

## The world in brief, July 6th 2024



A fifth Democrat legislator—Angie Craig, a congresswoman from Minnesota—called on **President Joe Biden** to step aside, suggesting that his television [interview](#) on Friday had failed to quell an uprising in his party. During it, Mr Biden struck a defiant tone. House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries has reportedly scheduled a virtual meeting on Sunday with senior House Democrats to discuss whether Mr Biden should withdraw from his candidacy. Earlier, asked by ABC news whether he would [step aside](#) if Democratic grandees urge him to, he said “they’re not gonna do that”.

Voters in **France** go to the polls on Sunday in the second and final round of [a parliamentary election](#), with attention focused on the prospects of Marine Le Pen’s hard-right, anti-immigration, **National Rally** party (RN). It took a massive lead in [the first round](#) on June 30th but since then, left-wing parties and President Emmanuel Macron’s centrists have teamed up to make an outright RN victory less likely.

**Sir Keir Starmer**, Britain's new prime minister, arrived in Scotland on the first leg of a whistle-stop tour of all four nations of the United Kingdom. Sir Keir's Labour Party made huge gains in Scotland in his thumping [election victory](#) on Thursday, denting hopes of Scottish nationalists for another referendum on independence in the near future. Sir Keir then heads to Washington for a NATO summit.

Officials from **Hamas** said the Palestinian group is waiting for a response from Israel after dropping an important objection to a ceasefire agreement in [Gaza](#) proposed by America. Previously, Hamas had demanded Israel commit to a permanent ceasefire before signing. It will now enter into negotiations to achieve that end during a first six-week phase of the ceasefire. An Israeli delegation is studying the plan with Qatari mediators.

The president of Argentina, **Javier Milei**, arrived in Brazil to meet former president **Jair Bolsonaro**. The two right-wingers are presiding over a political convention, CPAC Brasil, intended to bring together other such leaders in Latin America. It is unlikely that [Mr Milei](#) will meet the current president of Brazil, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, whom he has called a "communist".

"Patriots for Europe", a **right-wing political group** set up by Viktor Orban, the Hungarian prime minister, won enough support from members of the **European Parliament** to secure the parliament's formal recognition. Mr Orban, who took over the EU's rotating presidency this month, hopes to use the bloc to "change European politics". It wants to halt European support for Ukraine in its war against Russia, among other things.

**BYD**, a Chinese **electric-vehicle** company, [announced plans](#) to purchase a 20% stake in Rever Automotive, its car distributor in Thailand. The announcement came days after BYD opened its first factory in Thailand, which is its biggest market outside China. Thai

officials have begun an investigation into aggressive discounting by BYD dealers after complaints by other distributors.

**Word of the week:** *umrah*, a Muslim pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia that takes place all year round. [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.*

## France's parliamentary vote



The French will vote on Sunday in the final round of their snap parliamentary election. The chances of Marine Le Pen's hard-right National Rally (RN) securing a majority of seats have receded somewhat since the first round on June 30th, as [tactical deals](#) were struck among 224 candidates in 577 constituencies. Scores of candidates from both the left-wing New Popular Front and from President Emmanuel Macron's centrist alliance have stood down, in order not to split the anti-Le Pen vote.

By Friday, the last day for the publication of polls under electoral rules, they suggested that the RN could gain 174-250 seats, short of the 289 needed to control parliament. Even without a majority, however, Ms Le Pen's party may be asked by Mr Macron to try to form a government. If she accepts, she would put forward Jordan Bardella, her 28-year-old protégé, to be prime minister. Mr Bardella may not manage to scrape together a majority. But the invitation itself would represent a political earthquake.

# Death Valley lives up to its name



In Death Valley National Park, mostly in eastern California, there is a famous thermometer. Tourists brave the region's scorching temperatures to pose in front of it. But that photo opportunity might best be avoided this weekend. Between Sunday and Tuesday the mercury may reach even  $54.4^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $130^{\circ}\text{F}$ ), the highest reliably recorded temperature on earth. (In 1913 one observer in the park recorded  $56.7^{\circ}\text{C}$ , though that number is disputed.)

The peak heat in Death Valley is no outlier. [Heatwaves](#) are wreaking havoc across the northern hemisphere, where more than 85% of the world's population lives. Climate change, caused by greenhouse-gas emissions, has led to the world's average temperature rising by  $1.2^{\circ}\text{C}$  since the 19th century. Heatwaves are among the [deadliest consequences](#), putting vulnerable people, especially the old and poor, at grave risk. Governments must do more to [protect](#) them as sizzling summers become the norm.



# Bulls on the charge in Pamplona



On Sunday the first bull run of the festival of San Fermín begins in Pamplona, in northern Spain. The weeklong jamboree centres around the daily running of six bulls down an 848-metre stretch of narrow streets, with white-clad, red-handkerchiefed people running pell-mell ahead of them. Most injuries are caused by falls, though last year a visitor took a horn to the scrotum.

Then, each afternoon, the six bulls will be killed in a bullfight. Spain has recently undergone a periodic bout of [debating the bloody practice](#). Adherents consider it sublimely beautiful (it is not a sport, as the bull has little chance of “winning”, supporters acknowledge). But the culture minister, from a far-left party, has called it “animal torture”. Colombia banned bullfighting this year; Catalonia no longer hosts bullfights. But in some places—Seville, Madrid and of course Pamplona—it is deeply rooted, and going nowhere fast.

## Just when you thought it was safe to watch the TV...



There is supposedly no such thing as bad publicity. But not in the case of sharks. “Jaws”, a blockbuster film of 1975, not only created a widespread fear of the fish, but also encouraged people to hunt them for sport. (Steven Spielberg, the director, has lamented the film’s role in the “decimation of the shark population”.) In response, executives at the Discovery Channel launched “Shark Week” in 1988, a series of documentaries to educate the public about the creatures and aid conservation efforts.

Shark Week is now one of the hits of the entertainment calendar. Discovery says it is the longest-running cable-TV event. This year’s extravaganza, hosted by John Cena, a former wrestler, begins on Sunday. Commissioners seem keener to terrify viewers than mollify them, with programmes such as “Belly of the Beast: Bigger and Bloodier”, “Great White Serial Killer: Sea of Blood” and “Deadliest Bite”. Galeophobes would be better off watching something else.

# Boeing's woes over the 737MAX



Boeing must decide on Sunday whether to accept an offer from America's Department of Justice to plead guilty to fraud in connection with two deadly plane crashes involving its 737MAX some five years ago. The aerospace giant is accused of violating a deal that it made with the authorities to head off a charge of conspiracy to defraud the government. It did this by allegedly misleading regulators over the cause of the crashes. The blowout of a [door panel](#) on another 737MAX in January appeared to invalidate an agreement to oversee safer manufacturing.

The Department of Justice may impose a fine on Boeing. If Boeing rejects the offer it faces a criminal trial, or might have to make another deal that would include even greater regulatory oversight of the company's production process. Such an outcome could further hamper the rate at which it makes new planes.



## 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:

**Martin Lampa**, Victoria, Canada

**Marilyn Lipschultz**, Folgueroles, Spain

**Himmat Kalsia**, Delhi, India

They all gave the correct answers of crystal, Doctor Doom, sundial, the fourth crusade, the Raiders. The theme was Indiana Jones films: "Indiana Jones and the Crystal Skull", "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom", "Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny", "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade", "Raiders of the Lost Ark".

The questions were:

**Monday:** What gift is associated with the 15th wedding anniversary?

**Tuesday:** Which comic book character is the archenemy of the Fantastic Four?

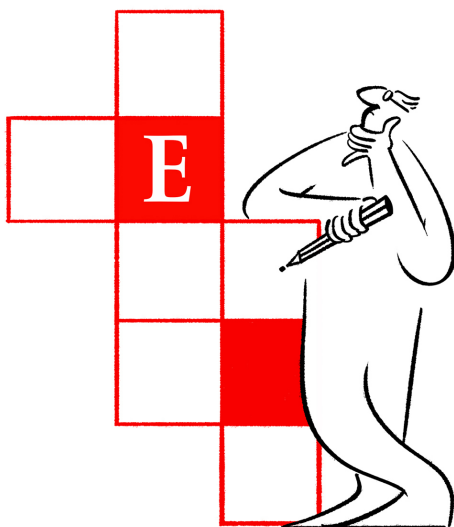
**Wednesday:** What ancient time-telling device only worked in the

daytime?

**Thursday:** During what event in 1204 did Latin soldiers sack Constantinople?

**Friday:** Which NFL franchise moved from Oakland to Las Vegas in 2020?

# 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*:

Email all four answers, along with your home city and country, by 9am BST on Monday to [crossword@economist.com](mailto:crossword@economist.com). We will pick randomly from those with the right answers and crown three winners in next week's edition.

## July 6th edition

### Cryptic clues

1 down Drink frothy cup for panic (11)

1 across Country's old money precedes introduction of the Euro (6)

2 across Proper egghead is the best (5)

3 across Egad! Look briefly in the mirror for cause of decline (3,3)

## **Factual clues**

1 down Blended iced coffee drink (11)

1 across Election-holding country in Europe (6)

2 across America's fourth-most-watched video-streaming service (5)

3 across A stumbling block in Joe Biden's campaign (3,3)

# umrah

*a Muslim pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia that takes place all year round.*

*Read the full story.*



**Fall in love with yourself, with life and  
then with whoever you want.**

*Frida Kahlo*