

# The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter

**Israel** asked **America** to reschedule a meeting about plans to attack the southern city of Rafah in **Gaza**. Binyamin Netanyahu, Israel's prime minister, had cancelled the meeting after America allowed the UN to pass a resolution calling for a ceasefire. America's concerns over the [humanitarian crisis](#) in Gaza have increased tensions with Israel. Separately, Ireland said it wanted to widen the terms of an International Court of Justice case accusing Israel of committing genocide in Gaza, which is being brought by South Africa. Ireland's prime minister said actions such as denying aid were "a blatant violation of international humanitarian law".

**Amazon** said it would invest a further \$2.75bn in **Anthropic**, an AI startup, on top of the \$1.25bn investment it announced in September. Anthropic's AI model, Claude 3, competes with rivals such as ChatGPT. The firm's valuation has [risen](#) from \$3.4bn in April 2022 to \$18bn. Despite being short of a full takeover, Amazon's deal may well prompt [scrutiny from trustbusters](#).

The White House warned of a lengthy disruption to **Baltimore's port** following the collapse of the [Francis Scott Key Bridge](#). Pete Buttigieg, America's transportation secretary, said the effects of the disaster would "ripple out" beyond the region and rebuilding the bridge would not "be quick or easy or cheap". Divers recovered the bodies of two of the six workers presumed dead from the accident.

**France's** prime minister said the state would sue a teenage student for falsely accusing a headteacher of violence in a row over the **hijab**. The girl claims the teacher hit her when she refused to remove the garment, which is proscribed in schools. Gabriel Attal said the state would "always stand" with officials faced with

“breaches of secularism”. The headteacher resigned after receiving death threats.

**Disney** settled a long legal fight with a board appointed by **Ron DeSantis**, Florida’s Republican governor. For decades Disney controlled a [special district](#) encompassing Disney World. But in 2023, retaliating against Disney’s [criticism of a law](#) passed by his administration, Mr DeSantis replaced the district’s governing board with his allies. Under the settlement, Disney will drop or pause some litigation and negotiate a development plan with the new board.

**UBS**, a Swiss bank, signed a deal with **Apollo**, an American asset-management firm, to sell \$8bn worth of unwanted loans. The deal concludes an older agreement whereby Apollo agreed to purchase the assets from Credit Suisse—now owned by UBS—in 2022. UBS has tried hard to renegotiate that earlier deal, arguing that the fees agreed by Credit Suisse were too high.

**Japan’s** [Moon lander](#) survived a second lunar night and transmitted new images to Earth. The Smart Lander for Investigating Moon, or SLIM, was put to sleep in early March after freezing temperatures made it impossible to function. Odysseus, the first private spacecraft to reach the Moon, had less luck. Last week Intuitive Machines, its American operator, said the lander had “permanently faded”.

**Figure of the day:** 45,000, the headcount at McKinsey, which has been growing faster than the consulting firm’s revenues. [Read the full story](#).



Photo: Reuters

## Israel lashes out at America

An Israeli delegation was scheduled to visit the White House on Wednesday to resolve disagreements over [the war in Gaza](#). But Binyamin Netanyahu, Israel's prime minister, told his envoys to stay home after America refused to veto a UN Security Council resolution that calls for an "immediate ceasefire" in Gaza. Mr Netanyahu called America's decision a "clear retreat" from its "consistent position"—a reaction that reflects his fear that it will undermine his already weak political standing at home.

Worsening hunger in Gaza is one of America's main concerns. The UN says that 1.1m people, half of the population, face "catastrophic" food shortages. Aid workers reckon that Gaza needs at least 300 lorry-loads of supplies each day, double the current number. Air drops cannot fill the gap, and deliveries by sea are still small. After months of American pleading, Israeli officials promised to "flood" the enclave with aid. Yet the flow remains only a trickle.

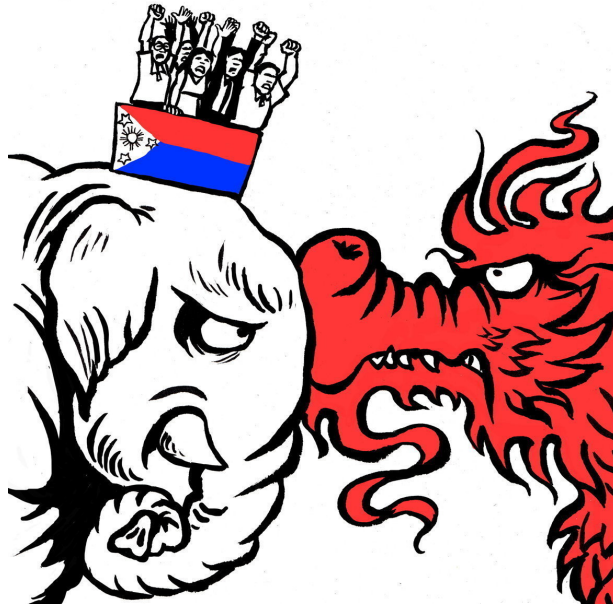


Photo: Dave Simonds

## India and the Philippines resist China

India's foreign minister, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, completed a three-day visit to the Philippines on Wednesday. He spent his time in Manila, the capital, in talks aimed at strengthening Indo-Philippine co-operation to deter China. The countries' partnership is part of a network that links Australia, India, Japan, the Philippines, the United States and Vietnam. All of these countries want to stop China from pushing its borders outwards into southern Asia and the western Pacific.

India and the Philippines are both having run-ins with China. Chinese forces clash with the Indian army in the Himalayas and with the Philippine navy in the [South China Sea](#), almost all of which China claims as its own. India wants to help the Philippines counter the threat from China. It is soon expected to deliver "BrahMos" supersonic anti-ship missiles to the Philippines.



Photo: Rex Shutterstock

## **Argentines' confidence in their economy**

The results of Argentina's latest consumer-confidence survey were published on Wednesday. The index asks respondents about their own economic situation, that of the country and their expectations. It rose by 1.8% in March, compared with February.

President Javier Milei, a self-described “anarcho-capitalist”, will have been hoping for a much bigger rise. That would have nicely capped a string of economic successes from his [first 100 days](#) in office. The government has achieved monthly fiscal surpluses. Inflation, though still extremely high at 13% a month, is falling.

Mr Milei's economic progress has come at a heavy price: slashing government spending and temporarily driving inflation up. Many Argentines suffered. The consumer-confidence index plunged sharply in the first two months of Mr Milei's presidency before creeping up in February. This second slight rise suggests that, despite a deepening recession, the public are cautiously gaining faith in the president's reforms—though probably much slower than he would like.





Photo: Getty Images

## Desperate times for Myanmar's army

Wednesday is Armed Forces Day in Myanmar. It's an excuse for the army to hit the tarmac in Naypyidaw, the capital, awing the population with parades, tanks and fiery speeches. This year, however, the generals should be feeling less arrogant than at any time since February 2021, when they [deposed](#) the civilian government and provoked a civil war. Since October the army has suffered humiliating [reversals](#) against rebel militias in the north of the country. Thousands of troops, including six generals surrendered.

One sign of the army's weakness—and desperation for more troops—is a conscription law that comes into effect in April. It stipulates that all men aged 18 to 35 and women aged 18 to 27 must serve at least two years. The draft is unpopular: thousands of Burmese have fled the country to avoid it. Officials attempting to identify eligible citizens have reportedly been killed. Most Burmese, it seems, do not wish to kill their countrymen or risk being killed by them.



Photo: PETER MOUNTAIN/NETFLIX

## The Prince and the producer in “Scoop”

In November 2019 Emily Maitlis [interviewed](#) Prince Andrew for the BBC’s “Newsnight” about his friendship with Jeffrey Epstein, a convicted paedophile who had recently died. Andrew denied an accusation by one of Epstein’s victims that he had sex with her when she was 17. His arrogant defence of his association with Epstein was widely mocked.

Now the negotiations behind the interview have been turned into a film. “Scoop” has its world premiere in London on Wednesday. It streams on Netflix from April 5th. The cast includes Gillian Anderson (Ms Maitlis) and Rufus Sewell (Andrew). The drama is adapted from a memoir by Sam McAlister, a former “Newsnight” producer.

The same story is the subject of “A Very Royal Scandal”, a forthcoming three-part series by Amazon starring Ruth Wilson and Michael Sheen. Both will cater to the public’s curiosity about what goes on behind closed palace doors—and both will struggle to match the high drama of the interview itself.



## 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.

**Wednesday:** What was the name of the first prequel in the Star Wars movie series, released in 1999?

**Tuesday:** What is the usual term for a provision in a bill that provides for a law to expire after a certain date?

*For progressive people the present is the beginning of the future. For conservative people the present is the end of the past.*

*Karl Mannheim*