

# The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter

**India** and **Pakistan** [began a ceasefire](#), though some explosions were reported in Kashmir after it was declared. Marco Rubio, America's secretary of state, said that the South Asian neighbours would "start talks on a broad set of issues at a neutral site" (something that neither has confirmed). Fighting erupted after a terrorist attack in Indian-administered Kashmir in April, which India blamed on Pakistan.

The leaders of Britain, France, Germany and Poland travelled to **Ukraine** to push for a [30-day ceasefire](#), to start on Monday. The four met Volodymyr Zelensky, Ukraine's president, and held a phone call with Mr Trump, which Ukraine's foreign minister called "fruitful". They threatened [more sanctions](#) on Russia unless it agreed to a truce. Earlier the Kremlin's spokesperson said that would require an end to the flow of Western weapons to Ukraine.

Trade talks between **America** and **China** began in Switzerland. Scott Bessent, Donald Trump's treasury secretary, and He Lifeng, Xi Jinping's vice-premier, are leading the negotiations. They are the first face-to-face talks since Mr Trump imposed tariffs of 145% on [China](#), which responded with 125% levies of its own. On Friday Mr Trump suggested an 80% tariff on China "seems right".

**Leo XIV** held his [first meeting](#) with all the Roman Catholic church's cardinals since being elected pope. Explaining his priorities as pontiff, Leo urged the church to preserve the "precious legacy" of his liberal predecessor, Francis. He also warned that artificial intelligence is a challenge to "human dignity, justice and labour" that will require Catholics to engage in "social teaching".

The Trump administration reportedly threatened UN agencies with funding cuts if they did not support an American-led **aid** plan for **Gaza**. According to the *Financial Times*, Steve Witkoff, America's special envoy to the Middle East, issued the warning earlier this week. The new [proposal](#) involves funneling aid into Gaza with the help of American military contractors. UN officials worry that this would endanger their staff.

A federal judge in America ordered the release of a detained **Tufts University** student from Turkey. In March immigration authorities arrested Rumeysa Ozturk, who contributed to an op-ed critical of Israel for a student newspaper. Her visa was revoked. [The Trump administration](#) accused her of participating in “activities in support of Hamas”. The judge said officials lacked evidence and that her arrest violated free-speech rights.

**Simon Mann**, an Old Etonian who participated in an attempted coup in **Equatorial Guinea** in 2004, died aged 72. The son of a former England cricket captain, Mr Mann joined the British Army before becoming a mercenary. He was imprisoned for around five years for his role in [the putsch](#), which allegedly involved the son of Margaret Thatcher, a former British prime minister.

**Word of the week:** Webtoons, digital comics whose global market was worth some \$9bn in 2024. [Read the full story.](#)



Photograph: Alamy

## Chile searches for new friends abroad

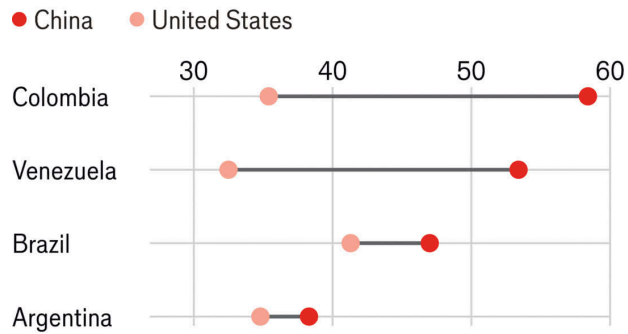
This weekend Gabriel Boric, [Chile's](#) president, begins a tour of Asia. His agenda has a distinct commercial edge. Seeking to deepen Chile's economic ties in the shadow of [Donald Trump's trade war](#), the president will for the first time visit Japan, Chile's third-biggest export destination. He will also make a trip to China, by far Chile's biggest market: Chile sells a whopping 70% of its copper ore to the country.

While in Beijing, Mr Boric will attend a diplomatic jamboree, where Xi Jinping will welcome Presidents Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of Brazil and Gustavo Petro of Colombia, among other Latin bigwigs. The event will highlight the strength of China's ties with South America. That will irritate Mr Trump, who wants countries to distance themselves from the Asian superpower. South Americans see things differently. [New polling for \*The Economist\*](#) shows that many believe China respects the region more than the United States does.

## Find out what it means to me

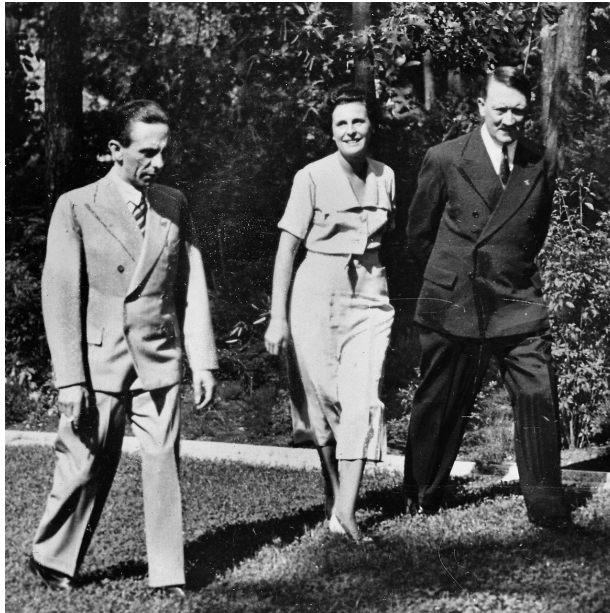
**“Do you believe China/US respects Latin American countries?”, % responding “yes”\***

April 24th-May 6th 2025



\*800 respondents for Brazil, Colombia and Venezuela. 600 for Argentina

Source: Premise

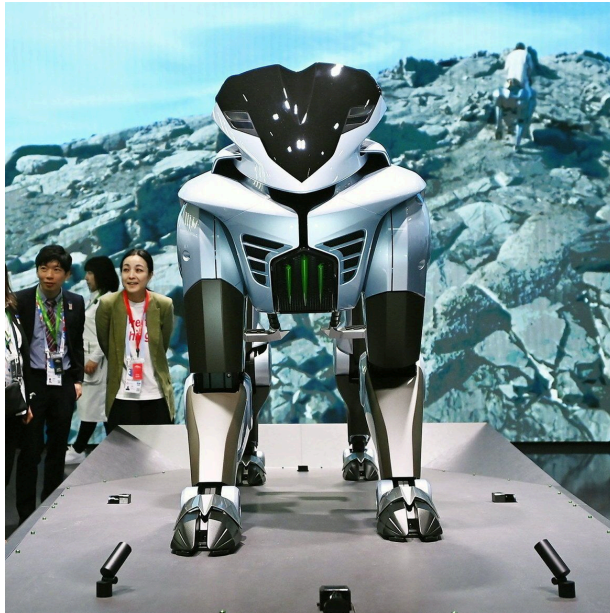


Photograph: Getty Images

## Hitler's favourite film-maker

The only woman at the top of the Nazi regime was Leni Riefenstahl, [Adolf Hitler's](#) favourite film-maker. She directed “Triumph of the Will”, a notorious tribute to National Socialism, and “Olympia”, about the Berlin Olympic Games of 1936. Both aestheticised Nazi power, creating the imagery—strong male bodies, delirious crowds—that would forever be associated with the movement.

“Riefenstahl”, a new documentary by Andres Veiel, takes a look inside her private estate. Once acclaimed as a cinematic genius, Riefenstahl, who died in 2003, remained nauseatingly unapologetic about her role in [Hitler's Germany](#). After the war she spent decades fighting accusations that she was complicit in the Nazi's crimes by making their propaganda films. Her friendships with Hitler and Josef Goebbels did not help her defence: that she knew nothing of politics and was just following orders. At one point in Mr Veiel's film she declares that, if asked, she would have made films for Josef Stalin. That is hardly reassuring.



Photograph: Getty Images

## Building robotic animals

Kawasaki, a Japanese motorcycle maker, plans to build a new breed of off-road machine shaped like a robotic horse. It is called Corleo, and is shaped like a headless steed; a pair of handlebars serves as reins. Like a real horse, the rider will control it with very subtle movements. These will be detected by a combination of sensors, with the data passed on to an artificial-intelligence system that instructs motors to respond accordingly.

The company is not alone in [developing robotic animals](#). Xpeng, a Chinese electric-vehicle manufacturer, is working on a small robotic pony that can be ridden by children. This, reckons Xpeng, will become a child's "first smart vehicle". Meanwhile Boston Dynamics, an American robot-maker owned by Hyundai, a South Korean carmaker, has already sold more than 1,500 versions of Spot, its four-legged doglike robot (a basic model costs some \$75,000). Robots such as these are pricey, but at least they don't require feeding.





Photograph: Getty Images

## **Li Ka-shing: a billionaire caught in a superpower struggle**

To Hong Kongers, [Li Ka-shing](#) is a 97-year-old “Superman”, the tycoon who can turn any crisis into a business opportunity. To pro-Beijing media in the city he is the “Cockroach King”, a traitor who spurns his “patriotic” duties. And to Donald Trump he is an agent of Chinese imperialism: a facilitator for the “soldiers” who are “lovingly, but illegally, operating the Panama Canal”.

Mr Li has amassed a \$37bn fortune by walking a tightrope between East and West. But recently Hong Kong’s richest resident has risked a heavy fall. CK Hutchison (CKH), the conglomerate he founded, operates, among other things, a vast network of ports—including one at each end of the Panama Canal, through which passes around 5% of global maritime trade. That has made him a target for Mr Trump, who wants America to “take back” the canal. A consortium led by BlackRock, an American investment firm, announced in March that it would [buy the ports](#). *Ta Kung Pao*, a pro-China Hong Kong newspaper, [decried Mr Li’s “spineless grovelling”](#) that “sold out all Chinese people”.

Mr Li has faced bigger challenges. He was a wartime refugee, fleeing southern China with his family in 1940 at the age of 12. His father died shortly after, forcing him out of school and into work at a plastics factory. He scraped together enough money to start his own company, Cheung Kong Industries, in 1950. Mr Li was rich by the time protests against British rule convulsed Hong Kong in 1967; he capitalised on slumping property prices to buy swathes of the city. When they recovered, he made a fortune. He then expanded abroad more than any other local tycoon.

After China opened up in 1978, Mr Li was one of the first outsiders to invest. For years the country's officials celebrated him as a hero of private enterprise. But his relationship to his motherland has since become complicated. In 2019 Mr Li called for authorities to show restraint amid Hong Kong's widespread pro-democracy protests. Chinese officials saw that as a tacit endorsement of the movement.

Since a crackdown on dissent began in the territory in 2020, America has increasingly treated Hong Kong businesses as Chinese. It revoked Hong Kong's special trading status that year. Mr Li will find it difficult to avoid being drawn further into [the deepening rivalry between China and America](#). His companies may come under increasing pressure to align with China's national-security interests. He could still pull off the Panama ports deal, reinforcing his "Superman" reputation. But it also could prove to be his Kryptonite.





Illustration: The Economist

## Mini 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 Ayatollah or Emir encircles Asian city (6)

2 across A headless brain gets scrambled in African capital(5)

3 across Musical-sounding country (6)

1 down Sadly, we clean wrong for Victor in Singapore (12)

### Factual clues

*1 across* Big city 30km from Muridke (6)

*2 across* Nigerians spent 16.5trn of them in 2023 on off-grid power (5)

*3 across* Premature entrant to eurozone (6)

*1 down* Man who led his party to victory in an election on May 3rd (12)

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.

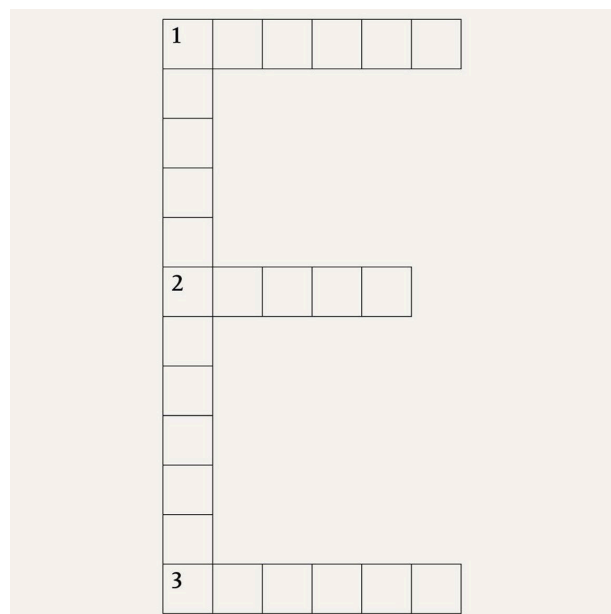


Image: The Economist



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:

**Ian Meades**, Walla Walla, Washington, America

**Gregor Peltri**, Leipzig, Germany

**Guntars Silders**, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

They all gave the correct answers of Fantasy Island, Russian roulette, the Italian Stallion, Julius Caesar and The French Connection. The theme is salad dressings; thousand island, Russian, Italian, Caesar and French.

The questions were:

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

**Tuesday:** What deadly game does Christopher Walken play in a memorable scene in The Deer Hunter?

**Wednesday:** What was Rocky Balboa's nickname in the boxing movies?

**Thursday:** Which Shakespeare play features the line “Cry ‘Havoc!’ and let slip the dogs of war”?

**Friday:** In which film did Gene Hackman win his first Oscar?

*When you finish a creation, take something off. Diminish, diminish, diminish.*

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***Joan Crawford***