

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: Getty Images

A magnitude 6.3 earthquake struck near Mazar-i-Sharif, a city of around 682,000 people in northern **Afghanistan**. A local health official reported a preliminary death toll of at least 20. In August an earthquake with a similar magnitude killed at least 2,200 people in the country. Afghanistan's ability to respond to natural disasters has been hindered by [curbs](#) on international aid.

OPEC+, a group of oil-producing countries led by Saudi Arabia and Russia, said that it would raise its daily output by only 137,000 barrels in December, and make no further increases in the first three months of next year. [The cartel](#) has lifted its production targets by about 2.9m barrels per day since April. But it has slowed down in recent months, fearing oversupply.

Mexico's president, Claudia Sheinbaum, promised to bring to justice the people behind the murder of **Carlos Manzo**, the mayor of Uruapan city. Mr Manzo, a vehement opponent of organised-crime cartels, was shot during Day of the Dead celebrations on Sunday. The gunman was killed at the scene. Although Mexico's official murder rate has recently fallen, on [most measures](#) crime, led by gang violence, has increased.

British police said a 32-year-old British man was the sole suspect in a **mass stabbing** on a train in Cambridgeshire, England on Saturday. They had not determined a motive, but added that there was no reason to suspect that it was a terrorist attack. Another man was released without charges. Eleven people were taken to hospital; one remains in critical condition

Hamas handed back the remains of three of the **hostages** it took in an attack on Israel on October 7th 2023, according to the Israeli government. As part of a ceasefire signed last month, Hamas agreed to return the 20 hostages it still held, as well as the bodies of those who died in captivity. Israel has complained about the slow pace of returns and challenged Hamas's identification of some bodies.

A spokesman for **Nigeria's** president told Reuters that the government would welcome America's help in combating jihadist terrorism, but only if the superpower respected the country's "territorial integrity". On Saturday Donald Trump said he would stop all aid to Nigeria and might send in troops "guns-a-blazing" unless the government took action to stop "Islamic Terrorists" killing Christians.

A **Parisian** prosecutor said that small-time criminals from a deprived area in the north of the city had conducted [a brazen heist at the Louvre](#) on October 19th, not organised-crime groups. Thieves escaped with eight items of Napoleonic and royal jewellery worth \$102m. Three of four suspected robbers have now been arrested. The jewels are still missing.

Word of the week: *Sisu*, a Finnish attitude to life that draws on inner strength and perseverance in the face of adversity. [Read the full story.](#)



Photograph: Reuters

Putin's Pokrovsk deadline

Vladimir Putin has reportedly ordered Russian forces to seize Pokrovsk, in eastern [Ukraine](#), by mid-November. They have been trying, at great cost, to take the logically important former coal-mining town since July last year. Mr Putin's deadline is likely to be missed. But the situation has become critical as Russian forces attempt to encircle the town.

Russia does not yet have full control over any positions in Pokrovsk, according to the Institute for the Study of War, an American think-tank. However, small groups of its soldiers have infiltrated the town. And 1,200 civilians are more or less trapped. Ukrainian forces have mounted limited counter-offensives. But Russia's ten-to-one advantage in [drones](#) around Pokrovsk is hampering their ability to move troops and equipment.

The fall of Pokrovsk would not immediately threaten the four cities of Ukraine's Donetsk "fortress belt" that lie between 60km and 90km to the north. But it would remove a key defensive barrier.



Photograph: Reuters

A new course for Japan's car giants

Automakers are showing off their whizziest designs at the Japan Mobility Show, a gathering of [automotive](#) and technology firms running this weekend in Tokyo. Toyota flaunted a redesigned and sleek Corolla. “Wanting to drive a car that looks cool...I think that many of us share such a desire,” said the firm’s chief executive.

Yet in the boardrooms of [Japan’s automakers](#), the mood is far from cool. Carmakers have largely absorbed Donald Trump’s tariffs on vehicles and car parts, taking a hit to their margins. Eventually, most analysts expect, they will pass on the higher costs to consumers.

Meanwhile they are rushing to catch up with [Chinese rivals](#). Toyota has inked several joint ventures with Chinese firms such as BYD, giving it access to the battery technology required to compete in China’s fast-growing electric-vehicle market. Other Japanese carmakers, including Nissan and Mazda, have, too. Japan’s automaking prestige now hinges on its firms’ ability to re-engineer themselves.



Photograph: Getty Images

How politics shapes the world's clocks

On Sunday Americans will turn their clocks back an hour, ending [Daylight Saving Time](#) (DST) and resuming a debate about what time it ought to be. The Senate this week failed to agree on a proposal, backed by Donald Trump, to make DST permanent. Opponents argue that darker winter mornings could endanger schoolchildren. For now, America will keep resetting its clocks twice a year, a practice that began as a wartime energy-saving measure.

Non-Americans argue about [time](#), too. Around the world, governments use time zones to make political statements. China runs entirely on “Beijing time”. In western cities, such as Kashgar, the sun thus rises after 10am. Spain, whose longitudinal position overlaps with Britain’s, uses Central European Time—a legacy of General Francisco Franco, a dictator who adopted Nazi Germany’s time zone in 1940. Russia has moved the parts of Ukraine it has conquered onto Moscow time. In a fractious world, expect more leaders to make statements by the clock.



Photograph: Alamy

Chimps show human-like reasoning

The view that only humans think rationally is being put to the test by ever-more-sophisticated [artificial-intelligence](#) models. And chimpanzees. A new study of our closest relative, published in *Science*, a journal, suggests that the human mind may be less distinctive than previously thought.

In a series of experiments, researchers hid a piece of apple in one of two boxes and asked the [chimpanzees](#) to find it, offering a mix of helpful and misleading clues about where it was. The animals revised their choice with each new clue, weighing a clue's strength, discarding anything misleading and keeping track of what they knew. It is the first evidence of this kind of reasoning in a non-human animal.

The findings suggest that the common ancestor of humans and chimps may have possessed this skill millions of years ago—meaning that rational thought could predate human [language](#) and culture. They may reshape how humans approach intelligence, whether human or artificial.

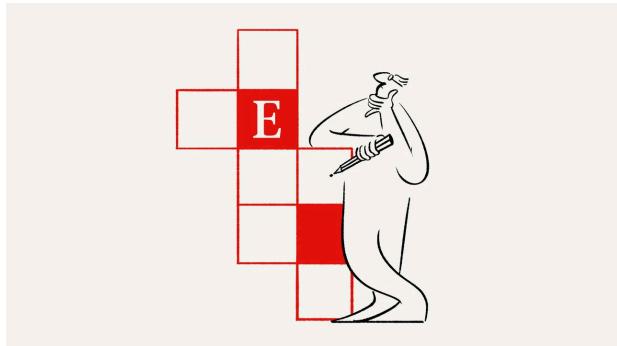


Illustration: The Economist

Mini crossword

We publish a new interactive edition of our crossword daily, allowing you to enter and check the answers and see explanations. Try it [here](#). Or, if you prefer, use the grid below.

There are two sets of clues, one for seasoned cruciverbalists and the other for less experienced solvers. Both give the same answers.

Cryptic clues

1 across - Anxiety in the style of René Magritte, initially (5)

2 across - Film five papers on executive order (5)

3 across - Might get alternative city leader (5)

1 down - Protection from snake bite meant I've no malignancy inside (9)

Straight clues

1 across - Warning klaxon; state of fear (5)

2 across - Visual accompaniment to audio (5)

3 across - Position up for grabs in the city that never sleeps (5)

1 down - Something that can neutralise a snake bite (9)

Email all four answers, along with your home city and country, by 9am GMT on Monday to [\[email protected\]](mailto:). We will pick three winners at random and crown them in Tuesday's edition.

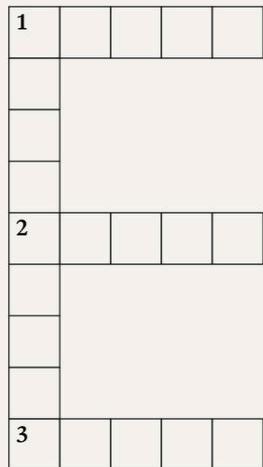




Illustration: The Economist

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:

Tetsuyuki Maruyama, Ito, Japan

Orla McRann, Dublin, Ireland

Michael Zenaitis, Calgary, Canada

They all gave the correct answers of: chicks, sledge, St Andrews, the heart and a pointer. The theme is musical groups with sisters in them: The Chicks (formerly the Dixie Chicks), Sister Sledge, The Andrews Sisters, Heart and the Pointer Sisters. The questions were:

Monday: What is the general term for baby birds?

Tuesday: What British word for a toboggan is also a verb that describes the tactic of insulting sporting opponents?

Wednesday: Which university did Prince William and his wife, Kate, attend?

Thursday: Which human organ is contained within the pericardium?

Friday: Which breed of dog, used to find game, is often called a “bird dog” in the American South?

If you want to gather honey, don't kick over the beehive.

Dale Carnegie