

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter

Donald Trump condemned a [Russian](#) strike on Kyiv, **Ukraine's** capital, which killed nine people, as “very bad timing”. In a rare criticism of his Russian counterpart, he wrote “Vladimir, STOP!”, on his Truth Social account. Earlier he accused **Volodymyr Zelensky** of undermining peace negotiations. The Ukrainian president said that Ukraine would do “everything” proposed by its allies, except recognise Russia's annexation of Crimea.

China said there was no progress on a [trade deal](#) with America and that any talk of negotiations should be dismissed. On Wednesday Scott Bessent, America's treasury secretary, said that there was an opportunity for a “big deal” with China if it were “serious” about reducing its dependence on manufacturing exports.

Israeli strikes killed at least 44 people in **Gaza** on Thursday, Palestinian officials said. One, an airstrike on a police station in Jabalia, in northern Gaza, killed at least ten people. Israel's army said that the Jabalia attack targeted a command centre of Hamas and Islamic Jihad, another militant group. A ceasefire between Israel and Hamas [fell apart](#) in March.

Germany revised its growth forecast for 2025 from 0.3% to zero. Europe's largest [economy](#) shrank by 0.2% in 2024. Robert Habeck, Germany's economy minister, said that the country's economy, which had already been struggling, would be “particularly affected” by Mr Trump's tariffs. Germany's manufacturing-based economy will be hit by a 25% tariff on automobiles, steel and aluminium.

The medical condition of **Jair Bolsonaro**, Brazil's far-right former president, has worsened, his doctors said. Mr Bolsonaro, who

remains hospitalised following bowel surgery earlier this month, has suffered from health complications since 2018, when he was stabbed in the abdomen during a campaign rally. He is [due to go on trial](#) shortly for allegedly plotting a coup after losing Brazil's election in 2022.

Three astronauts aboard **China's** Shenzhou-20 mission docked with the country's [Tiangong space station](#), according to state media. For the next six months the crew will reportedly conduct scientific experiments and carry out technical tasks, such as installing equipment to protect the station from debris. Their arrival relieves Shenzhou-19, the mission's previous cohort; that crew is set to return to Earth next week.

Archaeologists uncovered evidence that **gladiators** really did fight **lions** in the colosseums of ancient Rome, not just in Hollywood. A skeleton buried in what is believed to be a graveyard for [gladiators](#) in England shows bite marks on the pelvis, probably made by a "large cat" dragging its helpless victim around an arena. It is the first physical evidence of human-animal combat from the era.

Figure of the day: 86%, the probability of Canada's Liberals taking the most seats in the election, according to our model. [Read the full story.](#)



Photograph: Getty Images

Asia's messy trade deals

On Thursday South Korean and Malaysian trade negotiators hope to ink trade deals with America to avert Donald Trump's punishing "reciprocal" [tariffs](#). They are not the first from Asia to try. Results have been [measly](#). And still, Mr Trump's unilateralism may not shock Asia into regional integration.

Although Asia's economies are more closely bound to each other than they were, progress has slowed in recent years. Intra-Asian trade has fallen since 2020. A thicket of intra-Asia trade agreements has led to a "noodle-bowl effect"—complexity that confuses firms. On average deals in other regions raise trade flows by 20%; in Asia the boost is a mere 3%. Untangling the mess would require a shift away from gimmickry like non-binding provisions and trade-inhibiting domestic rules. For now, America remains the only game in town.



Photograph: Getty Images

Can Alphabet shrug off the tariffs?

On Thursday Alphabet, [Google's](#) parent company, will report quarterly results. Investors will watch closely for signs of the effects of President Donald Trump's tariffs.

At first blush Alphabet may appear insulated. Most of its sales come from digital services (online advertising and cloud computing) rather than goods, and its presence in China is tiny. However, it faces risks. In the last two years Chinese e-commerce firms such as [Temu](#) and Shein used Alphabet's platforms to splurge on marketing to American shoppers. These firms are now cutting ad spending because of tariffs on their exports to America. And economic uncertainty is making companies hesitant to commit to long-term contracts for cloud-computing services.

Investors are concerned. In the past three months Alphabet's share price has fallen by 23%, more than the S&P 500 index. The new data will provide a useful indication of the health of the business.



Photograph: Getty Images

Searching for a new post-Brexit relationship

The British prime minister, Sir Keir Starmer, is due to meet the president of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, on Thursday. This comes ahead of an EU-Britain summit on May 19th that should kick off a much-advertised reset of the post-Brexit relationship. Starting with the easy bit, both sides will seek to raise defence spending so as to rely less on America. Sir Keir has been [prominent](#) in urging more support for Ukraine's resistance to Vladimir Putin's invasion.

But it may prove harder to rebuild the broader relationship. Sir Keir has set out red lines of no single market, no customs union and no free movement of people, limiting how far any reset can go. And the EU is reasonably happy with the agreement negotiated in December 2020, which gives European makers of most goods free access to Britain. The most likely outcome will be a new food-trade deal. But it will take time even to agree to this.



Photograph: Eyevine

Rebooting Intel

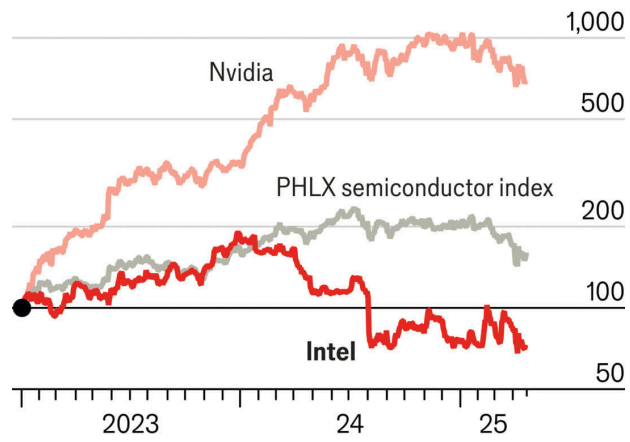
Intel will report quarterly earnings on Thursday, its first under new boss Lip-Bu Tan. He took over in December, and inherited a firm in [deep trouble](#). Once the world's top chipmaker, Intel is struggling with falling sales of chips for personal computers and servers. In the fast-growing market for AI chips, it barely registers. At the same time, Intel is spending \$100bn to increase its manufacturing capacity.

Mr Tan wants to shake up the American company's culture. He has vowed to cut bureaucracy and run Intel like "a big startup". Some early pruning is under way. Intel will offload a majority stake in Altera, its programmable-chip arm, and the firm is expected to lay off 21,000 employees. Intel's foundry business (as the contract manufacturing of chips is known) lags far behind Taiwan's TSMC, and in AI [Nvidia](#)—the world's most valuable chip firm—is leagues ahead. Mr Tan's challenge is to close both gaps.

Declining Intel

Share prices, January 3rd 2023=100

Log scale



Source: Bloomberg



Photograph: David Simonds

A piano marathon in London

When Erik Satie, a French composer, finished “Vexations” sometime in the 1890s, he jotted a line on the sheet music suggesting that the performer could repeat the composition 840 times. On Thursday at the Southbank Centre in London, starting at 10am, Igor Levit, a German pianist, will do just that.

Satie’s note advises the musician first to prepare for the repeated pattern of slow, harmonically unsettling music “in the deepest silence, through serious immobilities”. Mr Levit had better do so. Sitting hunched at a grand piano for at least 16 hours with just occasional breaks (his seat can turn into a bed) will take a toll. The concert, directed by Marina Abramovic, a Serbian conceptual artist, will also test the audience’s stamina. Tickets for a one-hour slot cost £32 (\$42). Braver spectators can pay four times that much to hear the whole performance, which will end after midnight. And “Vexations” is no lullaby; ticketholders will have to stave off the urge to wince, let alone sleep.



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 GMT on Friday to [\[email protected\]](#). We'll pick randomly from those with the right answers and crown three winners on Saturday.

Thursday: James Galway is a famous soloist on which instrument?

Wednesday: Alonso Quijano is better known as the title character of which famous novel?

Tomorrow is always fresh, with no mistakes in it.

Lucy Maud Montgomery