

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter

An American court blocked many of **Donald Trump's trade tariffs**, saying the president had exceeded his authority by imposing them. The ruling is potentially a [huge setback](#) to one of the White House's central policies. Usually, Congress, not the president, has the power to impose tariffs. The US Court of International Trade ruled that Mr Trump's scheme to circumvent the legislature, by declaring a national emergency, is unlawful. The administration said it would appeal.

Elon Musk said he would step down as a “special government employee” with the Trump administration. The billionaire has led a radical effort to overhaul the American state through the Department of Government Efficiency. He has been critical of Mr Trump's [budget bill](#), which would add trillions to debt. He recently said he wanted to spend more time on his businesses—which have themselves suffered [a backlash](#).

Marco Rubio, **America's** secretary of state, said his country would “aggressively revoke visas for **Chinese** students”, some of whom the administration has accused of spying. He said America would also “enhance scrutiny” of future visa applicants from China. The announcement came a day after his [terrible idea](#) to pause student-visa applications.

Chega, a hard-right party, came second in a snap election in **Portugal**, ending 50 years of two-party dominance in the country. The ruling centre-right Democratic Alliance won the most seats, but again fell short of a majority. Its traditional rival, the Socialist Party, was pipped by [Chega](#), which was founded just six years ago.

Binyamin Netanyahu, **Israel's** prime minister, confirmed that his forces had killed Muhammad Sinwar, the chief of **Hamas** in Gaza. He was targeted in a missile strike on the European hospital in the southern city of Khan Younis on May 13th. He was the younger brother of the previous chief, [Yahya Sinwar](#), killed by Israel last October. Hamas has neither confirmed nor denied Muhammad Sinwar's death.

Argentina raised \$1bn from foreign investors through local-currency debt, marking a return to global capital markets after seven years. The peso-denominated bond was issued with a coupon of 29.5% and can be purchased using dollars. It is part of a larger strategy to boost the country's currency reserves. Investors remain cautiously optimistic about Argentina's economic reforms under Javier Milei, its [libertarian president](#).

Germany's cabinet approved proposals to [restrict immigration](#), signalling a shift in policy under Friedrich Merz, the new chancellor. Migrants who do not qualify for full refugee status will no longer be able to bring their children and spouses to Germany. The measures still have to be approved by the Bundestag.

Figure of the day: Seven. The weight, in pounds, of the Double Gloucester used in England's annual cheese rolling competition. The government is mulling making the sport official. [Read the full story.](#)



Illustration: David Simonds

An economic rough patch in South Korea

South Korean politics have been in turmoil since the former president, Yoon Suk Yeol, declared martial law in December. He was [impeached](#), and a snap election is scheduled for June 3rd. Meanwhile, Donald Trump's tariffs threaten turmoil for South Korea's export-driven economy; the value of trade is equivalent to nearly 90% of GDP. The economy shrank by 0.2% in the first quarter of 2025 from the previous three months. Earlier this year the Bank of Korea cut its growth forecast for 2025 from 1.9% to 1.5%. On Thursday the central bank cut interest rates, from 2.75% to 2.5%, as expected.

That is in part because inflation, at least, is no longer causing a ruckus. Last year, Mr Yoon marvelled at the "reasonable" price of spring onions at a subsidised market, triggering nationwide ["spring-onion protests"](#). But in April, consumer prices rose by just 2.1%, close to the central bank's target of 2%. That gives rate-setters room to help growth.



Photograph: Getty Images

Dell's AI success is a mixed blessing

Dell, a maker of computer hardware, reports quarterly earnings on Thursday. The firm has benefited from the artificial-intelligence boom. Its AI servers use chips made by [Nvidia](#), the world's most valuable semiconductor firm, a partnership that has helped boost sales. Morgan Stanley, a bank, reckons Dell could generate more than \$15bn in revenue from AI servers this year—around 15% of its total sales.

But margins on these machines are thinner than on Dell's other products. Shortages of Nvidia's latest chips have also created a backlog of orders. Trade tensions pose another risk: Dell relies on overseas suppliers to assemble servers, and tariffs could tighten the squeeze. Meanwhile, demand for Dell's other mainstay—personal computers—is expected to remain weak as consumers hold back. Even so, Dell is doubling down on AI infrastructure. It recently announced a deal with Nvidia to build “AI factories”: data centres designed to train and run the most advanced AI models.



Photograph: Getty Images

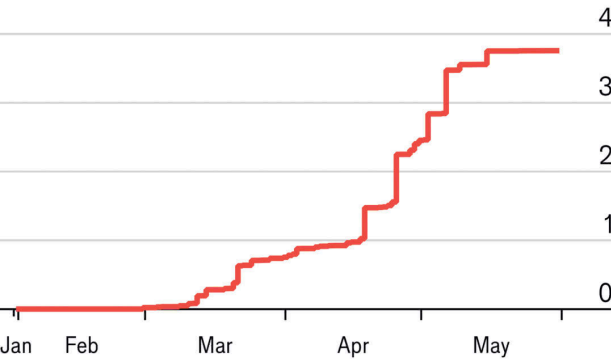
Trump's feud with Harvard worsens

A bitter conflict between Harvard, America's oldest university, and Donald Trump shows no sign of easing. Mr Trump, who sees elite universities as [hotbeds of woke liberalism](#), has rescinded all the institution's federal research [grants and contracts](#), sought to revoke its tax-exempt status and tried to ban its enrolment of international students. In response Harvard has sued the government, winning some reprieve. On Thursday a court will determine if the international-student ban should go ahead.

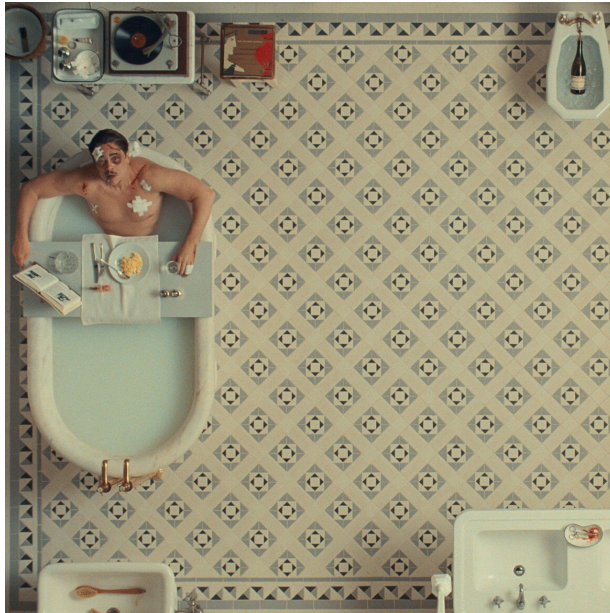
Even if it does not, Harvard faces a straitened future. Without billions of dollars in federal funding, Harvard's [world-leading researchers](#) will struggle to keep labs running as usual. And even if the courts hand back their current grants and contracts, they will eventually have to ask the government for more. They, and their colleagues at other institutions in similar situations, will be hoping Mr Trump picks another target soon. They should not hold their breaths.

Untimely ends

United States, number of NSF and NIH grants terminated*, 2025, '000



*Includes 81 NIH grants that may have been reinstated
Source: Grant Watch



Photograph: Alamy

Wes Anderson goes full Wes Anderson

“The Phoenician Scheme” opens in a few American theatres this week, before its wider release on June 6th. Wes Anderson’s 12th feature film stars Benicio del Toro as a ruthless tycoon and Mia Threapleton, Kate Winslet’s oldest child, as his estranged, convent-raised daughter, along with the American director’s other stalwarts, including Willem Dafoe.

Mr Anderson’s films do not generate massive box-office returns. Still, he has amassed a devoted following for his tidy, intricate storylines, snappy dialogue, pervasive sense of melancholy and obsessive (if slightly airless) aesthetic. For this film he eschewed location shots in favour of building nearly everything, including Heaven, on a soundstage in Potsdam, Germany.

Trailers suggest that this may not be the best Wes Anderson film. But it certainly looks like the most Wes Anderson. Those not acclimated to his previous catalogue should brace themselves for potentially hazardous levels of tweeness and self-regard.



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.

Thursday: A mass audition for a showbiz event is colloquially known by what term?

Wednesday: The green circle on a darts board is commonly known by what term?

Freedom is indivisible, and when one man is enslaved, all are not free.

John F. Kennedy