

## The world in brief, June 1st 2024



**President Joe Biden** announced that an **Israeli** proposal—which he said could lead to a “durable” ceasefire—had been transmitted to **Hamas** by Qatar. He said that the terms include a six-week ceasefire, the withdrawal of Israeli forces from populated areas of Gaza and the release of women and elderly Israeli hostages in exchange for Palestinian prisoners. Mr Biden also claimed that Hamas is “no longer capable” of carrying out another attack like October 7th, adding that “it’s time for this war to end”. Earlier the Israel Defence Forces confirmed that it had entered central Rafah, despite [international condemnation](#) over its offensive in the city.

**Donald Trump’s campaign** said it had raised \$34.8m in donations in the hours following his [criminal conviction](#) on Thursday—and that nearly 30% of online donors were new. Mr Trump was found guilty on all 34 counts of falsifying business records to hide hush-money payments to a former porn star before the election in 2016. It is the first time that [a former American president has been found guilty](#) of a crime. Mr Trump said he will lodge an appeal.

**Ukraine** and **Russia** each swapped 75 [prisoners of war](#), in their first such exchange in nearly four months. Volodymyr Zelensky, Ukraine's president, said that four civilians were among those who returned in the deal, which was brokered by the United Arab Emirates. Earlier, Germany joined other NATO countries, including America, in approving Ukraine's use of its [weapons](#) to hit targets in Russia.

The **Federal Reserve's** preferred measure of annualised **inflation**, the core personal consumption expenditures index, remained at 2.8% in April. The headline inflation measure, which includes food and energy prices, was also unchanged at 2.7%. Both figures were in line with analysts' expectations. Real consumer spending and wage growth, both indicators of future inflation, moderated, suggesting that inflation could be on the way down.

The ruling **African National Congress** is [poised to lose](#) its parliamentary majority, according to early results in **South Africa's** election. The ANC's share of the vote stands at about 41% with counting complete at over 80% of polling stations. The result would make Cyril Ramaphosa the first ANC leader of the country without a parliamentary majority. Final [results](#) are expected by Sunday.

America's drug regulator approved **Moderna's** second product: a respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) [vaccine](#) for adults over the age of 60. Moderna said that the shot will be available later this year and that it is America's first [mRNA](#) vaccine to be approved for a disease other than covid-19. Vaccines for RSV, a flu-like virus, by Pfizer and GSK also became available for this age group last year.

The **James Webb Space Telescope**, the largest-ever [telescope](#), broke its own record by detecting the most distant known galaxy. The collection of stars was formed just 290m years after the Big Bang. The JWST, which cost \$9.7bn to build, has given

astronomers the most powerful tool yet for scanning the cosmos in infrared frequencies of light.

**Word of the week:** *Magicicada*, the Latin word for periodical cicadas. Two broods are emerging simultaneously in America for the first time since 1803. [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.*

## Nayib Bukele's second term



On Saturday [Nayib Bukele](#) will be sworn in for a legally dubious second consecutive term as El Salvador's president. Mr Bukele won elections in February by a landslide, after appointing new judges to reinterpret the constitution and allow him to run again. In his first term, he oversaw a harsh crackdown [on gangs](#); the murder rate has plummeted, and extortion is no longer commonplace. But new challenges will make the next five years hard.

Salvadoreans now view the economy as the country's biggest problem. Poverty has risen. Debt is high. El Salvador is growing more slowly and attracting less foreign investment than its neighbours. Mr Bukele wants to attract tech investment and secure a loan with the IMF. But the IMF is no fan of his decision to adopt bitcoin as legal tender, and investors are worried by the erosion of the rule of law. Mr Bukele may find it tricky to square his authoritarian tendencies with economic growth.

# Winning streaks at the Champions League final



Saturday's [Champions League final](#) will pit Real Madrid, European football champions a record 14 times, against Borussia Dortmund, winners just once before. Carlo Ancelotti, Real's manager, belongs to an exclusive club. Of the seven men who have lifted the cup as both a player and a manager, just two have done at least twice in each role. One is Spain's Miguel Muñoz, who won three in a row for Real as a midfielder in the 1950s before taking two more titles as the club's manager in the 1960s. The other is Mr Ancelotti, the only six-time winner.

Mr Ancelotti hopes to add to the titles he won for Real during previous stints as manager in 2014 and 2022. Some multiple winners are strict tacticians. But Mr Ancelotti is different. He believes his teams are full of high-quality players who can figure out what needs to be done. His job is to keep them happy and focused. Perhaps that is the secret to success.



# Boeing's Starliner is set to take off at last



America's newest spacecraft is due to take to the skies on Saturday. If all goes to plan the inaugural crew on Boeing's CST-100 Starliner will arrive at the International Space Station a bit less than two days later. It is a short trip for the astronauts. But it has been a long and troublesome journey for Boeing.

Ten years ago NASA awarded Boeing and SpaceX contracts worth \$4.2bn and \$2.6bn respectively to develop spacecraft that would take crews to the ISS. SpaceX [started operating its Crew Dragon in 2020](#), which has since provided NASA with eight flights and has been used for private missions, too. Meanwhile misbehaving clocks, corroded valves and unacceptably combustible material have left Boeing's offering years behind schedule and \$1.5bn in the red, adding to [Boeing's many woes](#). This latest launch attempt, originally scheduled for early May, has been delayed because of a further valve problem and concerns about a helium leak.

## A new album from Crowded House



Crowded House are the opposite of a cult band: commercially successful, inspiring more affection than obsession. The Antipodean group has sold millions of records, making music for four decades through three line-ups. Yet their output has been far from prolific. Their new album, “Gravity Stairs”, is only their eighth.

But as their marketing copy once insisted, “you know more Crowded House songs than you think you do”. Their hits may be few but they boast memorable melodies. As soon as tunes such as “Don’t Dream It’s Over” and “Weather With You”—penned by Neil Finn, the band’s frontman—enter the listener’s consciousness, they often refuse to leave. The band’s latest set draws on a range of styles: folk pop (evoking Simon and Garfunkel); 1970s adult-oriented rock (reflecting Mr Finn’s recent spell in [Fleetwood Mac](#)); and New Wave and alternative rock with softened edges. It works as a satisfying primer of melodic pop and rock over the decades.

# Keir Starmer, Britain's likely next prime minister



If the polls prove right at the [British general election](#) on July 4th, [Sir Keir Starmer](#) will have a strong claim to be Britain's first accidental prime minister.

The Labour leader came to politics late, entering parliament in 2015 at the age of 52. At the time his ambition appeared limited. A successful career in law, which culminated with Sir Keir becoming the director of public prosecution in England and Wales, stood him in good stead to become attorney-general, the government's top legal adviser.

This plan went awry when Labour lost the general election in 2019. But the party's misfortune was Sir Keir's opportunity. While other MPs had blanched at serving under Jeremy Corbyn, the party's left-wing leader, Sir Keir did so with reluctant loyalty. When Mr Corbyn stepped down, Sir Keir was perfectly placed to succeed him. In barely five years Sir Keir went from newbie MP to opposition leader, tasked with making the party electable after four straight election defeats.



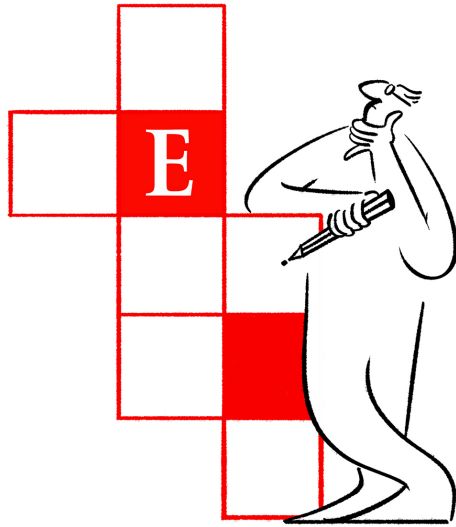
Sir Keir's [tenure](#) has been marked by a mix of cynicism and brutality. He won the leadership promising left-wing policies and competence. Once in power, he ditched his pledges and overhauled the party machinery, removing left-wingers and replacing them with people loyal to him and his team.

The party Sir Keir leads is [a different beast](#) to the one he inherited. In 2020 he suspended Mr Corbyn for downplaying allegations of antisemitism in the party. This week, several left-wing MPs were banned from standing in the election.

Sir Keir reached the brink of power far quicker than anyone expected. Labour's cautious programme of moderate tax increases—on private schools, for example—coupled with flag-hugging to burnish the party's patriotic credentials has reassured voters, if not inspired them.

Still, it is [the Conservative Party's collapse](#) that will probably land Sir Keir in Downing Street. The tragicomic incompetence of [Boris Johnson](#), a former prime minister, coupled with a debt crisis brought about by the policies of his successor, [Liz Truss](#), sealed the Tories' electoral fate. Cynicism and brutality are nothing without a large dose of luck.

# Weekly crossword



Our crossword is designed for experienced cruciverbalists and newcomers alike. Both sets of clues give the same answers, all of which feature in articles in this week's edition of *The Economist*:

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

## Cryptic clues

1 down Generation destroyed Bombay sober (4-7)

1 across Animal, without right, is bust (6)

2 across State's mineral deposit not entirely gone (6)

3 across Some use a songbook to add salt and pepper (6)

## Factual clues

1 down Who, as a group, are loaded yet stingy (4-7)

1 across What the World Health Organisation preaches is “best” (6)

2 across An American state with rent- control laws for existing tenants (6)

3 across What is about to start in America for hurricanes (6)

## The winners of this week's quiz



### 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:

**Maureen Evans**, Vernon, Canada

**Thomas Bergt**, Munich, Germany

**Sonia Lacombe**, Singapore

They all gave the correct answers of the Venerable Bede, Daniel, John Stuart Mill, Felix Baumgartner and Chris Evans. The theme was the author George Eliot, who wrote the novels Adam Bede, Daniel Deronda, The Mill on the Floss and Felix Holt, the Radical and whose real name was Mary Ann Evans

The questions were:

**Monday:** Which saint wrote the “Ecclesiastical History of the English People”, one of the earliest histories of the nation?

**Tuesday:** Which Old Testament book features Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego?

**Wednesday:** Which 19th century philosopher wrote “On Liberty”?

**Thursday:** Who set the then world record for the highest skydive in 2012, becoming the first person to break the sound barrier without vehicular power?

**Friday:** Which actor has played both the Human Torch and Captain America on film?



# Magiccicada

*the Latin word for periodical cicadas. Two broods are emerging simultaneously in America for the first time since 1803.  
Read the full story.*

**Time and memory are true artists; they remould reality nearer to the heart's desire.**

*John Dewey*