

# The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter

**Donald Trump** said he has “no intention of firing” **Jerome Powell**, despite calling him a “major loser” earlier this week. American stocks rose after his clarification. America’s president has repeatedly attacked the chairman of the Federal Reserve for refusing to further cut interest rates, rattling markets. Mr Powell has vowed to serve his full term, which ends in May 2026.

**Elon Musk** said he would “significantly” step back from working for the Trump administration. He said that had nothing to do with **Tesla** reporting dismal first-quarter earnings. Profits at Mr Musk’s electric-vehicle firm fell to their lowest since 2020; revenue was down by 9%. The billionaire’s role in slashing federal-government spending has prompted a backlash, though sales were falling before then.

The **European Commission** fined Apple and Meta a combined €700m (\$798m) for failing to comply with the Digital Markets Act, designed to keep tech firms from competing unfairly. The EU’s executive arm said that restrictions in Apple’s App Store, and Meta’s “consent or pay” model were anti-competitive. Joel Kaplan, Meta’s chief global affairs officer, accused the EU of “attempting to handicap successful American businesses”.

A **Ukraine ceasefire** meeting between foreign ministers in London was postponed, denting hopes of progress on any deal. Marco Rubio, America’s secretary of state, and Steve Witkoff, Mr Trump’s special envoy, said they would not attend. Instead, senior officials from Europe, Ukraine and America will take part. President Vladimir Putin has reportedly offered to freeze Russia’s invasion of Ukraine along current front lines, in return for concessions.

**Intel** will reportedly announce staff cuts of more than 20% this week. According to Bloomberg the troubled American chipmaker's new boss, Lip-Bu Tan, wants to cut bureaucracy and "rebuild an engineering-driven culture". Intel is expected to report a fourth consecutive drop in quarterly revenue on Thursday. The firm's [struggle](#) to compete with Asian rivals, such as Taiwan's TSMC, has been complicated by Mr Trump's trade war.

Narendra Modi, India's prime minister, cut short a visit to Saudi Arabia to deal with the aftermath of a terrorist attack in **Indian-administered Kashmir**. He also talked to Mr Trump. Gunmen killed at least 26 people in Pahalgam, a destination for tourists. The Himalayan region has suffered from [separatist violence](#), but this was the deadliest attack on civilians in years.

Record-high temperatures are severely damaging more than four-fifths of the world's **coral reefs**, according to a report by Coral Reef Watch, an American government research group. The fourth mass [bleaching event](#)—which scientists declared in 2024, the hottest year ever—has devastated corals in the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans. Coral reefs support a third of all marine life.

**Figure of the day:** 1.9, the average number of days that college-educated Canadians work from home, the highest among big, rich countries. [Read the full story.](#)



Photograph: Reuters

## China looks for friends at the United Nations

A new front in the trade war sparked by Donald Trump's punitive tariffs will open at the United Nations on Wednesday. [Chinese diplomats](#) are convening an informal meeting of the UN Security Council to accuse America of “unilateral and bullying acts of power politics”, according to state media. They have invited representatives of all 193 UN member countries to speak. It will be a test of China's decade-long effort to build influence at the UN.

China is trying to avoid becoming isolated as America rushes to sign deals with other large economies, often on the condition that they reduce their own trade with China. On Monday China's commerce ministry warned that it would take “countermeasures” against countries that enter into such deals. China may also sense opportunity. Western diplomats expect it to capitalise on anger at tariffs to rally opposition to another economic weapon used by America: [unilateral sanctions](#), which China considers illegal.



Photograph: Getty Images

## **The legality of Donald Trump's deportation blitz**

Donald Trump's deportation plans may yet founder in the courts. The most closely watched case involves [Kilmar Abrego Garcia](#), an illegal immigrant whom a judge in 2019 ruled could not be deported to El Salvador. The government blames his deportation to a prison in the country on its "administrative error". The Supreme Court has given a unanimous order to "facilitate" his release, but Mr Trump has refused. He alleges, without solid evidence, that Mr Abrego Garcia is a gang member.

Other cases concern Mr Trump's use of the Alien Enemies Act of 1798 to justify sending more than 200 Venezuelan men to the same prison. On April 19th the Supreme Court temporarily blocked the government from deporting more alleged gang members using the law. Meanwhile an appeals court is reviewing a district-court judge's finding that officials may be in contempt of court for ignoring his order last month to bring back a group of deportees. Another case challenging the use of the AEA is slated to be heard in Texas on Thursday.



Photograph: EPA

## Iran's busy foreign minister shores up support

Abbas Araghchi has not been home much lately. On Wednesday Iran's foreign minister visits Beijing. The trip comes after a second round of [nuclear talks](#) with America, in Rome on April 19th, and a stop in Moscow the day before. His travels are connected. Russia and China are friendly to Iran; they are also parties to a nuclear deal signed in 2015 and abandoned by Donald Trump three years later. Mr Araghchi wants to consult Iran's allies before further talks with America on Saturday.

China is now almost the [sole buyer of Iranian oil](#), which is under American sanctions. In March it imported 1.8m barrels a day, an all-time high, according to Vortexa, a vessel-tracking firm. America has imposed scattered penalties on Chinese refiners but not halted the trade. Still, China has been reluctant to invest in Iran, despite a much-ballyhooed "strategic partnership" announced in 2021. Mr Araghchi hopes that a new deal will unlock Chinese investment.





Photograph: Getty Images

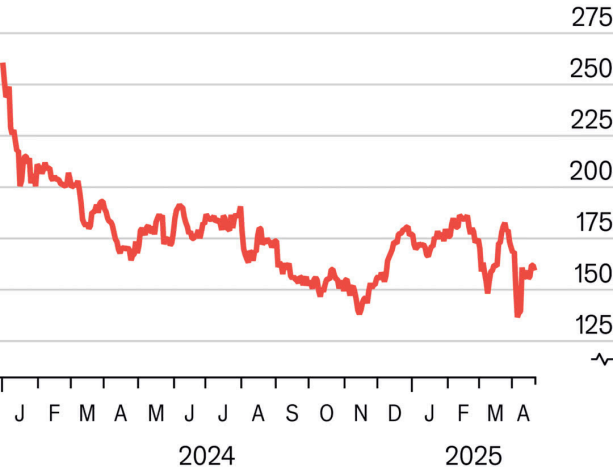
## Can Boeing regain altitude?

Boeing publishes first-quarter results on Wednesday. The firm's once-stellar reputation for engineering was tarnished by two crashes in 2018-19. Last year things were [little better](#). In January shoddy manufacturing caused the mid-flight blowout of a panel on a 737 MAX jet; in September problems with its Starliner space ferry left two astronauts stranded and needing a lift home from Elon Musk's SpaceX. Then 33,000 machinists went on strike, stopping production for almost eight weeks.

Things may be looking up. First-quarter losses are expected to be only a fraction of the \$4bn Boeing posted in the three months to December. Its order books for commercial jets are full, and on April 22nd it agreed to sell some digital operations for \$11bn to focus on its core business. But Boeing's task remains formidable. It has been made harder by Donald Trump's trade war: on April 15th China banned the delivery of nearly 180 Boeing aircraft ordered by Chinese airlines.

**Brace, brace!**

Boeing share price, \$



Source: LSEG Workspace



Photograph: ROPI

## **If Ukraine says no, will America walk away?**

Officials from America, Britain, France and Ukraine are meeting in London on Wednesday for further talks about a ceasefire between Ukraine and Russia. Marco Rubio, America's secretary of state, will not attend. His last-minute decision to skip the meeting comes shortly after he threatened to "move on" from peace talks unless there is quick progress towards a deal.

The details of the deal that America favours are far from clear. A report in the *Wall Street Journal* suggests that America wants Ukraine to cede Crimea to Russia and establish an American-controlled neutral zone around the Zaporizhia nuclear-power plant. Donald Trump's special envoy to Ukraine, Keith Kellogg, confirmed on April 20th that the country's membership of NATO "is off the table". American support for other security guarantees is unforthcoming.

Legal recognition of Russia's annexation of Crimea would undermine the principle in international law that countries cannot redraw borders by force. Apart from giving Ukraine an opportunity



to avoid blame for the collapse of the talks, the plan offers little to the embattled country.



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

**Tuesday:** The Great Red Spot is a centuries-old storm visible on which planet?

*Brevity is the soul of wit.*

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***William Shakespeare***