

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter

Binyamin Netanyahu vowed to retaliate after Israeli authorities reported that a missile launched by the **Houthi** rebel group in Yemen landed near Ben Gurion airport, pausing flights briefly. “It will not happen in one bang,” said Israel’s prime minister, “but there will be many bangs.” The Iranian-backed **Houthis** have been firing missiles at Israel since the outbreak of the conflict in Gaza, but they rarely get past the country’s anti-missile systems.

George Simion, [a hard-right populist](#), won the first round of **Romania’s presidential election** with 41% of the vote. The country’s constitutional court annulled the previous election, held last year, after Calin Georgescu, another hard-right populist, unexpectedly won the first round—allegedly thanks to Russian interference. Mr Simion will face Nicusor Dan, the independent mayor of Bucharest, in a run-off on May 18th.

Oil prices plunged after the OPEC+ oil cartel announced a second consecutive monthly increase in output—adding to fears of a supply glut. Brent crude, a global benchmark, fell by 4% to below \$59 per barrel, near a four-year low. Tensions within OPEC+ have grown recently as some members, such as Kazakhstan and Iraq, have [pumped above their quotas](#).

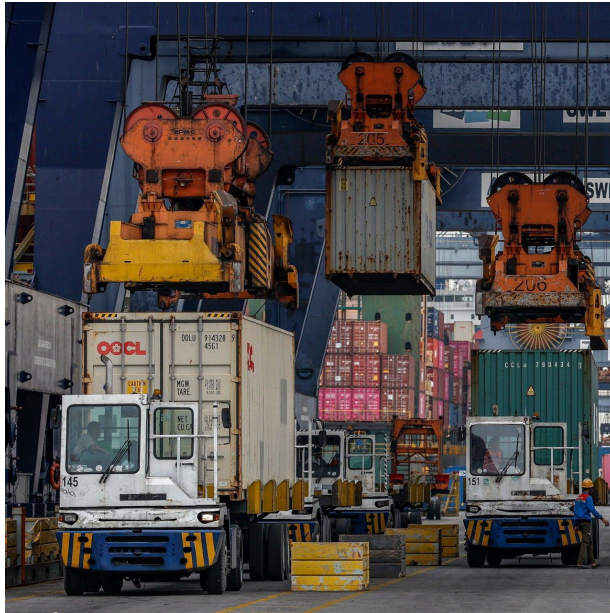
Kato Katsunobu, **Japan’s** finance minister, said his country had no plans to use the possibility of selling **American Treasury bonds** as a negotiating chip in discussions with the Trump administration about tariffs. On Friday Mr Kato had said in an interview that Japan could do so. The country holds over \$1trn of [American debt](#), more than any other country.

President **Donald Trump** said he had ordered officials to rebuild and reopen **Alcatraz**, a famous prison on an island off San Francisco. The jail—which once housed criminals such as Al Capone—was closed in 1963 and has since become a popular tourist destination. [Mr Trump](#) said Alcatraz would “house America’s most ruthless and violent offenders” and that it was “a symbol of law and order”.

Brazilian police arrested two people in connection with a plan to bomb a Lady Gaga concert attended by more than 2m people on Saturday in Rio de Janeiro. Authorities say the pair were recruiting people, including minors, online to attack the pop gig with improvised explosives. The alleged leader was arrested on gun charges while a teenager was detained for possession of child pornography.

Mr Trump said he would slap a 100% tariff on films made abroad because he thinks **Hollywood** is dying a “very fast death”. The president said efforts by other countries to attract [filmmakers and studios](#) from America were a “National Security threat”. “WE WANT MOVIES MADE IN AMERICA, AGAIN!” wrote Mr Trump on Truth Social, his social-media platform.

Figure of the day: More than 5,500,000%, the increase in Berkshire Hathaway’s market value since 1965. [Read the full story.](#)



Photograph: EPA

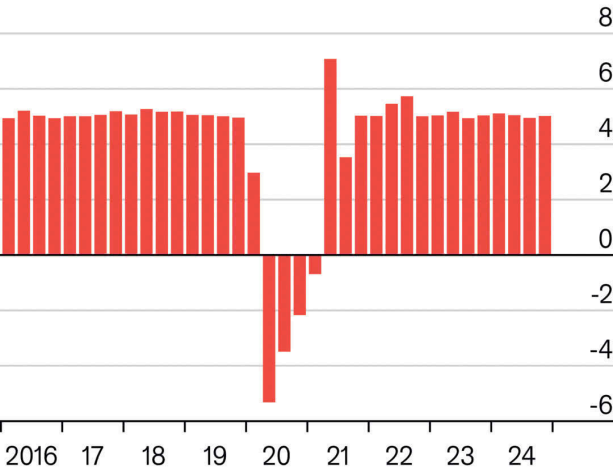
Indonesia's tepid economy

When Indonesia's stockmarket reopened on April 8th after a long weekend break, it plunged 8% in a day. Investors were processing the news, announced on April 2nd, that Donald Trump would hit Indonesian goods entering America with "reciprocal" tariffs of 32%. Indonesia's currency fell to its lowest level against the dollar since 1998, during the Asian financial crisis. But Indonesia's government got some good news when, the next day, America's president postponed those tariffs until July (a blanket 10% levy remains).

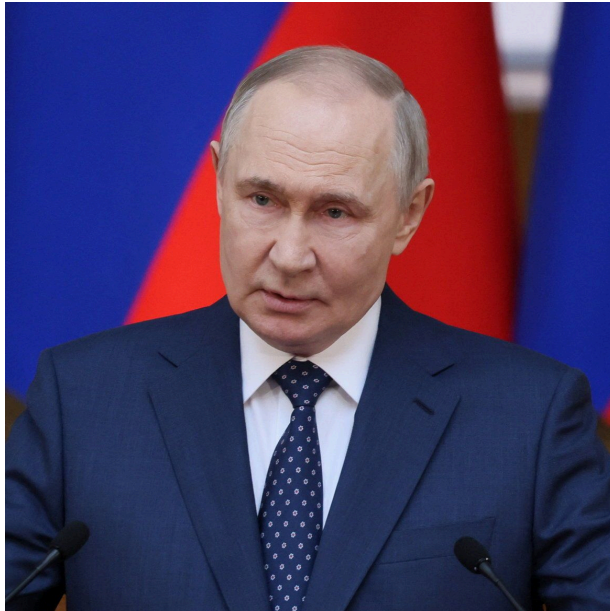
But GDP data for the first quarter of 2025—released on Monday—piled on more misery. Indonesia's economy grew by 4.9% year on year, down from 5% in the previous quarter and below estimates. Indonesia's annual growth rate for most of the past three decades has been around 5%—mediocre, for a middle-income country. President Prabowo Subianto wants to hit 8%. His plan? Spend big, including on a \$28bn free school-lunch scheme. Analysts fear cost overruns. But raising growth will require more than splurging. Deeper changes to Indonesia's economy, such as overhauling state-owned businesses, are needed.

Invariable rate

Indonesia, GDP, % change on a year earlier



Source: LSEG Workspace



Photograph: Reuters

Putin's short, cynical ceasefire

On April 28th Vladimir Putin announced a three-day ceasefire in Ukraine, beginning on Thursday. Russia's president insists he is motivated by "humanitarian" reasons. Ukrainians are sceptical. They think the pause is a cynical attempt to persuade America to suspend some sanctions, particularly those that affect civilian aviation, a vital cog in Russia's war machine. Volodymyr Zelensky, Ukraine's president, called it a "theatrical show" and rejected the proposal.

America seems better disposed to Ukraine since Mr Zelensky met his American counterpart, Donald Trump, in the Vatican on April 26th. The terms of a long-touted [mineral deal](#), signed four days later, ended up being more favourable to Ukraine than expected. The White House has approved a \$50m sale of arms to Ukraine, which is perhaps of greater symbolic than material importance. And efforts by Britain and France to persuade Mr Trump to take a tougher line with Mr Putin appear, at least for now, to be paying off.



Photograph: Getty Images

Europe woos American scientists

Emmanuel Macron, France's president, and Ursula von der Leyen, head of the European Commission, have a pitch for researchers: "Choose Europe for Science". On Monday they will deliver it at a conference at the Sorbonne, in Paris. Although not explicitly addressed those working in America, the idea is clear: scholars who want to be sure of academic freedom are welcome in Europe.

Mr Macron wants to secure more investment in research and innovation to help boost European economic performance. (This was a central recommendation of a report conducted in 2024 by Mario Draghi, a former president of the European Central Bank, into EU competitiveness.) France's president has in recent years focused on luring foreign investors. His new pitch to scientific researchers will come with the possibility of partial state funding. He and Ms von der Leyen are hoping to make a virtue for Europe of Donald Trump's clampdown on American campuses.



Photograph: Getty Images

Fashion's big night out

From ginormous frocks to animal costumes, the Met Gala takes spectacle seriously. So do the millions who tune in to watch celebrities parade down the red carpet. But when the world's glitterati descend on the Metropolitan Museum of Art in Manhattan on Monday, it may be suits that receive the most attention. For the first time in two decades the theme—"Superfine: Tailoring Black Style"—will focus on menswear. It will put a spotlight on the ways in which black men express resistance through fashion.

The gala, which raises funds for the museum, has sometimes been criticised for being out of touch. Last year tickets cost \$75,000. Given the economic uncertainty that has followed Donald Trump's election, such prices seem otherworldly. And the racial politics of this year's theme are stark against the backdrop of the president's attack on diversity policies and attempts to alter discrimination law. Whoever said fashion isn't political?



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.

Monday: Which TV show starred Ricardo Montalban as Mr Roarke and Herve Villechaize as his assistant, Tattoo?

*You need to have discipline in
order to be truly creative.*

Delia Derbyshire