

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter

The **Trump** administration reportedly told American embassies to stop scheduling **student-visa** appointments as it prepares to expand the vetting of applicants' social-media accounts. Donald Trump wants to [banish foreign students](#) who have participated in campus activism. Meanwhile, the administration is apparently preparing to instruct federal agencies to exit all remaining contracts they have with [Harvard](#), worth about \$100m.

Ukraine's president, **Volodymyr Zelensky**, sounded a warning over a build-up of 50,000 Russian soldiers near its border in apparent preparation for a large summer offensive. He said that Russia was gearing up to oust Ukrainian forces that had seized a pocket of land in the Kursk region last year, and to cross into Ukraine's Sumy region in the north-east.

Mr Trump warned **Vladimir Putin** that he is "playing with fire" as Russia continued to [strike Ukraine](#) with drones. The American president threatened Russia with "REALLY BAD" things, but did not specify what those would be. The Kremlin dismissed Mr Trump's remarks. Meanwhile a Ukrainian drone attack on Russia prompted two airports in Moscow to suspend flights.

Salesforce said it would buy Informatica, a data-management company, for \$8bn. The deal comes as the software giant seeks to expand its [artificial-intelligence offerings](#); last year it released Agentforce, a workplace AI agent. The acquisition, reportedly revived in April after previous negotiations collapsed, is the company's largest since 2020, when it agreed to [buy Slack](#), an instant-messaging tool, for \$27.7bn.

McKinsey has slashed its staff by 10% over the past 18 months. The consultancy wants to increase profitability amid [slowing revenue growth](#) across the industry. According to the *Financial Times*, the firm currently has about 40,000 employees, down from 45,000 at the end of 2023. McKinsey insisted that it “continues to grow” and “recruit robustly”.

SpaceX’s unmanned Starship rocket soared and then disintegrated. The vessel—for the first time launched reusing a rocket booster from [a previous test](#)—climbed higher than it had on its earlier lift-offs. However, control was lost before it completed several objectives, including releasing dummy satellites into orbit. Elon Musk, SpaceX’s founder, wants to use Starship to take people to Mars.

Average global **temperatures** in the next five years will probably be 1.5°C higher than pre-industrial levels, according to the World Meteorological Organisation. The agency also warned of a “shocking” but small possibility that the 2°C threshold could be breached. The projections suggest that the world will experience the hottest year ever recorded between 2025 and 2029, beating the record set in [2024](#).

Figure of the day: 42%. The year-on-year surge in Baidu’s revenue from its cloud-computing business in the first quarter. [Read the full story.](#)



Photograph: Getty Images

Hunger continues to stalk Gaza

Thousands of Gazans rushed to collect food parcels for the first time in weeks on Tuesday, after the Israeli military opened two of four planned aid-distribution sites in the enclave. Israel wants to bypass the UN, which had previously overseen [humanitarian efforts in Gaza](#). Instead the centres are run by a shadowy foundation based in America—its executive director quit on Sunday. Upon opening, one of the centres was overwhelmed by crowds, forcing the army to fire warning shots and staff to temporarily abandon their posts.

Israel insists the scheme will stop Hamas from stealing aid. Aid groups doubt whether it can feed Gaza's 2m people, who have been under a near-total blockade since early March. Each centre is meant to supply only 300,000 Gazans—many Palestinians will have to trek for kilometres for their parcels of rice, pasta, sugar and other staples. The foundation is vague about its sources of funding and how much aid it has been able to procure.



Photograph: Getty Images

Merz stands with Zelensky

Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelensky, met Germany's new chancellor, Friedrich Merz, in Berlin on Wednesday. Mr Merz takes a more robust line on supporting Ukraine than his predecessor, Olaf Scholz. The leaders spoke of new joint defence investments, including a plan to build long-range weapons in both countries, without specifying which weapons. Despite Ukraine's long-standing hopes that Germany will supply it with the fearsome Taurus missile, which has a range of more than 500km and carries a powerful warhead, no agreement was announced after the talks.

The meeting follows nights of [massive air attacks](#) on Ukrainian cities. Donald Trump declared that Mr Putin had “gone absolutely crazy”, but the American president is yet to follow up criticism with new sanctions. Russia is meanwhile preparing a summer offensive, although experts doubt that it will break through the Ukrainian lines, or be able to exploit such success if it happens.



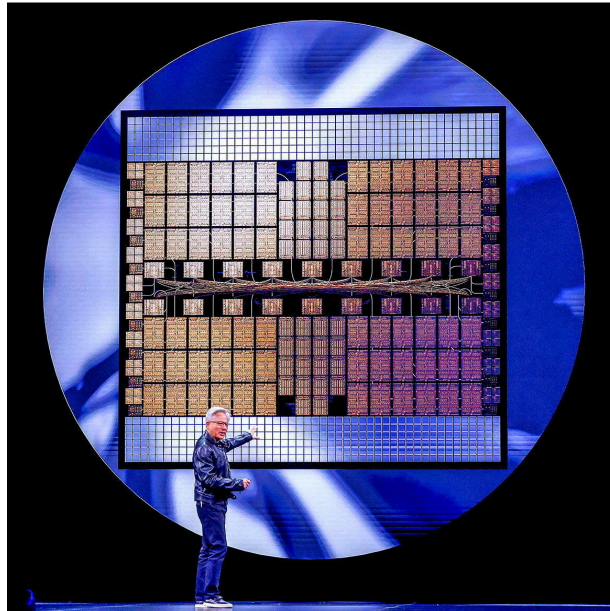
Photograph: Getty Images

Cambodia seeks friends beyond China

Cambodia has long been China's reliable friend in South-East Asia. But more recently, the two have traded accusations that the other is not doing enough to crack down on [scam centres](#). To hedge its position in the region, Cambodia is trying to boost other alliances.

Hun Manet, the prime minister, arrived in Tokyo on Wednesday for a four-day trip during which he will meet Ishiba Shigeru, his Japanese counterpart. The leaders will probably discuss how to further improve defence ties, following the recent stopover of two Japanese warships at the Ream naval base in Cambodia. It was the first official port call at Ream since a Chinese-funded expansion of the base, during which two Chinese warships docked there.

Still, Cambodia is unlikely to fully realign from China. The bigger country has funded several loss-making infrastructure projects in Cambodia in recent years, while Japan has been more wary of investing. In some cases, Cambodia has few alternatives to Chinese cash.



Photograph: Reuters

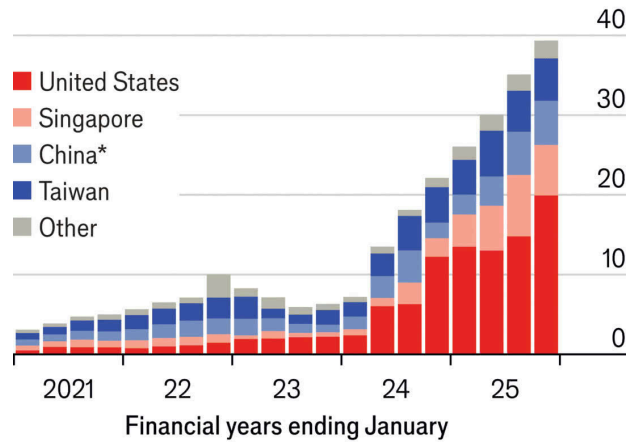
Geopolitics creates problems for Nvidia

Nvidia, the world's most valuable chipmaker, is due to report quarterly earnings on Wednesday. The firm, whose processors have a big role in the artificial-intelligence boom, has enjoyed a run of good news. On May 13th the Trump administration scrapped a proposed "AI-diffusion" rule that would have restricted exports of advanced chips to most countries, not just [China](#). That same week Nvidia signed large deals in the Gulf: Saudi Arabia pledged to buy "hundreds of thousands" of its processors over five years, and the United Arab Emirates will reportedly import half a million annually.

Yet geopolitics continues to be a problem. A recent American ban on exports of Nvidia's H20 chip to China forced a \$5.5bn write-down of unsold inventory. Jensen Huang, the firm's boss, has called for looser restrictions, warning that American firms are losing ground to Chinese rivals. So far the administration shows little sign of yielding. Investors will watch closely for Nvidia's forecasts, particularly about whether strong [global demand](#) can offset lost sales in China.

Veering off course

Nvidia, revenues, \$bn



Source: S&P Global

*Including Hong Kong



Photograph: Getty Images

ExxonMobil's AGM: no drama?

Managers of ExxonMobil, the world's largest private-sector oil company, are often apprehensive about its annual shareholder meetings. At past get-togethers shareholders have challenged the firm with resolutions and lawsuits, some provoked by its anaemic financial performance, others by its inaction on climate change. Four years ago green-tinted activists shockingly won three board seats. A wounded management responded by bludgeoning later activists with lawsuits, which seems to have silenced them.

This year's shareholder gathering, held on Wednesday, will see not a single resolution. That does not mean all is quiet. The firm is engaged in a bitter legal battle with Chevron, another firm based in Houston, over a highly profitable \$1trn oil field in Guyana. An arbitration hearing started this week in London on the matter. The outcome could decide which of the [American supermajors](#) tops the league table of Big Oil for decades to come.



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.

Wednesday: The green circle on a darts board is commonly known by what term?

Tuesday: Which sinister organisation, with its roots in Nazi Germany, is one of the main opponents of Captain America?

*To understand the stars would
spoil their appearance.*

Patrick White