

The world in brief, June 15th 2024



Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelensky, arrived in Switzerland to host a [summit](#) aimed at finding a “just and lasting peace” for his country. Emmanuel Macron of France and Olaf Scholz of Germany are expected to attend, though notable absences include President Joe Biden. **Russia** was not invited. On Friday President Vladimir Putin demanded that Ukraine cede four provinces and abandon its bid to join NATO.

G7 leaders concluded their summit in Italy with a warning to **China** that they will continue to target actors that “materially support Russia’s war machine”. They called on the superpower to “step up efforts to promote international peace and security”. The G7 also warned **Iran** against advancing its [nuclear programme](#) and gave its full support to America’s peace plan for Palestine.

South Africa's parliament elected **Cyril Ramaphosa** to a second term as the country’s president. The vote came after Mr Ramaphosa’s African National Congress reached a deal to form a [national unity government](#) with the Democratic Alliance, the main opposition party, and the Inkatha Freedom Party, a Zulu nationalist

outfit. The ANC lost its parliamentary majority in a general election on May 29th.

Iran and **Sweden** agreed on an exchange of prisoners. The Swedes released Hamid Noury, an Iranian sentenced to life imprisonment for his part in the killing of around 5,000 prisoners in Iran in 1988. Iran freed Johan Floderus, an EU diplomat detained in 2022, and Saeed Azizi, a dual national. Oman brokered the [exchange](#), according to the Gulf state's news agency.

Meta said it would pause the launch of its **AI** models in **Europe**, after Ireland's data-privacy regulator requested that it delay training its [models](#) with personal data from Facebook and Instagram. The tech company said it planned only to use data publicly available online; critics said that Meta was still required to seek users' consent.

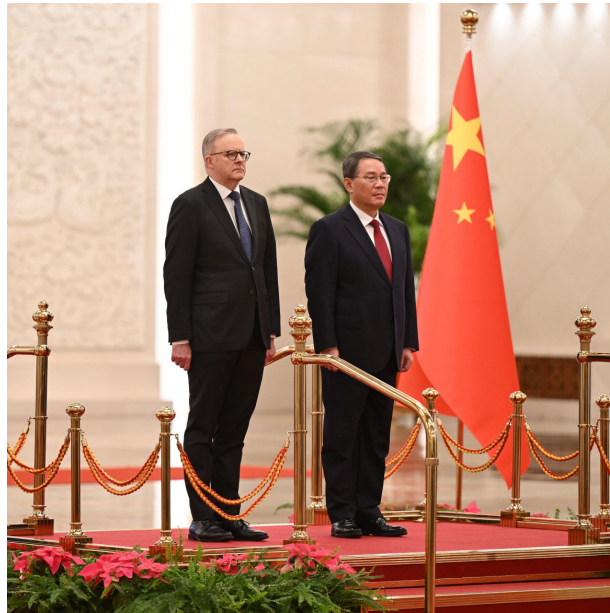
A judge in Texas ordered **Alex Jones**, a conspiracy theorist, to liquidate his personal assets to pay damages to the families of victims of the [Sandy Hook school shooting](#). In 2022 juries in [defamation trials](#) in Texas and Connecticut awarded the families \$1.5bn in damages. The latest ruling allows Mr Jones's businesses, including InfoWars, a website, to continue operating.

Germany thumped a sorry **Scotland** side 5-1 in Munich, in the opening match of football's Euro championships. The hosts are among the [favourites](#) to win the month-long tournament, along with England and France.

Word of the week: *Ras-le-bol*, the French word for being fed-up. [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.

Australia hosts China's prime minister



China's prime minister, Li Qiang, begins a four-day visit to Australia on Saturday. [The trip](#) is designed to show that relations between the countries are back on track following years of hostility. His first stop is Adelaide, where a zoo houses two pandas on loan from China. As a gesture of friendship, Mr Li may say they can stay longer than planned. Talks with Australia's centre-left prime minister, Anthony Albanese, will follow in Canberra, the capital.

Tensions between the countries have thawed since Mr Albanese was elected in 2022. China has wound back the trading restrictions it imposed on Australia in 2020, after successive conservative governments provoked its ire. But Australians do not expect the friendliness to last for long. To deter China's military aggression, Mr Albanese is beefing up Australian defences. Concerns about war are growing: more than 70% of respondents in a recent poll thought China would threaten Australia militarily in the coming 20 years.

Ukraine's plan for peace



This weekend [Volodymyr Zelensky](#) holds a peace summit in Switzerland, where attendees will thrash out ideas for ending the war in Ukraine. [Emmanuel Macron](#) of France and [Olaf Scholz](#) of Germany will be there, as will Britain's prime minister, [Rishi Sunak](#). But there are notable gaps on the guest list. Snubs from China and President [Joe Biden](#) were a blow to Ukraine's president. (America's vice-president, Kamala Harris, is expected to appear in her boss's place.) Russia, meanwhile, was never invited.

The initial idea of [the summit](#) was to create a joint proposal based on a ten-point "peace formula" that Mr Zelensky developed back in 2022, and then to present it to Russia. But Russia's recent advances, and waning patience among some of Ukraine's allies, necessitate compromise. The communiqué will probably only focus on three of the original ten points: food security, nuclear security and the return of prisoners and children. Serious negotiations are still a way off.

Extreme heat on the haj



On Saturday more than 1.5m Muslims will gather around Mount Arafat, near Mecca in Saudi Arabia, as part of the annual pilgrimage that forms one of the five pillars of Islam. The Day of Arafat is the most important religious rite of the *haj* and, often, the most physically gruelling. Pilgrims spend from dawn to dusk in prayer on the desert plains. This time, they will do so in temperatures forecasted up to 48°C.

[Climate change](#) is pushing up temperatures in the Arabian Peninsula faster than the global average, making the pilgrimage increasingly dangerous. In 2023, when the *haj* fell at the end of June, more than 8,400 pilgrims were treated for heat stroke or exhaustion, according to local media. Hundreds of *hajis* are thought to die annually, despite the kingdom spending billions on technology and infrastructure to try to keep them cool. The hosts' efforts range from building air-conditioned tunnels to coating roads with light-reflecting asphalt.

A festival of science and art in London



In the spirit of the original [Great Exhibition](#) of 1851, the “Great Exhibition Road Festival” starts on Saturday in London. Led by Imperial College, the event unites the local cluster of famous institutions—such as the Royal Colleges of Music and Art, and the Natural History Museum—in a weekend fusion of the arts and sciences.

As befits the illustrious Imperial College, a lot of the fun is didactic. Painters will team up with medics to create huge murals illustrating how to tackle malaria. Cell biologists will partner with poets; a “Silent Disco” applies AI to dance. About 50,000 people are expected to throng in South Kensington.

Sleep scientists will model kids’ bedrooms to show how everyone can get a better night’s shut-eye. Chefs will be challenged by experts on the human microbiome to produce the best meals for optimal gut health. And there will be panels on virtual reality and mental health. Technology has moved on since the original exhibition, but the spirit of adventure endures.

Weekend profile: Julian Nagelsmann, the Tiggerish coach of Germany's national team



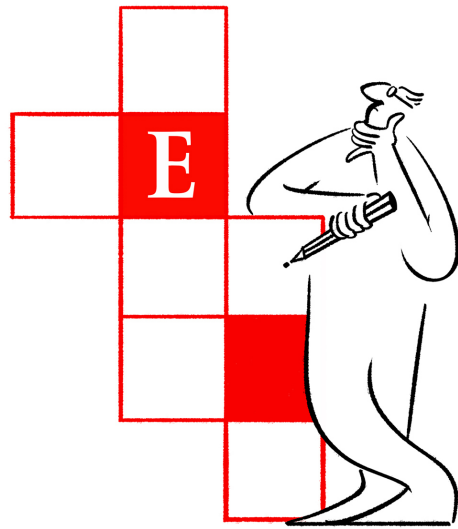
Julian Nagelsmann, the manager of the German men's national football team, has plenty of swagger. When he was coach of Bayern Munich, the country's most successful club, he once arrived at the training ground on a skateboard. On the touchline he wears bold (and rather tight-fitting) suits. In 2020 a grey, chequered number prompted jibes on social media after a match in the Champions League, Europe's premier club competition. "I wear what I like," Mr Nagelsmann retorted.

His pugnacity may stem from a sense that he has more than usual to prove. Mr Nagelsmann, who turns 37 in July, is younger than Manuel Neuer, the goalkeeper of *Die Mannschaft*, as Germany's team is known. Unlike Mr Neuer, Mr Nagelsmann has no medals to his name as a player: his career was ended at 20 by a knee injury. Mr Nagelsmann started coaching with the youth teams at 1860 Munich, the city's lesser-known second team, and Hoffenheim, from a village in Germany's south-west.

His rise was remarkable. In under six years he was managing the first team at Hoffenheim, whom he transformed from relegation candidates to Champions League qualifiers. From there he went to RB Leipzig, taking them to that competition's semi-finals for the first time. Mighty Bayern soon came calling. In 2023, less than two years into the job, the club sacked him after he failed to win the big European prize. Yet the following year *Die Mannschaft*, which had long struggled for form, identified him as the man to restore self-belief as Germany prepared to host [Euro 2024](#), which kicked off this weekend. Pundits are piling on the pressure: should his team win the tournament, it is said, it could return a sense of self-esteem not merely to football fans but also to a German public divided by political and economic woes.

This is a lot to ask of a young coach a year on from the first serious setback of his career. Yet there are reasons to be confident about Mr Nagelsmann's prospects. Coaching international football is less about developing intricate tactical systems (there is little time for that) and more about bringing the best out of a country's most talented players. To this end, Mr Nagelsmann coaxed Toni Kroos, a veteran midfielder, out of international retirement. Results have picked up since. As Germany roars on *Die Mannschaft*, the loudest supporter will be the man on the touchline.

Weekly crossword



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 down Feeling about different hospital for maternity (10)

1 across City's ambition brought about motorway (5)

2 across Tech entrepreneur companionless back at the start (4)

3 across Once untouchable surrealist painter has achievement at last (5)

Factual clues

1 down What may not carry a financial penalty, after all (10)

1 across Where Peter Navarro is currently in prison (5)

2 across Who tweeted that “the *New York Times* is pure propaganda” in March (4)

3 across Someone at the bottom of the Hindu caste system (5)

Email all four answers, along with your home city and country, by 9am GMT on Monday to crossword@economist.com. We will pick randomly from those with the right answers and crown three winners in next week’s edition.

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:

Kevin Conley, Espoo, Finland

Anne Hilde Hole, Horten, Norway

Kieran Scott, Birmingham, Britain

They all gave the correct answers of the Hope diamond, Al Green, Flash Gordon, paper, Switch. The theme was words ending in back: "diamondback", "greenback", "flashback", "paperback" and "switchback".

The questions were:

Monday: Which precious stone, supposedly the subject of a curse, was once owned by Louis XIV of France and now resides in the Smithsonian Museum?

Tuesday: Which soul singer, who later became a minister, part-wrote and recorded the hit “Let’s Stay Together”?

Wednesday: Which comic book (also TV and movie) hero battles the villain Ming the Merciless?

Thursday: What type of material was historically sold in measures such as a quire, ream or bundle?

Friday: What is the name of Nintendo’s games console?

Ras-le-bol

*the French word for being fed-up.
Read the full story.*

**Every human being is a repeated question
asked to the spirit of the Universe.**

Mihai Eminescu