

## Catch up: Israel strikes a school in Gaza; Russia orders evacuation of Kursk



**Israeli rockets** hit a school in **Gaza**. Hamas claimed that the strike killed 100 people, which would make it one of the conflict's deadliest attacks. Israel claimed it had hit a Hamas "command-and-control centre" in the school. Displaced **Gazans** were using the al-Tabin school, in central Gaza city, as a shelter. Egypt's foreign ministry said the attack showed Israel had no intention of ending the war.

The governor of **Kursk**, a Russian region under attack by **Ukrainian** troops, ordered authorities to speed up the evacuation of tens of thousands of civilians. On Saturday Volodymyr Zelensky, Ukraine's president, acknowledged the incursion for the first time and said it was bringing "exactly the kind of pressure that is needed—pressure on the aggressor". **The operation** is Ukraine's biggest cross-border incursion since Russia invaded it in 2022.

**Donald Trump's** presidential campaign said its internal communications had been hacked by "foreign sources hostile to the United States" and suggested Iran was to blame. The campaign

published the claims after Politico, a news website, reported that it was sent internal campaign documents by an anonymous source. [The Trump campaign](#) did not provide direct evidence of the hack or of Iran's involvement.

**Bangladesh's chief justice**, Obaidul Hassan, resigned under pressure from protesters. He was seen as a loyalist to [Sheikh Hasina](#), the prime minister who was ousted earlier this week and fled to India. Some 500 people have been killed in weeks of unrest, according to local media. The police in Dhaka are on strike following several deaths in their ranks.

Around 40,000 people signed up to the People's Party in **Thailand** since it launched on Friday. The party succeeded the [Move Forward Party](#), a liberal party that won more than any other in last year's election, but was forced by a Thai court order to [dissolve on August 7th](#). The new party reported receiving more than 20m baht (\$570,000) in donations.

**The Philippines** accused **China** of "dangerous and provocative actions" by two of its aircraft, which it said had dropped flares in the path of a Philippine plane patrolling the South China Sea. China said it had been acting professionally. Chinese coastguards regularly [harass Philippine vessels](#) in the disputed maritime region; but this was the first time that the Philippines has complained about aerial harassment.

The authorities in **Japan** have urged citizens to refrain from hoarding. People appeared to have started panic-buying after the meteorological agency warned of a heightened risk of a massive [earthquake](#). Demand for disaster kits and daily necessities has spiked. The prime minister, Kishida Fumio, cancelled a trip scheduled to begin on Friday to Central Asia and Mongolia.

**Word of the week:** Siesta, an afternoon nap or rest period. It is still a serious business in Europe's south. [Read the full story](#).

*In the run-up to America's presidential election, we've launched [The US in brief](#)—a daily update to help you keep on top of the political stories that matter. [Sign up here](#) to receive it as a newsletter, each weekday, in your inbox.*

## Another push for a Gaza ceasefire



Some people in Gaza are losing track of how many times they have been displaced. On Friday the Israeli army sent troops into Khan Younis, its third ground offensive in the southern city since the war began in October. Thousands of Palestinian civilians were ordered to evacuate; most left on foot, carrying their meagre possessions in backpacks.

America, Egypt and Qatar have called for talks on Thursday to try to finalise a ceasefire. They insist that an agreement is close and that the talks—to be held in either Cairo or Doha—can resolve the outstanding issues. But Binyamin Netanyahu, Israel's prime minister, is ambivalent about a deal that would upset his right-wing base. Yahya Sinwar, the [new leader of Hamas](#), is hardly enthusiastic either. He insists that any deal must include a full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, a condition Mr Netanyahu will not accept. The talks may bring little relief for Palestinians on the run for nearly a year.

## Sánchez's Catalan quagmire



Spain's prime minister, Pedro Sánchez, last week managed to install Salvador Illa, from his Socialist party, as Catalonia's president, ending 14 years of government of the region by separatists. This was despite a last-minute distraction from [Carles Puigdemont](#), who unconstitutionally declared Catalonia's independence in 2017. A fugitive from justice since then, he appeared in Barcelona on Thursday, gave a speech and then disappeared, evading arrest with the apparent complicity of the Catalan police.

The price of Mr Illa's victory may come to haunt Mr Sánchez's minority government. It offered Esquerra, one of the two main separatist parties, a deal granting Catalonia, one of Spain's richest regions, fiscal sovereignty. That undermines the federalist spirit of the constitution and is anathema to the conservative opposition and many in the Socialist party. Mr Sánchez may not get the deal through Spain's parliament. If he fails the Catalan separatists, on whom his government depends, may block the budget for a second year. Mr Sánchez survives, but Spain drifts.



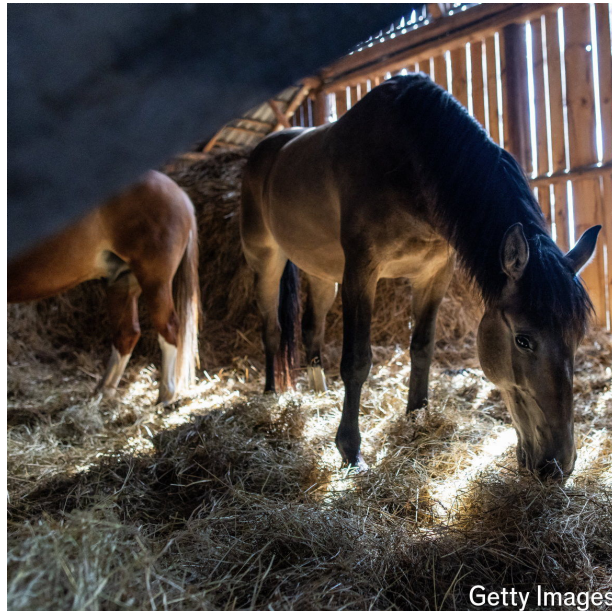
# How the games got their groove back



Organisers of the Paris Olympics have had to contend with bad weather, an ugly row over [eligibility in boxing](#) and, allegedly, worms in the food at the athletes' village. But there are always logistical problems at huge events. These will not be the abiding memories from the games, which end on Sunday. Instead, Paris will be remembered as the place where the Olympic movement got its groove back, after the corruption and drug scandals of the winter games at Sochi (in 2014) and the joyless obligation-fulfilment of Tokyo (in 2021) during the pandemic.

These games had plenty of stars. Leon Marchand, a French swimmer, was a sensation; Simone Biles was back to her best in the gymnastics; and in Noah Lyles athletics may have found a sprinter with the star power of Usain Bolt. The youth-focused events—BMX, skateboarding and breaking—were hits. As yet, no big stars have failed drugs tests. Organisers in Los Angeles, to which the summer Olympics head in 2028, can focus less on rehabilitation and more on celebration.

# Healthier ice cream with horse milk



About 230,000 horses produced milk for human consumption in the Soviet Union. It is the basis for making koumiss, a slightly heady fermented milk of ancient origin, which is quaffed across Central Asia. The peoples of the steppe have long believed it has health-giving properties, and not without reason. A growing body of evidence suggests that mare's milk can prevent and treat gastrointestinal and respiratory disorders.

Polish scientists have been experimenting with using mare's milk to make ice cream. They reported the results of its health benefits this week in *PLOS ONE*, a journal. The new product is reassuringly tasty, creamy and white—with added probiotic benefits. Mare's milk is similar to human breast milk: it is sweeter than cow's milk, and has immune-boosting enzymes like lactoferrin and lysozyme. It is also lower in fat and less allergenic. Ordinarily, healthier ice cream would sell itself. But Western consumers might hesitate before sitting down to a bowl of vanilla, with added Shergar.

## Berlioz at Bard



Muhammad Yunus, a Nobel-peace-prize winner, was already Bangladesh's most famous citizen. This week the 84-year-old assumed its most important political office. When protests forced the resignation of Sheikh Hasina, the prime minister, he was [deemed the best person](#) to lead an army-backed interim government. As one protest leader put it: "In Dr Yunus, we trust."

Mr Yunus has long sought to help his fellow Bangladeshis. In 1971, as Pakistani troops suppressed an independence movement, Mr Yunus, then an assistant professor of economics in America, helped lead the freedom fight from abroad. He lobbied the White House to formally recognise Bangladesh, and returned home to join the new country's government.

But bureaucracy—and a subsequent role in academia—proved frustrating. As famine ravaged Bangladesh in 1974, Mr Yunus said he felt terrible teaching "elegant theories of economics" amid widespread starvation. He wanted to be "of some use to some people".



In 1976 Mr Yunus met Sufiya Begum, a 21-year-old bamboo-furniture maker. Like many around her, she depended on credit from usurious lenders. Mr Yunus freed her from debt himself, prompting the launch of a financial programme disbursing small loans to the very poor.

His novel project evolved into Grameen Bank, which today has some 23,000 employees and 11m borrowers across 94% of Bangladeshi villages. It has cumulatively disbursed \$39bn in loans, mostly to poor women. In 2006 Mr Yunus, along with Grameen Bank, won a Nobel peace prize.

Yet some economists have cast doubts on the microfinance model, and research on its effectiveness is mixed. Ms Hasina once described him as a “bloodsucker of the poor”, arguing the high interest rates charged by microfinance lenders trapped borrowers in a cycle of debt.

Her criticisms seemed motivated less by economics than by politics. After becoming prime minister in 2009 she suppressed those who might conceivably pose a political threat, including Mr Yunus. In 2011 her government ousted him from Grameen’s board. Earlier this year he was sentenced to six months in jail for violating labour laws. He denies any wrongdoing, claiming that the 190 court cases pending against him have been politically motivated.

[Writing in \*The Economist\*](#) shortly before assuming his new role, Mr Yunus urged Bangladeshis to move on from “backward-looking” politics. Already he has helped them look to the future with a bit more hope.

## The winners of this week's quiz



*The Economist*

Thank you to everyone who took part in this week's quiz. The winners, chosen at random, were:

**Jörg Hackenberg**, Mainz, Germany

**Jos Aarts**, Nijmegen, The Netherlands

**Shin Chang Sup**, Incheon, South Korea

They all gave the correct answers of Top Gun, James Garfield, Tom Joad, Sylvester and Felix Mendelssohn. The theme is cartoon cats: Top Cat, Garfield, Tom, Sylvester and Felix (one of the first animated characters in film history).

The questions were:

**Monday:** Maverick, Goose and Iceman are nicknames for characters in which 1986 movie?

**Tuesday:** Which President was assassinated in 1881, only six months into his term of office?

**Wednesday:** Which character in John Steinbeck's novel "The Grapes of Wrath" inspired an album by Bruce Springsteen?

**Thursday:** Which singer had a disco hit with the song “You Make Me Feel (Mighty Real)”?

**Friday:** Who composed the widely used “wedding march” and the Hebrides Overture?

# Siesta

*An afternoon nap or rest period. It is still a serious business in Europe's south.*

*Read the full story.*





**It is the heart of life to have a real meeting  
with another human being.**

*Fay Honey Knopp*