

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter

The Trump administration blocked **Harvard University** from enrolling foreign students, revoking a certification that allows the school to host non-Americans on certain visas. Kristi Noem, America's homeland-security secretary, said the action follows Harvard's failure to turn over information about alleged misconduct by foreign students, and called it a “[warning](#)” to other [institutions](#). The ban also means that existing international students must switch universities. Harvard said the move was “unlawful”.

Elias Rodriguez, a 31-year-old man from Chicago, was charged with first-degree murder for killing two **Israeli embassy** staff in Washington. [Jeanine Pirro](#), the capital's district attorney, said the case is eligible for the [death penalty](#). The victims—a man and a woman—were shot after leaving an event for young diplomats. Police said Mr Rodriguez shouted “Free Palestine” before being taken into custody.

Finance ministers from the G7, a group of rich democracies, vowed to tackle “non-market policies” that contribute to “excessive imbalances” in the **global economy**. The statement came after a three-day meeting and is seen as a rebuke of China's [trade practices](#). It did not, however, mention the tariffs imposed by America. The group also said it was considering imposing more sanctions on Russia.

Charities were able to distribute some aid in **Gaza** on Thursday for the first time in weeks. But the United Nations warned that deliveries remain far below what is needed after Israel's 11-week blockade of supplies—just 90 trucks entered the enclave, versus 600 daily deliveries during a ceasefire between January and March.

Meanwhile, Israeli strikes killed at least 50 people as its [military operation](#) continued.

Germany stationed troops in **Lithuania** in its first permanent foreign deployment since the second world war. The “Panzerbrigade 45”, comprising nearly 5,000 German soldiers, will be positioned near Russia’s border to strengthen NATO’s eastern flank. “The security of our Baltic allies is also our security,” declared [Friedrich Merz](#), the chancellor, at an inauguration ceremony.

Net [migration](#) to **Britain** fell by nearly half in 2024 to 431,000, as tougher visa rules brought in by the former Conservative government began to show effect. Arrivals on work and study visas fell sharply; asylum claims rose to 109,000 in the year to March 2025. The drop eases pressure on the Labour government, which has promised further curbs.

The launch of **North Korea’s** largest naval destroyer ended in a dramatic failure, provoking [Kim Jong Un’s](#) fury. The dictator slammed his officials for their “carelessness” after the vessel’s stern sank prematurely. He vowed to hunt down those responsible for the “criminal act”. Satellite images have shown the damaged 5,000-ton warship covered in blue tarpaulins at Chongjin, a north-eastern city.

Figure of the day: \$385bn, the value of Vietnam’s annual exports, which has risen eight-fold since 2007. [Read the full story.](#)



Photograph: AP

A demanding host

NATO's Parliamentary Assembly is meeting on Friday in Dayton, Ohio. It will be the first time legislators from member countries have gathered in America since 2003. A month ahead of a NATO summit in the Netherlands, European members will seek reassurance that Donald Trump is not about to end America's 76-year [commitment](#) to defend their continent.

Among the speakers will be America's ambassador to NATO, Matt Whitaker, who is a former acting attorney-general believed to have influence with Mr Trump. He recently said America had made no decision about whether its troops would leave Europe but that there "will not be any security gaps". He added that "conversations" would take place with allies.

The assembly will also discuss Mr Trump's demands for higher European defence spending. NATO's secretary-general, Mark Rutte, has reportedly called on members to reach 3.5% of GDP on "hard" military spending and 1.5% on related expenses, such as infrastructure and cyber-security, over the next seven years.



Photograph: AP

The fight for Sudan's skies

At last, according to Sudan's national army, Khartoum is fully free from the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). Most of the Sudanese capital had been in the hands of the mutinous militia group, which stands accused of genocide and other atrocities, since shortly after the outbreak of civil war in early 2023. But the triumphant return of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) to the capital in March this year heralded a new phase in the conflict. Since then they have been mopping up the remaining pockets of resistance in the western district of Omdurman near the capital.

Now the SAF are determined to show that by recapturing the capital they are fully back in charge of the country. On May 19th the army's top brass appointed a civilian prime minister. But earlier this month the RSF carried out [drone attacks](#) on Port Sudan, the SAF's eastern stronghold, for the first time. The message was clear: rather than ending, Sudan's civil war is moving to the skies.





Photograph: Getty Images

What's next for the budget bill

Republicans in America's House of Representatives start their Memorial Day break on Friday with a big win. After an all-night session, on Thursday they passed their "One Big Beautiful Bill" designed to fund Donald Trump's priorities. Appeasing the various wings of the party took last-minute changes, a lot of compromise and some threats from Mr Trump. But the reconciliation bill squeaked through by 215-214, with no Democratic support, two Republicans voting against and one voting "present".

The bill will now [go to the Senate](#), where lawmakers will probably take a red pen to it. Cuts proposed to the social safety-net are especially contentious. A Senate-approved version will go back to the House for another potentially difficult vote. Mike Johnson, the Republican Speaker of the House, wants this all done by July 4th. Turning it into the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act" by that deadline could be one big, ugly scrap.



Photograph: EPA

Tariffs bring the house down

New-home sales data for April, due on Friday, will offer clues about how Donald Trump's economic agenda is reshaping America's housing market. Sales rose by 7.4% year on year in March, but economists expect that momentum to slow. Spring is high season for homebuying. But this year, prospective owners face more difficult choices. Mr Trump's tariffs on Chinese goods have raised construction costs. The National Association of Home Builders, a trade body, estimates they are adding over \$10,000 to the price of each new home. Tariffs on furniture and fittings are pushing interior costs higher, too.

Buyers will need to weigh these increases, as well as mortgage costs that have been rising again since early April. Many are choosing to defer: mortgage applications have fallen, and existing-home sales dropped nearly 6% year on year in March, the sharpest fall since 2022. April's figures will show whether the market for new-home sales is starting to slow, too.



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 Michael Chabon novel was turned into a 2000 film starring Michael Douglas?

Thursday: Which American painter was nicknamed “Jack the Dripper” for his style?



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:

Guillermo Garrido, Orlando, Florida

Peter & Jane Harvey, Barcelona, Spain

Ahsan Ulhaq Shah, Budgam, India

They all gave the correct answers of [Ankara](#), [Rafale](#), [eulogy](#) and [Air Force One](#).

*Nature provides exceptions to
every rule.*

Margaret Fuller