

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter

Pakistan said it had [launched retaliatory strikes](#) after accusing **India** of targeting its air bases. According to Pakistan's military spokesman, most of India's missiles were intercepted, but some got through. The Nur Khan base, near the capital Islamabad, was targeted. Pakistan said its counter-attack would target military sites in India. Shortly afterward explosions were reported in parts of north India.

India called Pakistan's actions "escalatory and provocative" and insisted that it has been "responsible and measured" during the conflict. Indian officials also denied that Pakistan's barrage—which they said included high-speed missiles—had caused any damage to military infrastructure. Earlier Marco Rubio, America's secretary of state, offered to help start talks between India and Pakistan to de-escalate the conflict.

Donald Trump said that an 80% tariff on China "seems right", ahead of **trade talks** with China [in Switzerland](#). America's president has raised tariffs on most Chinese goods to 145%; China has retaliated with its own levies of 125%. Earlier China reported that the value of its exports rose by 8% year on year in April, despite [shipments](#) to America falling by 21%.

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.

Nippon Steel forecast a 43% drop in profits to ¥200bn (\$1.4bn) over the next fiscal year, warning of disruption caused by [American tariffs](#). Nippon's profits fell by 36% over the last fiscal year. The Japanese firm blamed rising Chinese exports for the decline. Nippon also said it expected America to decide whether to approve its takeover bid for [us Steel](#) by June.

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 Her visa was revoked.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

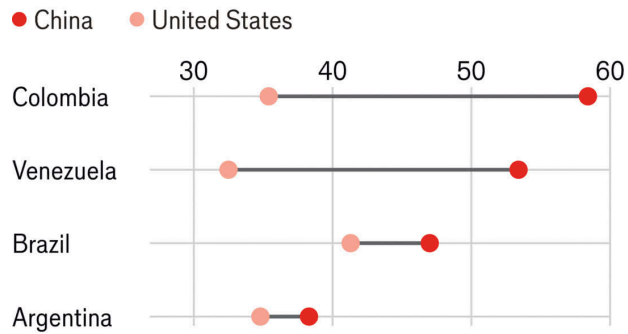
This weekend Gabriel Boric, [Chile's](#) president, begins a tour of Asia. His agenda has a distinct commercial edge. Seeking to deepen Chile's economic ties in the shadow of [Donald Trump's trade war](#), the president will for the first time visit Japan, Chile's third-biggest export destination. He 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

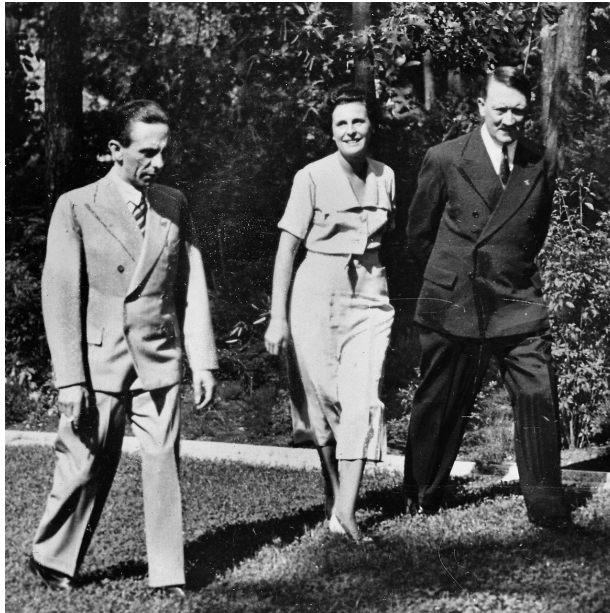
“Do you believe China/US respects Latin American countries?”, % responding “yes”*

April 24th-May 6th 2025



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

Source: Premise

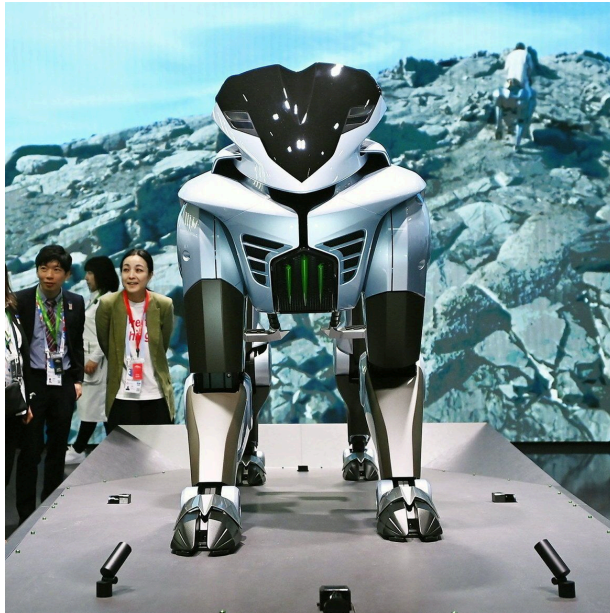


Photograph: Getty Images

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.

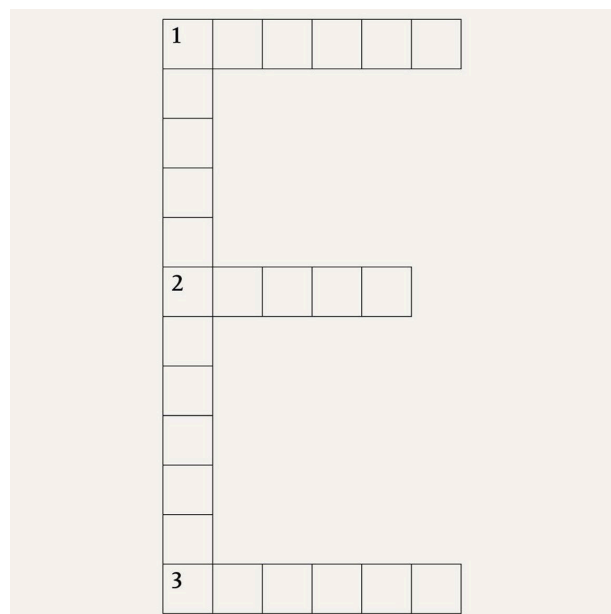


Image: The Economist



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.

Joan Crawford