

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter

Israel's armed forces said they had begun “extensive ground operations” in Gaza. The move follows days of Israeli air strikes, which killed 135 people overnight on May 17th-18th, according to Palestinian officials. Renewed ceasefire talks in Qatar have so far made little progress. Earlier, Israel said that its negotiators would aim to end the fighting while securing the “release of all hostages”, the “exile of Hamas terrorists” and the “disarmament” of Gaza.

Russia launched its biggest drone attack on Ukraine so far, the Ukrainian air force said. Russia fired 273 drones at the region around Kyiv, Ukraine's capital, as well as at Dnipropetrovsk and Donetsk in the east. The strikes killed one person and wounded several others. Earlier **Donald Trump** said he would call his Russian counterpart, **Vladimir Putin**, on Monday in an effort to end the “bloodbath”.

Rafal Trzaskowski, the liberal [candidate for president](#) supported by **Poland's** ruling Civic Coalition, and Karol Nawrocki, the candidate of the populist right, look set to face each other in a run-off. An exit poll put Mr Trzaskowski on 30.8% in the first round of voting, just ahead of Mr Nawrocki on 29.1%. The run-off will take place on June 1st.

Nicusor Dan, the liberal mayor of Bucharest, looks set for a shock victory in the second round of **Romania's** presidential election. Tallies from 99% of polling stations suggest that Mr Dan has won about 54% of votes, compared with 46% for his hard-right opponent, [George Simion](#). Mr Simion, an admirer of Donald Trump, had hoped that votes from the diaspora would give him victory, but Mr Dan's lead appears unassailable.

The ruling Democratic Alliance (AD) party looks set to win the most votes in **Portugal's** third election in three years, though it will probably fall short of a majority. Exit polls put the centre-right AD on between 29% and 35% of the vote. Meanwhile the hard-right Chega party looked set to increase its vote share, perhaps even forcing the Socialists into third place.

Canada's prime minister, [Mark Carney](#), said his government would not propose a federal budget until after Parliament's summer recess. Economists and opposition politicians had criticised the idea of delaying the budget until autumn, saying it would damage government transparency. But Mr Carney, whose Liberal Party won a general election last month, said Donald Trump's tariffs and other factors make the delay necessary.

Joe Biden has a "more aggressive form" of prostate cancer, his office said. It added that the disease "appears to be hormone-sensitive, which allows effective management". America's former president is reviewing treatment options. The 82-year-old left office in January. He dropped out of the 2024 presidential race under pressure from Democrats worried about his acuity and fitness.

Word of the week: *amphidromia*, an ancient Greek ceremony during which the father decided whether to keep a baby, or abandon it on a hillside. It's better being a dad now. [Read the full story.](#)



Photograph: Getty Images

A real choice in Poland

Law and Justice was booted out of power in [Poland](#) in 2023, but it kept a foothold in the presidential palace. That has allowed the national-conservative party to frustrate the new government's liberal agenda by blocking some two dozen of its laws and obstructing the appointment of judges and ambassadors. The impasse could soon end.

Poles voted in the first round of a presidential election on Sunday. Exit polls suggested that Rafal Trzaskowski, Warsaw's mayor, backed by the ruling Civic Coalition (KO) and Karol Nawrocki, the continuity candidate of the populist right, would proceed to a second round having each won around 30% of the vote. Mr Trzaskowski was marginally ahead of his rival. Should Mr Trzaskowski win the run-off on June 1st, he has promised to approve government reforms of courts and public media—though progress on these has also been delayed by squabbles within KO's unwieldy alliance.



Photograph: Getty Images

Portugal votes, again

On Sunday the Portuguese voted for a government for the third time in a little over three years. The election came about when Luís Montenegro, the centre-right prime minister for the past year, lost a confidence motion in parliament. His family's consulting firm had received a monthly fee from a company seeking to renew a government concession to run some casinos.

Exit polls suggested voters are not much bothered by that scandal and that his coalition may win more than the 29% of votes it scraped last year. As votes are counted, Portuguese will pay close attention to whether or not Chega ("Enough!"), a hard-right outfit, improves on its 18%. Mr Montenegro rules out a coalition with them and may again have to depend on the opposition Socialists.

While the country has enjoyed healthy economic growth, many Portuguese are angry about a housing shortage and a creaking health service. To fix them, they need a stronger and more durable government.



Photograph: AP

Israel's precarious economy

On Sunday [Israel](#) will release GDP data, expected to show that the economy grew at an annualised rate of 2.1% in the first three months of 2025. This is strong compared with most rich countries. It is also an improvement on 2024, when the economy grew by a sluggish 1%.

However, optimism should be guarded. Israelis have one of the highest birth-rates in the developed world. When adjusted to population growth—which in 2024 was 1.4%—the economy is hardly growing. The war has brought short-term boosts due to a sharp rise in government expenditure and a drop in unemployment, as young people are called up to reserve duty. But in the long term, these things will be bad for Israel's economy. There is a cost to splurging on weapons and paying reservists to fight instead of working in the most productive sectors. With prospects for a ceasefire in Gaza still unclear, Israel is far from economic recovery.



Photograph: Reuters

The work begins for Pope Leo

[Pope Leo XIV](#) was in St Peter's square on Sunday for a mass celebrating the formal start of his papacy. The event also closed the cycles of ceremony that began with the death of his predecessor, Francis, on Easter Monday.

But the new pope had already started working. One of his first meetings, on Wednesday, was with Cardinal Seán O'Malley, head of the Vatican commission responsible for tackling clerical sex abuse. It raised hopes that Leo will be more effective in his approach than his predecessor, although his own previous handling of cases involving alleged offenders has been criticised.

Leo is expected to soon make his first trip abroad as pope, to Turkey, to mark the 1,700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea, a milestone in the definition of Christian doctrine. While there, he may also meet the leader of the Eastern Orthodox church, Patriarch Bartholomew.



Illustration: The Economist

This week's 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 down Fair or incorrect? Crime without limit, only this moves Donald Trump (3,5,3)

1 across In part to outflank a rascal, Zelensky headed here (6)

2 across Far out! Before a beer, Pakistan soldiers claimed they downed this (6)

3 across A dedication to European science, perhaps (6)

Factual clues

1 down Presidential plane at the centre of a corruption storm (3,5,3)
1 across The city in which Volodymyr Zelensky met Recep Tayyip Erdogan this week (6)
2 across French-made warplane that Pakistan claims to have shot down (6)
3 across A tribute to someone who died (6)

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

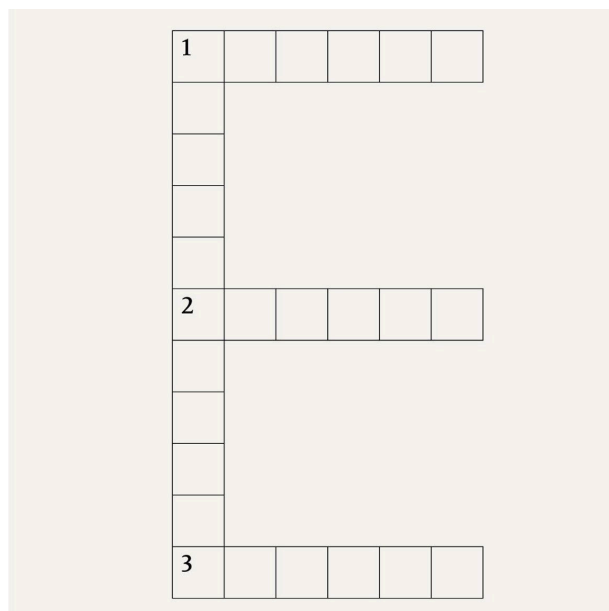


Image: The Economist



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:

Jaci Noel, Phoenix, Arizona, United States

Hélène Tremblay, Gatineau, Canada

Carlos Sangil, Madrid, Spain

They all gave the correct answers of Bonnie Prince Charlie, Giant, Fox News, a peach and Waltzing Matilda. The theme is books by Roald Dahl: Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, the BFG (Big Friendly Giant), Fantastic Mr Fox, James and the Giant Peach and Matilda.

The questions were:

Monday: What popular nickname was attached to the member of the Stuart family who led the Jacobite rebellion in Britain in 1745?

Tuesday: What was the last film made by James Dean before he was killed in a car crash?

Wednesday: Roger Ailes was the long-term head of which cable news network?

Thursday: The state of Georgia has a nickname associated with which fruit?

Friday: Which traditional Australian song begins with the line “Once a jolly swagman camped by a billabong”?

Although this may seem a paradox, all exact science is dominated by the idea of approximation.

Bertrand Russell