its wrong practices” by scrapping “unilateral tariffs”. Mr Trump slapped a 145% tariff on China in April; in response, **China** imposed a 125% levy on imports from America.

Tim Cook, **Apple's** boss, said that Mr Trump's trade war would add around \$900m to the firm's costs in the current quarter. The tech giant has moved some of its manufacturing to India and Vietnam, but still **produces the bulk** of its products in China. **Amazon** also lamented the cost of tariffs as it issued a downbeat profit forecast.

Volodymyr Zelensky, **Ukraine's** president, said a long-awaited **minerals deal** with America had “changed significantly” [during negotiations](#) and was now “truly an equal partnership”. He said the deal had resulted from his meeting with Mr Trump at the Vatican before Pope Francis’s funeral. Earlier Mr Zelensky called on allies to put “further pressure” on Russia to agree to a ceasefire.

**South Korea's** acting president, [Han Duck-soo](#), resigned amid reports that he may run for a full presidential term next month. Meanwhile the Supreme Court overturned the acquittal of [Lee Jae-myung](#), the contest’s frontrunner, over alleged election-law violations. It returned the case to a lower court, threatening his candidacy. South Korea has been in political turmoil since December, when the now-ousted president, Yoon Suk Yeol, attempted to impose martial law.

A judge in Texas ruled that the **Trump administration** could not use the 18th-century **Alien Enemies Act** to [deport](#) Venezuelan immigrants. Other judges have challenged the government’s process by, for example, requiring it to give deportees advance notice. However they have not ruled against its use of the act itself, which allows the executive branch to remove “foreign invaders”.

**Figure of the day:** 15 gigawatts, the amount of power that Spain’s electricity grid suddenly lost shortly after noon on April 28th. [Read the full story.](#)



Photograph: Reuters

## **Drill, maybe, drill**

“Liquid gold” is what Donald Trump calls petroleum. Since returning to office his administration has been busy deregulating and reforming the energy sector, all to get American oil companies pumping more. Not so fast. On Friday Britain’s Shell reported net profits of \$5.6bn in the latest quarter, a 28% year on year drop. ExxonMobil and Chevron, the biggest Yankee majors, will also report their quarterly earnings later in the day. Their reports come on the heels of disappointing numbers put up by BP and TotalEnergies, European rivals.

Despite Mr Trump’s support, analysts expect grim profits and an even bleaker outlook for these behemoths. The energy sector looks likely to be the worst performing of the S&P 500 index of big American companies this year. The main culprit is the oil price, which has dropped close to \$60 a barrel of late from an average above \$80 a barrel in 2024. That is because the OPEC group of producer countries has doused the market despite a weak world economy, and indicated it will release even more barrels shortly.

**Drip, drip, drop**

Brent crude oil price, \$ per barrel



Source: LSEG Workspace



Photograph: Getty Images

## Trump's economy isn't working

America's labour market appears to be losing steam. GDP data released on Wednesday showed the [economy contracting](#) for the first time in three years. On Friday the Bureau of Labour Statistics will publish the April jobs report. Expect more bad news.

Bloomberg's survey of economists forecasts just 125,000 new jobs—down from 228,000 in March. Some of that is due to Elon Musk's spring cleaning. His [Department of Government Efficiency](#) has slashed public-sector jobs. However, because many departures were voluntary buyouts, a portion of the layoffs may not appear in official figures until later this year. And private firms may have slowed hiring, as they brace for a slowdown in business when Donald Trump's tariffs take hold.

Still, the overall picture may not be too dire. Analysts expect the unemployment rate to hold steady at 4.2%, suggesting that the labour market is cooling, not collapsing.



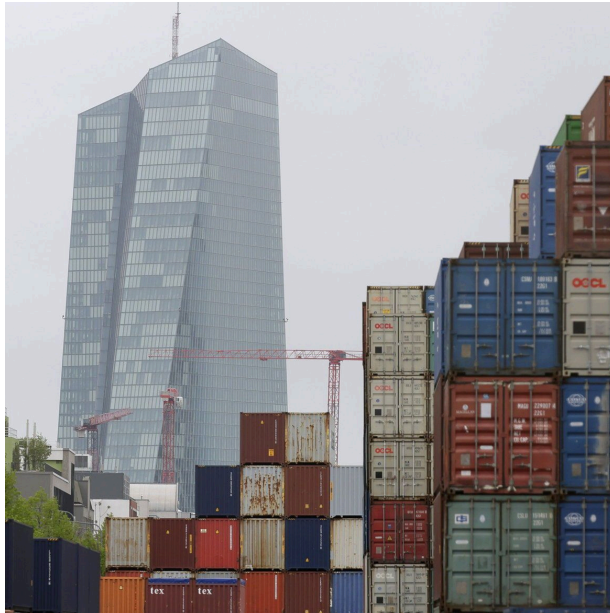
Photograph: Getty Images

## Extreme hunger in Gaza

On Friday the International Court of Justice will conclude a week of hearings into the [humanitarian crisis in Gaza](#). Two months have passed since Israel imposed a total ban on food, medicine and other essentials entering the territory. The situation is bleak. The World Food Programme has run out of food to deliver to kitchens, which supplied hundreds of thousands of hot meals each day. All 25 UN-supported bakeries have closed too. Cooking gas is scarce, leaving families to scrounge for wood or rubbish to burn.

Ammar Hijazi, the Palestinian ambassador to the Netherlands, told the court Israel was turning Gaza into a “mass grave”. Israel has refused to participate in the hearings, with the foreign minister calling them a “circus”. Any ruling from the ICJ will be non-binding. Still, Israel must soon decide whether to lift the ban on aid. Politicians insist they will not, arguing it will help Hamas. But the army has quietly urged them to relent.





Photograph: EPA

## **Euro inflation closes in on target**

The economic outlook is dimming across Europe. Germany has lowered its growth forecast to zero; the IMF revised its euro-zone projection for 2025 down by 0.2 percentage points to 0.8%. The European Central Bank will no doubt consider weaker growth when it mulls a probable interest-rate cut in early June. It will also parse the latest euro-zone [inflation](#) figures, which will be released on Friday.

National data published so far suggest that headline inflation across the euro zone was 2% year on year for April—exactly on the ECB's target. Falling energy prices pushed down inflation in March to 2.2%. But inflation in services has fallen only slightly since February, remaining above 3%. It will probably stay around that level due to a late Easter holiday this year. Luckily, the ECB will get a fresh set of data in May, in time for its next interest-rate meeting.



Photograph: Utopia

## A musical detour on screen

If you are a member of Gen x—and you were a slacker or a dork or a poet—you probably listened to Pavement: the quintessential '90s indie-rock band of disaffected dudes from suburban California, all arch lyrics and vocal fry. They never had huge commercial success but they had a devoted fanbase, including Alex Ross Perry, an American filmmaker. “Pavements”, his documentary about the band which opens in New York this weekend before expanding elsewhere, is as delightfully offbeat as its subject.

The film weaves together four bits of footage: from a parody biopic that Mr Ross Perry shot with actors; a jukebox musical set to Pavement tracks; the band’s reunion tour; and an exhibit of its ephemera held in 2022. The effect is to poke fun at the hagiography and clichés of [music movies](#). Wry and slightly ludicrous, the film’s style perfectly matches that of the band. And yet Mr Ross Perry’s fandom is totally sincere.





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.

**Friday:** Which Serbian-American inventor was a pioneer of the alternating current electricity system?

**Thursday:** Which company was founded in 1968 by the Beatles to manage their business interests?



Illustration: The Economist

## The winners of this week's crossword

Thank you to everyone who took part in our weekly crossword, published in the weekend edition of Espresso. The winners, chosen at random, were:

**Stefanos Spyridon**, Agios Kyrikos, Greece

**Ania Grobicki**, Laprade, France

**Andy Cayley**, Mount Claremont, Australia

They all gave the correct answers of [Mark Carney](#), [Model Y](#), [China](#) and [yields](#). Check back tomorrow for this week's crossword.

*Painting is poetry which is seen  
and not heard, and poetry is a  
painting which is heard but not  
seen.*

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***Leonardo da Vinci***