

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: Getty Images

Donald Trump said airlines should consider Venezuela’s airspace “CLOSED IN ITS ENTIRETY”. America’s president also addressed his message to “Drug Dealers, and Human Traffickers”. He has threatened military action against the regime of Nicolás Maduro, Venezuela’s autocrat, and ordered strikes against [alleged drug-running boats](#). American aviation officials had already warned of the “potential hazardous situation” in Venezuela’s airspace.

The Trump administration paused all asylum decisions and stopped issuing visas to **Afghans** following the shooting of two **National Guard** members on Wednesday. Earlier, prosecutors said they would charge the [alleged attacker](#)—an Afghan citizen—with first-degree murder after one of the victims died of her injuries. Since the shooting Mr Trump has vowed a crackdown on immigration from “third-world countries”.

Moldova said that **Russian drones** entered its airspace on Saturday, the third such incursion in just over a week. Its president has said Russia is trying to destabilise the eastern European country. Meanwhile, Ukraine destroyed two **tankers** in Russia’s “shadow fleet”, according to the country’s domestic-security service.

Underwater drones struck the vessels off Turkey's Black Sea coast on Friday and Saturday.

Police in **Hong Kong** reportedly arrested one person from a group that launched a petition demanding government accountability for a fire in a residential block that killed at least 128 people. Earlier China's emergency-management ministry said it would start a "campaign to investigate and rectify" fire risks and other dangers in high-rise buildings. Officials have arrested 11 people so far on corruption and negligence charges.

Flooding and landslides in **Indonesia** killed more than 300 people in the past week, according to local authorities. More than 100 people are missing in Sumatra, a western island. Heavy rains have deluged areas of Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand because of a tropical storm in the Malacca Strait. Indonesian officials said more troops would join the relief effort on Sunday.

Police in **Tunisia** arrested Chaima Issa, an opposition leader. On Friday a court handed long jail sentences to a group of opposition figures including Ms Issa, claiming they had conspired to oust the country's president, [Kais Saied](#). Last week thousands of people protested in Tunis, the capital, against the regime's increasing repression.

Sir Tom Stoppard, one of Britain's best playwrights, died aged 88. He wrote dozens of plays, such as "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead", as well as scripts for television and films—including "Shakespeare in Love", for which he won an Oscar and Golden Globe. "Stoppardian", a reference to the wit, wordplay and philosophical themes explored in his work, was added to the Oxford English Dictionary in 1993.

Word of the week: *Nicisanak*, a Cree word for siblings, used to refer to inmates of Canada's rehabilitative prisons. [Read the full story.](#)



Photograph: Reuters

The fragility of Israel's ceasefires

In the week of its first anniversary, the ceasefire ending the war between Israel and Hizbullah in Lebanon was breached on November 23rd when an Israeli air strike **killed** Haytham Ali Tabatabai, the military chief of Hizbullah. Israel claims he was working to rearm the Iran-backed militia in southern Lebanon. A day earlier, Israeli strikes had killed at least 20 Gazans, including a senior Hamas commander. That attack was a response to a shooting on the “Yellow Line”, dividing Gaza into areas controlled by Israel and Hamas.

Other fronts are rumbling too. On Friday **Israel** carried out a raid in southern Syria, killing 13 in a firefight and capturing two members of Jama'a Islamiya, a Lebanese Islamist militant group. Despite a security agreement between the neighbours, brokered by America after months of negotiations, Israel continues to hold a swathe of Syrian territory. The Israeli defence minister, Israel Katz, said the country was “not on track” for a deal with Syria any time soon.



Photograph: Reuters

Hondurans head to the polls

Honduras faces a potentially explosive presidential election this weekend. The race pits Rixi Moncada, an ally of Xiomara Castro, the president, against Nasry Asfura, a conservative, and Salvador Nasralla, a centrist. Polls say the candidates are neck and neck.

Foreign policy is a big electoral issue. Ms Castro switched diplomatic recognition from [Taiwan](#) to China in 2023; both Mr Asfura and Mr Nasralla say they would restore ties with Taiwan, a move that would anger China and put at risk Honduras's potential access to investment and cheap debt. Meanwhile, corruption scandals, poverty and gang-related violence have eroded [Hondurans'](#) faith in the political class. Opposition parties accuse the government of using state institutions to favour Mr Moncada, while the ruling party claims that its rivals are laying the groundwork to reject a loss. International observers are preparing for a messy count and allegations of fraud.



Photograph: Reuters

Authoritarianism on the ballot in Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan will vote in parliamentary elections on Sunday that look certain to deliver a rubber-stamp legislature loyal to Sadyr Japarov, the [central Asian country](#)'s populist president. Kyrgyzstan has traditionally held vibrant elections that have set it apart from the rest of central Asia. But Mr Japarov has set Kyrgyzstan on an authoritarian path, closing independent media and arresting journalists and opposition leaders. More detentions took place just days before the vote. Several critics have been jailed for allegedly plotting to stir up unrest aimed at overthrowing him.

Mr Japarov himself took power in a revolution sparked by a rigged election in 2020—Kyrgyzstan's third uprising since 2005. He appears determined not to suffer the fate of his toppled predecessors. After changing the constitution to grant himself a possible second term, he is eyeing re-election in 2027. A docile parliament will help him see off challenges to his rule.



Photograph: Brett Phibbs for SailGP

Formula One of the seas

Sail Grand Prix, an international sailing league, completes its fifth season this weekend in Abu Dhabi. The tournament features national teams—participants include America, Australia, Britain and New Zealand—racing high-speed catamarans in locations spanning the globe, from Saint-Tropez to Sydney. Half a dozen fleet races will be held over two days.

SailGP began in 2019 with an ambition to become “F1 on water”. The league was co-founded by [Larry Ellison of Oracle](#), a tech giant, and Sir Russell Coutts, a New Zealand yachtsman. It has attracted deep-pocketed sponsors such as Emirates, an airline, and Rolex, a watchmaker.

The league is part of a new wave of [niche leagues and tournaments](#), driven by the financial industry’s increasing interest in sport. Others include the Baller League (indoor football), Extreme E (electric-car racing) and Unrivaled (women’s three-on-three basketball). All are vying for a share of the institutional cash that is reshaping global sport.



Photograph: Getty Images

Man's ancient companions

Before dogs, wolves may have been man's best friends. Researchers at Stockholm University and other institutions found wolf remains dating from the late Neolithic period and the Bronze Age, 3,000-5,000 years ago. The discovery was made in Stora Forvar, a cave on the [Baltic](#) island of Stora Karlso.

The remote island has no native land mammals, suggesting that humans must have brought the [wolves](#). Analysis revealed other signs of domestication. DNA analysis showed that they were smaller and had lower genetic diversity than other ancient wolves, evidence of controlled breeding. Isotopic analysis revealed that the wolves had the same diet, rich in marine protein, as the island's human inhabitants, a sign that humans fed them.

The findings suggest that the interactions between pre-historic humans and wolves were more diverse than previously thought, resembling processes that led to the domestication of [dogs](#).



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](#).

Cryptic clues

1 across - Ms Klobuchar gets to bed down for immunity (7)

2 across - Outfit fee sounds like you and me (7)

3 across - Space and time led Dorothy initially to this city (7)

1 down - Airtight case? Ha! Crack'd by this dame (6,8)

Straight clues

1 across - Absolution or forgiveness (7)

2 across - Fancy dress; uniform (7)

3 across - Green gemstone (7)

1 down - Prolific crime writer (6,8)

Take each other for better or worse, but not for granted.

Arlene Dahl