

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter

Hamas proposed amendments to America's plan for a Gaza ceasefire. Under the deal, the militant group would free ten Israeli captives and return the bodies of 18 dead hostages in exchange for several Palestinian prisoners. But Hamas also wants Israel to withdraw from Gaza and a permanent [end to the war](#). Steve Witkoff, Donald Trump's envoy, called the militant group's response "totally unacceptable".

Eight members of the **OPEC+** oil cartel said they would sharply increase production. The group, including Russia and Saudi Arabia, plans to raise output by 411,000 barrels per day in July, the same as it did in May and June. It cited "healthy market fundamentals" based on low oil inventories. But many analysts expect Mr Trump's tariff wars to slow economic activity and push down global oil demand.

The International Atomic Energy Agency says that **Iran** increased its stockpile of highly enriched uranium by half over the past three months. According to a confidential report seen by several outlets, the UN agency reckons the country now has around 400kg of near-weapons-grade material, for which there is [no plausible civilian use](#). Israel said the findings demonstrate Iran's determination to produce a nuclear weapon.

America's defence secretary, **Pete Hegseth**, warned that the prospect of a Chinese attack on Taiwan was "real" and an offensive "could be imminent". Speaking at the Shangri-La Dialogue, a defence forum in Singapore, he said China's military actions in the Indo-Pacific should serve as a "wake-up call" and urged regional allies to spend more on arms. His own administration's fickleness has [added to Taiwan's anxieties](#).

Volodymyr Zelensky said that **Russia** was doing everything it could to ensure the failure of peace talks scheduled for next week. Neither Ukraine's president nor his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, appear likely to attend the negotiations in Istanbul. [Ukraine](#) insists that Russia must set out its position in advance and that a ceasefire must be in place.

Britain is to step up its spending on defence under plans laid out in its ten-year [Strategic Defence Review](#). It will build six new arms factories to manufacture munitions and explosives, at a cost of £1.5bn (\$2bn). The Ministry of Defence said it would also seek to procure 7,000 long-range missiles.

Paris Saint-Germain, a French football side backed by Qatari petrodollars, won the **Champions League** for the first time. PSG walloped Inter Milan 5-0 in the final in Munich. It was an overdue success: Qatar has pumped billions into the club since buying a controlling stake in 2011 with the express intention of winning the competition. PSG's past Champions League failures have verged on the slapstick.

Word of the week: *Catéchuménat*, the path to baptism in the Catholic church. The number of French adults who were baptised at Easter this year was 46% higher than in 2024. [Read the full story.](#)



Photograph: Reuters

Poland's time to decide

On Sunday Poland holds the second round of its [presidential election](#). Like so many elections these days, it pits a cosmopolitan liberal against a hard-right populist, and the polls are neck-and-neck. Rafal Trzaskowski, the mayor of Warsaw, was long seen as the probable winner. But in the [first round](#) on May 18th he finished barely ahead of [Karol Nawrocki](#), a nationalist historian backed by the opposition Law and Justice (pis) party. Other hard-right parties also did unexpectedly well, with most of their voters expected to back Mr Nawrocki in the run-off.

Donald Tusk, the centrist prime minister, and his coalition government need Mr Trzaskowski to win in order to undo the illiberal takeover of the courts that pis executed while in power in 2015-23. The outgoing president, Andrzej Duda, has used his veto to stymie reforms. Should Mr Nawrocki win, it would pave the way for a pis return in parliamentary elections in 2027—and Poland's retreat towards Europe's populist camp.



Photograph: Reuters

OPEC's parallel universe

On Saturday the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies met to decide how much they will collectively produce in July. The group, which supplies around half the world's oil, announced an increase of 411,000 barrels per day. That marked the third rise in three months and a tripling of what the group signalled late last year that it would add to the market. All this comes when growth in global oil demand, pushed down by Donald Trump's tariff wars, is projected to slow.

The cartel has justified its actions by citing “healthy market fundamentals”. In fact, they owe more to the ambitions of the group's [largest members](#) to regain market share, after making output cuts since 2022 that have failed to lift prices. But the cartel's production is still far from its peak, and after summer demand may soften further. If that happens, it will become harder for OPEC+ to keep raising output.



Photograph: Getty Images

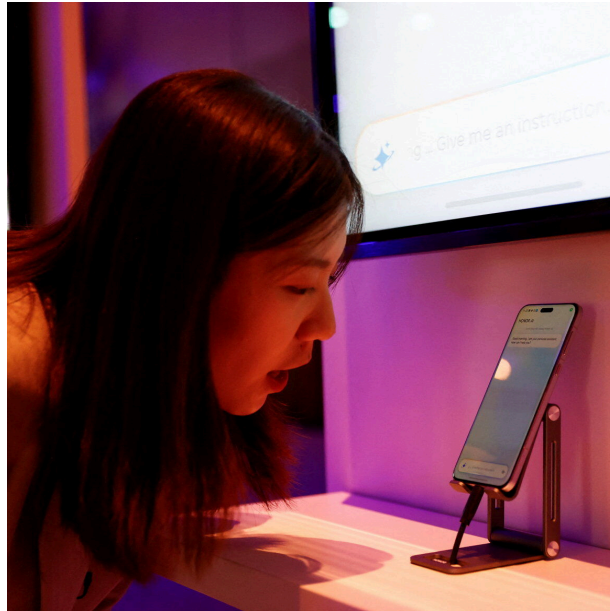
Mexico's judicial elections

Mexico is setting a milestone: it will become the first country in the world where just about every judge on every court is chosen by [popular vote](#). On Sunday, in the first of two rounds, Mexicans will elect judges to 850 federal posts, nine Supreme Court seats, 22 powerful tribunal jobs and thousands of roles in lower courts. In 2027 they will fill the rest of the seats.

President Claudia Sheinbaum argues that elections are necessary to “democratise” the judiciary and rid the courts of corruption.

Mexico's justice system is indeed wanting. But the reform, passed by her predecessor Andrés Manuel López Obrador, will only give Morena, Ms Sheinbaum's hegemonic party, and drug gangs a way to influence the courts.

Many sitting judges have refused to run. Turnout is expected to be low: one poll found only half of respondents know the first vote is on Sunday. It is a [blow](#) to the rule of law that will harm Mexico's democracy and economy.



Photograph: Reuters

AI's not-so-secret agents

Mentions of so-called “[agentic](#)” [artificial intelligence](#), software that can take actions on behalf of its users, have risen by 779% in corporate-earnings calls over the past year, according to AlphaSense, a market researcher. [Business has caught the bug](#). But AI agents have bugs of their own. In a study carried out by researchers at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, commercial AI agents were duped into clicking rogue links or leaking data inside online adverts. The scholars succeeded in tricking the agents 60% of the time.

In another study, led by researchers in America, malicious instructions were hidden on websites using low-contrast “fine print” that humans have trouble spotting. Six state-of-the-art AI agents obediently executed the planted commands, which were spread across 234 doctored web pages. Both studies expose the Achilles’ heel of agentic AI: anything the software can “see”, it might treat as gospel. Business’s new fixation urgently needs a fix.



Photograph: Getty Images

The pen of American conservatism

William Buckley founded the *National Review* in 1955, just five years after receiving his undergraduate degree. Staunchly anti-communist and devoted to small-government conservatism and free-market principles, it became the voice of the American right. Buckley, who died in 2008, became a multimedia star of an intensity that today's strident opinion writers can only dream of.

He is also the subject of a lengthy new biography by Sam Tanenhaus, who used to edit the *New York Times's* Book Review. It follows Buckley from his childhood in Mexico and rural Connecticut, through elite educational institutions (Millbrook, Yale) where he finds his voice—cutting, erudite and playful—and through the halls of power in Washington and beyond. Buckley emerges less as an intellectual than as a marketer of and fighter for ideas. Not an especially original thinker, he was a brilliant and fluid writer, with an enviable turn of phrase. The book is a delight, whatever your politics.



Illustration: The Economist

The winners of this week's quiz

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

Alvaro Tomas, Panama City, Panama

Linda Ely, Hanover, New Hampshire, America

Alexander Svanberg, Horten, Norway

They all gave the correct answers of: lion, hydra, bull, cattle, apple. The theme is the labours of Hercules: he must slay the Nemean lion, kill the nine-headed Hydra, capture the Cretan bull, steal the cattle of Geryon and retrieve the golden apples of the Hesperides.

The questions were:

Monday: MGM uses which animal as a symbol?

Tuesday: Which sinister organisation, with its roots in Nazi Germany, is one of the main opponents of Captain America?

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

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

Friday: Braeburn, Gala and Pink Lady are all types of what?



Illustration: The Economist

Crossword

We now publish an interactive edition of our crossword twice a week, allowing you to enter and check the answers, and see explanations, instantly. [Try it here](#). Or, if you prefer to do things the old-fashioned way, use the grid below.

Our crossword has two sets of clues, one for seasoned cruciverbalists and the other for less experienced solvers. Both give the same answers, all of which feature in articles in this week's edition of *The Economist*:

Cryptic clues

1 across Hippo is only concealing venom (6)

2 across Trojan hero's city (5)

3 across Even infant disowns country (6)

1 down Hull librarian with pink hair takes pill, surprisingly (6,6)

Factual clues

1 across What the Texas blindsnake secretes from its tail (6)

2 across Home of Notre-Dame Cathedral (5)

3 across Mohandas Gandhi was described as the “father of the _____”, for India (6)

1 down Who wrote that it was possible to make a living “by being a poet” rather than just by poetry itself (6,6)

Email all four answers, along with your home city and country, by 9am BST on Monday to [\[email protected\]](#). We will pick randomly from those with the right answers and crown three winners in next week’s edition.

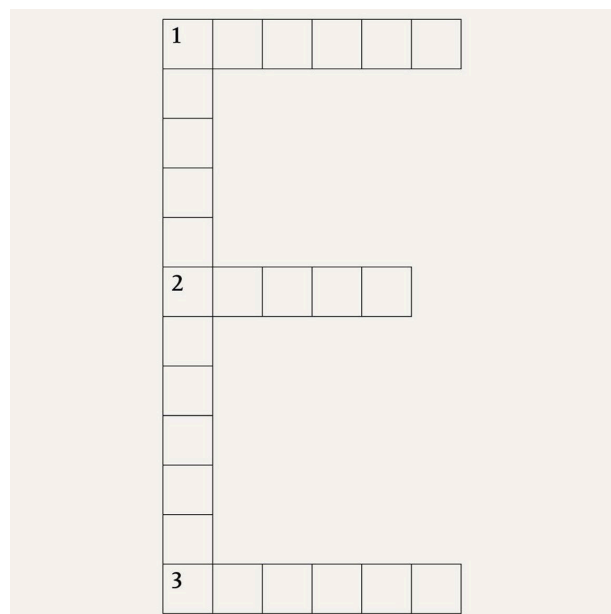


Image: The Economist

*None of us can know what we are
capable of until we are tested*

Elizabeth Blackwell