

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter

The UN's refugee agency in Gaza said it suspended food distribution in the southern city of **Rafah**, citing lack of supplies and security risks. UNRWA said it was unable to reach its warehouse and distribution centre because of [Israeli military operations](#), and that “closures/disruptions” of two border crossings—Rafah, into Egypt, and Kerem Shalom, into Israel—have affected its supplies. The UN said it received no aid in the past two days from a floating pier, which America built last week.

The **Biden administration** said it would work with Congress on an “appropriate response” to the decision by the chief prosecutor of the **International Criminal Court** to [seek arrest warrants](#) for **Israel's** prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, and defence minister. That could include sanctions. The prosecutor is also seeking warrants for Hamas's leaders. The court's judges will decide whether to issue them.

A 73-year-old British man died, probably of a heart attack, during extreme turbulence on a **Singapore Airlines** flight that left scores injured. A hospital in Bangkok, Thailand, where the flight was diverted, said that 71 passengers and crew members required medical treatment; six were seriously injured. Passengers told the BBC that the plane dropped suddenly; an official said that the cabin was “a mess”.

Spain said it had permanently recalled its ambassador to **Argentina**, stepping up a diplomatic feud. On Sunday **Javier Milei**, Argentina's [libertarian president](#), called the wife of Spain's Socialist prime minister, [Pedro Sánchez](#), “corrupt” during a rally in Madrid. Begoña Gómez, Mr Sánchez's wife, is the subject of

a corruption inquiry; prosecutors have asked for it to be dismissed, citing a lack of evidence.

Alibaba and **Baidu**, two Chinese tech giants, cut the prices they charge for companies using their [large-language models](#). Alibaba said it would slash prices by up to 97%, while Baidu said it would make some of its models available to businesses for free. The cuts come amid a wider price war in [China's cloud-computing sector](#), in which both firms are big players.

Protests broke out in **Taiwan** after the China-friendly opposition began a push to increase scrutiny of the [new president, Lai Ching-te](#). The Kuomintang party wants to force Mr Lai to address parliament each year; it also wants officials who are found to have lied to parliament to be jailed. Critics say that would hobble Mr Lai and prevent him from governing effectively.


Nestl , the [world's biggest food company](#), said it would start selling pizzas and other meals designed for people taking [weight-loss drugs](#). Dishes will be enriched with protein, iron and calcium. Each will cost \$5. Obesity drugs, such as Ozempic and Wegovy, suppress appetite and often cause users to shed muscle alongside fat.

Figure of the day: 200%, the year-on-year revenue growth that Nvidia, a chip manufacturer, is expected to announce on May 22nd. [Read the full story.](#)

In the run-up to America's presidential election, we've launched [The US in brief](#)—a daily update to help you keep on top of the political stories that matter. [Sign up here](#) to receive it as a newsletter, each weekday, in your inbox.



Photo: EPA

Georgia's top cop and judge on the ballot

Donald Trump is not the only candidate whose electoral run has been animated by the [racketeering case in Georgia](#). On Tuesday Scott McAfee, the judge, and Fani Willis, the prosecutor, will appear on the ballot in Fulton County. Both seem likely to keep their jobs.

Last August a grand jury indicted Mr Trump and 18 of his acolytes for conspiring to overturn the result of the presidential election in the state in 2020. The case has since stalled. In January a motion was filed to remove Ms Willis from the case for having a romantic relationship with a prosecutor she hired. Mr McAfee ruled in March that Ms Willis could [continue in her role](#), but the Georgia Court of Appeals recently said it would hear an appeal of that decision. That could delay the whole trial far beyond the presidential election in November. If Mr Trump wins the election his prosecution would be on hold until he left office.



Photo: AP

Microsoft takes the stage

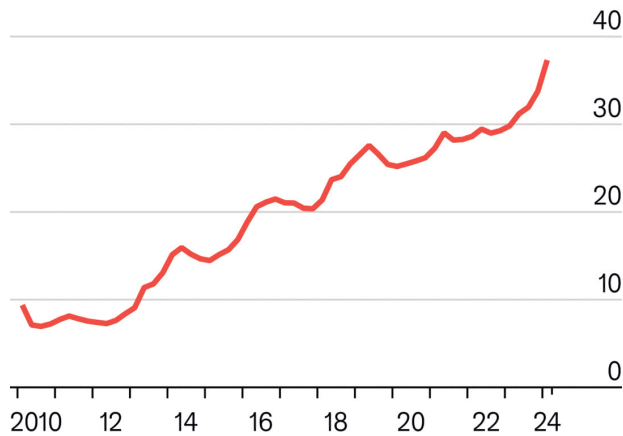
On Tuesday Microsoft Build, the [software giant's](#) three-day developer conference, kicks off in Seattle. Expect plenty of announcements about whizzy artificial-intelligence features. The world's biggest company by market capitalisation has a lot on the line.

Microsoft [raced forward](#) in the battle for AI dominance with an early investment in OpenAI, the startup behind ChatGPT. It is now selling AI tools across its business, from its cloud-computing arm to its productivity software (which includes Word and Teams). Analysts expect the company to rake in between \$5bn and \$10bn in sales related to generative AI this year, more than all other big tech firms.

But Microsoft is also spending heavily on servers and specialist AI chips. Capital expenditure will probably hit \$45bn in the 12 months to June, up from \$28bn in the previous year. That is a big bet on a promising but unproven technology. Microsoft's shareholders will be trying to gauge whether the investment will pay off.

Upping the ante

Microsoft, capital expenditure as % of revenue
Twelve-month moving total



Source: LSEG Workspace



Photo: Reuters

German coup-plotters in the dock

Nine people went on trial in Frankfurt on Tuesday in one of the most extraordinary cases in recent German history. The defendants stand accused of [plotting to overthrow](#) the government in the name of restoring the pre-war German empire. Chief among them is the self-styled Heinrich XIII Prinz Reuss, a far-right estate agent descended from minor aristocracy. In the fevered dreams of the coup-plotters, prosecutors allege, Reuss would have led a new

government formed after the conspiracists had stormed the Reichstag and arrested MPs. Another alleged plotter drew up a “hit list” of subjects for execution, including Olaf Scholz, Germany’s chancellor.

Much of the plot seems farcical. But far-right extremism is no laughing matter in Germany. A string of assaults on politicians has jangled nerves; the hard-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party is set to perform well in the [European](#) and local elections. Today the government will release new figures on racist and antisemitic violence in Germany. The timing seems appropriate.



Photo: Alamy

Slovakia after the shooting

Slovakia’s parliament is scheduled to convene on Tuesday for the first time since an [attempted assassination](#) of Robert Fico, the prime minister, on May 15th. What motivated the alleged shooter is unclear. But for months the populist [Mr Fico](#) had claimed prosecutors, foreign powers and the media were conspiring against his Smer party, while the opposition said he was turning the country into a copy of Hungary under Viktor Orban.

Since the shooting, opposition parties have called for the vicious partisan rhetoric to be toned down. But Mr Fico's acting deputy, Robert Kalinak, has brushed that off as "political correctness" and accused the media, which have investigated corruption among Smer members, of lying. The outgoing president, an opponent of Mr Fico, and the incoming one, an ally, are trying to organise a conciliatory meeting of party leaders. Mr Fico is recovering, but the country's political mood may not be.



Photo: The International Booker Prize

The globe-spanning Booker

Nominees for global literary awards tend to be an eclectic group. Finalists for the International Booker Prize, which goes to a work of fiction that has been translated into English and will be awarded on Tuesday, wrote an epic about Korean railway workers ([Hwang Sok-yong's](#) "Mater 2-10"); a troubled romance that takes place as the Berlin Wall falls ([Jenny Erpenbeck's](#) "Kairos"); and a saga of Brazilian peasant life (Itamar Vieira Junior's "Crooked Plow"). The shortlist extends to rural Argentina (Selva Almada's "Not a River"); the suicide of a twin in the Netherlands (Jente Posthuma's "What I'd Rather Not Think About"); and a Swedish story of bygone relationships (Ia Genberg's "The Details").

The \$50,000 prize is split between the author and the English-language translator. If the jury seeks a haunting study of memory and loss, they may pick Ms Genberg's work. But Ms Erpenbeck is the subtlest novelist and Mr Hwang the boldest storyteller. Ms Almada's harsh poetry captivates. And Mr Vieira Junior packs a visceral punch.



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: Meryl Streep played a fashion magazine editor in which 2006 film?

Monday: Which stuffed toy is named after America's 26th president?

Blessed is he who expects nothing, for he shall never be disappointed.

Alexander Pope