

## The world in brief, June 7th 2024



**America's** economy added 272,000 **jobs** in May, up from a revised figure of 165,000 for April, and far higher than expectations. The unemployment rate ticked up from 3.9% to 4%. The jobs boom may solidify the plans of the Federal Reserve, which is expected to hold interest rates steady at its monetary-policy meeting next week. The European Central Bank lowered rates by a quarter of a percentage point on Thursday.

**Israel** expanded its assault in Gaza, with tanks advancing on [Rafah](#), a southern city. Air strikes and ground attacks continued in central Gaza, including on Nuseirat, a refugee camp in which Israel bombed a school on Thursday. Israel claimed Hamas fighters were hiding there. America suggested Israel should be “fully transparent” about the strike, which killed at least 37 people, according to a local hospital.

An alliance led by the Bharatiya Janata Party formally put forward **Narendra Modi** to become **India's** prime minister. The BJP won India's recent election, though it [unexpectedly lost](#) its majority, meaning it must rule in coalition. That may [force the strongman to](#)

[adapt](#) his leadership style. Mr Modi is expected to be sworn in for a third term on Sunday.

**Rwanda's** electoral commission barred a prominent opposition figure from standing in next month's sham presidential election. Authorities said that Diane Rwigara, whose candidacy [was also rejected](#) in 2017, had failed to provide the correct documentation, a claim she dismissed. Paul Kagame, who became president in 2000, has squashed dissent via the courts and with [violent repression](#).

**Britain's** prime minister, Rishi Sunak, apologised for leaving commemorations marking the 80th anniversary of [D-Day](#) early to attend a TV election interview. Mr Sunak said he cared “deeply” about veterans and that it was a “mistake” not to spend longer in Normandy. Speaking at the event, **Joe Biden** cautioned NATO allies against “isolationism” and said that America would “not walk away” from Ukraine.

**Clarence Thomas**, a judge on America's Supreme Court, formally disclosed, among other travels, a trip to Indonesia that had been paid for by Harlan Crow, a right-wing Texan billionaire. He did not specify the value. Mr Thomas and other justices came under scrutiny [last year](#) after *ProPublica*, an investigative-journalism organisation, revealed that he had accepted luxury trips from Mr Crow for over two decades.

A woman who claims that the character of a stalker in “**Baby Reindeer**”, a hit Netflix show, is partly based on her filed a lawsuit against the streaming platform. Fiona Harvey accused Netflix of defamation and negligence, among other things. She is seeking at least \$170m damages. Netflix said it would “defend this matter vigorously”.

**Figure of the day:** \$15, the proposed congestion charge in New York, the introduction of which was paused “indefinitely” on June 5th. [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.*

# Samsung Electronics' first-ever strike



The National Samsung Electronics Union, which accounts for about a fifth of Samsung Electronics' total workforce, took Friday off in the first industrial action in the [South Korean](#) technology giant's 55-year history. Talks between the union and management have stalled over the amount of holiday workers receive, as well as the method used to calculate bonus payments.

A subsidiary of Samsung Group, South Korea's largest conglomerate, Samsung Electronics is one of the world's biggest producers of [memory chips](#), smartphones and televisions. While the disruptions from Friday's walk-out may be minimal, the union has threatened a larger strike if its demands are not met. Samsung, which was fiercely anti-union until 2020, has little experience handling labour disputes. And the internal turbulence compounds its other recent woes. The firm has fallen behind SK Hynix, a local rival, in the race to produce chips used for artificial intelligence.

# Exports boost Germany's economy



On Friday Destatis, the German statistics agency, published figures for foreign trade for April. German exports increased by 1.6% month on month, up from 1.1% in March. Imports rose too, by 2% (from 0.5%), resulting in an almost identical trade balance of €22.2bn (\$24.2bn) as in March.

Still, the data showing rising exports is welcome news because Germany's economic recovery has been slower than [elsewhere in Europe](#). The country's export-driven growth model is back, according to a recent report by ING, a Dutch bank. Exports to America look set to keep strengthening, more than offsetting the continued weakening in exports to China. But it may be too soon to celebrate. Industrial orders, which have declined almost continuously since the start of 2022, remain weak. In March they dropped by 0.8% in real terms from the previous month, before falling by another 0.2% in April. The export comeback could be short-lived.

# Mexico's election landslide shakes its economy



Data released by Mexico's central bank on Friday are expected to show that inflation still plagues the economy. Growth slowed in the second quarter and government finances are a growing concern—the fiscal deficit is over 5% of GDP.

The economic outlook has been further complicated by the election last Sunday, which saw [Claudia Sheinbaum](#) chosen as the next president. Her victory was expected, but the landslide for Morena (her populist political party) and its allies rattled markets. Both the stock market and the value of the peso fell. Investors worry that the ruling coalition having a supermajority in congress could lead to constitutional changes that make Mexico less business-friendly and less democratic.

Ms Sheinbaum will need to boost economic growth, which her proposal for transitioning to clean energy may help with. But Mexico also needs to remain attractive to foreign investment. It is one of the countries that could benefit most from manufacturers' desire to diversify from China.



# Russia without the West



The St Petersburg International Economic Forum was once dubbed the Russian Davos. Western leaders and financial bigwigs would talk up opportunities for co-operation and investment. With [Russia's war with Ukraine](#), though, those days are long gone. This year's summit focuses on the benefits of a "multipolar world" no longer dominated by the West. Attendees include Zimbabwe's president, Emmerson Mnangagwa, and his Bolivian counterpart, Luis Arce. President Vladimir Putin is billed to appear at a plenary session on Friday. He will probably fulminate against Western arrogance and hypocrisy.

One target of his ire is Joe Biden, who also makes a speech in Europe on Friday. The American president's remarks at the Pointe du Hoc, a crucial site of the [Normandy landings](#), will proclaim the "importance of defending freedom and democracy". The contrast between his and Mr Putin's comments will show just how wide the gulf between Russia and the West has become.

## A female artist who went her own way



The history of art is written in female nudes—usually painted by men. But Paula Modersohn-Becker, a [German artist](#) who died in 1907 aged 31, was probably the first to paint her own naked form. Among her more than 700 paintings and almost 1,400 drawings were many hauntingly original self-portraits.

Modersohn-Becker was a vital but underappreciated exponent of Expressionism, the movement of bright colours and bold forms associated with artists like Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and Max Pechstein. Yet her work was overshadowed by her diaries and letters: correspondents included her friend Rainer Maria Rilke, the poet.

Now the painter finally gets an American retrospective with “Paula Modersohn-Becker: Ich bin ich/I am me” at the Neue Galerie in New York. The 65 works on display reveal an artist interacting not just with her German peers, but also with French post-Impressionism and even ancient Egyptian portraiture. She always laid her subject bare: whether landscape, still life or portrait, nude or not.



## Daily quiz

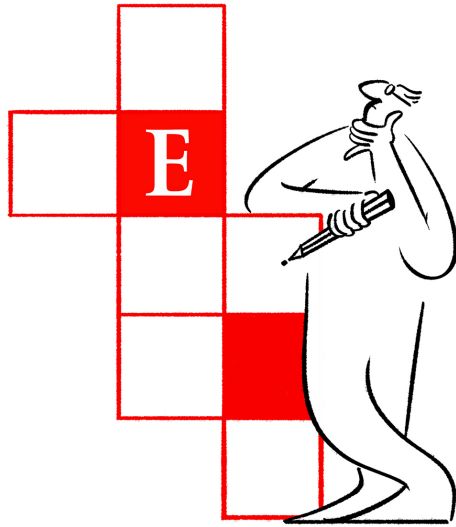


We will serve you a new question each day this week. On Friday your challenge is to give us all five answers and, as important, tell us the connecting theme. Email your responses (and include mention of your home city and country) by 1700 BST on Friday to [QuizEspresso@economist.com](mailto:QuizEspresso@economist.com). We'll pick randomly from those with the right answers and crown three winners on Saturday.

**Friday:** Which muscular hero was created by Robert E Howard and brought to life on screen by Arnold Schwarzenegger?

**Thursday:** Who, as finance minister of Louis XIV in France, proclaimed that “the art of taxation consists of so plucking the goose as to obtain the largest number of feathers with the smallest possible amount of hissing”?

# The winners of last week's crossword



Thank you to everyone who took part in our weekly crossword, published in the weekend edition of Espresso. The winners, chosen at random, were:

**Jim DeLaHunt**, Vancouver, Canada

**Sebastian Agudelo-Restrepo**, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

**Katy Herrick**, Munich, Germany

They all gave the correct answers of [baby-boomers](#), [breast](#), [Oregon](#) and [season](#). Check back tomorrow for this week's crossword.

**\$15**

*The proposed congestion charge in New York, the introduction of which was paused “indefinitely” on June 5th.*

*Read the full story.*

**Death destroys a man, but the idea of death saves him.**

*E. M. Forster*