

# The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: AFP

Ursula von der Leyen, the president of the European Commission, said that the European Union would not impose retaliatory **tariffs** on American goods before August 1st. On Saturday [Donald Trump](#) threatened a 30% levy on many EU goods entering America, starting from the same date. Ms von der Leyen said that the bloc would prefer a “negotiated solution” but was preparing “countermeasures” to be used if negotiations fail.

**Iran** will resume nuclear talks if America guarantees that it will not attack again, said Abbas Araghchi, the foreign minister. America bombed three Iranian nuclear facilities in June. It is unclear how much damage the strikes did to the country’s nuclear programme. Mr Araghchi also reiterated that Iran would continue to enrich uranium. America insists it should not.

**Muhammadu Buhari**, a former ruler of Nigeria, has died, aged 82. Mr Buhari came to power in a military coup in 1983, ruling for two years before he was overthrown. After becoming a democrat, he was elected president in 2015. During his eight-year tenure he mismanaged the economy and failed to provide political leadership. Nigerians grew poorer and violence increased.

Kim Jong Un, **North Korea's** dictator, said that Russia has his “unconditional support” in its war on Ukraine during a visit by Sergei Lavrov, Russia's foreign minister. North Korea is estimated to have sent 11,000 [soldiers to help Russia](#). Ukrainian intelligence expects the Asian country to send at least 25,000 more. Russia's top diplomat hailed an “invincible fighting brotherhood”.

An Israel missile hit a refugee camp in **Gaza**, killing at least eight people, many of them children. The Israeli Defence Forces said that the projectile had malfunctioned and missed its target. The IDF expressed regret and said it was investigating the incident. Gaza's health ministry said on Sunday that 139 people had been killed in the territory in the past 24 hours.

**France** announced a “historic” deal with **New Caledonia**, a French overseas territory where anti-colonial unrest took place last year. The nickel-rich Pacific islands will remain French but will be a new state “within the Republic”, said Emmanuel Macron, France's president. [New Caledonians](#) will have to approve the arrangement in a referendum, and it will have to pass France's parliament.

Ticket sales for DC Entertainment's “**Superman**” film flew past the \$100m mark in its first weekend, reaching \$122m in American and Canadian cinemas. [The man of steel](#) took in \$217m worldwide. Its success—which comes despite, or perhaps because of, anger about its “woke” message on immigration—will be welcome to DC, which has struggled to compete with its nemesis, Marvel.

**Word of the week:** *Izinkabi*, the Zulu word for hitmen, who are on the rise in South Africa. [Read the full story.](#)



Photograph: Getty Images

## Power play in the Pacific

On Sunday America and Australia kicked off Talisman Sabre. Held every other year since 2005, it is Australia's biggest military exercise. This will be the largest one yet. Over three weeks more than 35,000 troops from at least 19 countries—including, for the first time, India—will conduct land, sea and air manoeuvres in and around Australia and Papua New Guinea. A feared Chinese invasion of Taiwan is the obvious backdrop. Naval warfare will feature heavily, as will drills to fight off beach landings.

Australia will be hoping to impress America. Donald Trump's administration has slammed the country's defence spending of nearly 2% of GDP as insufficient. He is pushing for 3.5%. In June the [Pentagon ordered a review of AUKUS](#), casting doubt on the Joe Biden-era pact with Britain to provide Australia with nuclear-powered attack submarines. If, to China's delight, that deal gets canned, [Australia's geographic predicament](#) will loom even larger.



Photograph: Getty Images

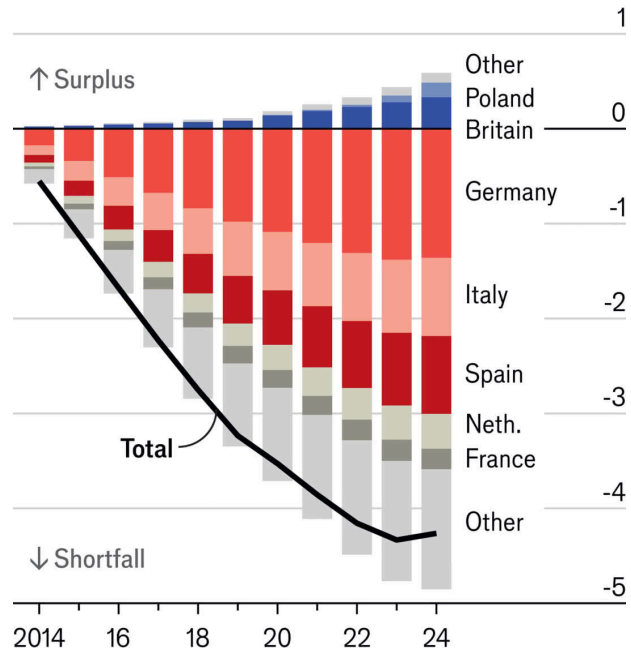
## Vive la défense!

On the eve of Bastille Day, France's national holiday, Emmanuel Macron will lay out the country's new defence plans in a speech in Paris on Sunday. Addressing members of the armed forces, France's president will speak about the growing threats to security and freedom in Europe. He will also make the case for his country [spending more on defence](#). Like [other NATO members](#) France has agreed to boost defence spending to 3.5% of GDP by 2035; its current level is just 2%.

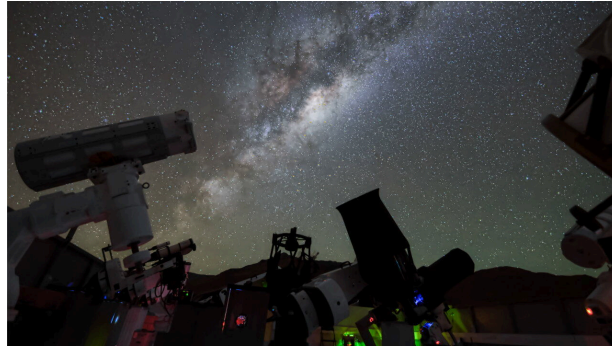
But France is currently running a budget deficit that is expected to end the year at 5.6% of GDP, one of the highest levels in the European Union. The government says it needs to find €40bn (\$46.7bn) of savings in its budget for 2026. By making clear the changing threats, Mr Macron is hoping to create a consensus around the need to boost defence spending. What remains unclear is what he is prepared to spend less on.

## Target missed

NATO Europe, cumulative surplus/shortfall since 2014 from defence-spending target of 2% of combined GDP, percentage-points



Sources: NATO; *The Economist*



Photograph: Obtech/El Sauce Observatory

## A test for astronomy's newest branch

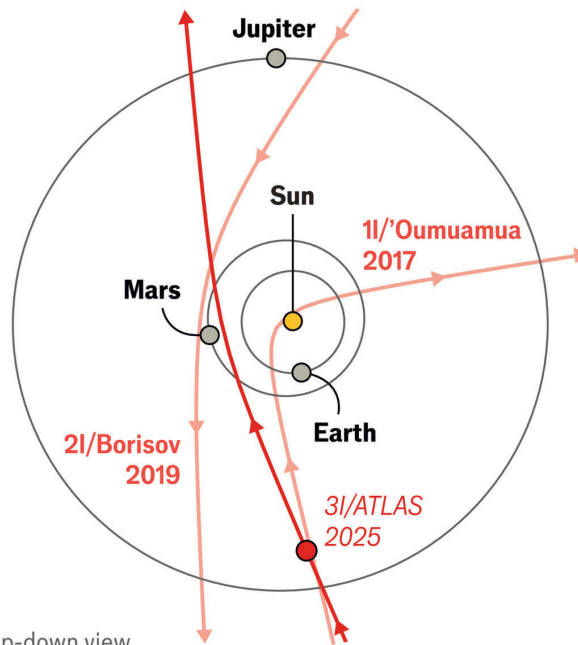
On July 1st a telescope in Chile spotted a visitor to our solar system from another star. 3I/ATLAS, as the object is known, is a comet perhaps 10km across, probably older than the Sun itself, and seems to have travelled from the galaxy's "thick disk", a clustering of relatively old stars that sits above and below the main plane of the galaxy.

3I/ATLAS is the third such visitor that [astronomers have spotted](#), after 1I/'Oumuamua in 2017 and 2I/Borisov in 2019. The study of such objects—which are thought to outnumber stars a million-billion-fold—has become astronomy's newest discipline.

3I/ATLAS's trajectory means it will not be visible from Earth as it makes its closest approach to the Sun, on October 30th. But it will be visible from Mars, and astronomers hope that probes in orbit around that planet might be able to take pictures of the encounter.

## Ex astris

### Paths of interstellar objects in the solar system



Top-down view

Source: "Discovery and preliminary characterisation of a third interstellar object: 3I/ATLAS",  
by Darryl Seligman et al., 2025





Photograph: Getty Images

## A football World Cup half full

For Chelsea and Paris Saint-Germain, participating in FIFA's controversial [Club World Cup](#) has served its purpose. On Sunday the teams meet in the final in New Jersey. For Chelsea, the competition has been a cash cow. The club has so far earned around £80m, with another £7m on offer if it can emerge victorious. The windfall has helped finance its recent spending spree on the world's most promising young players. Earlier this week, UEFA fined Chelsea €31m (\$36.3m) for breaching financial rules—but the Club World Cup earnings have softened the blow.

For PSG, the competition has enhanced its claim to be the best team in the world. After demolishing Inter Milan 5-0 in the final of the Champions League in May, it has proved similarly irresistible in America, brushing aside Real Madrid in a one-sided semi-final. Whereas a long season and scorching American summer have taken their toll on other European teams, the Parisians look full of *joie de vivre*.





Photograph: Getty Images

## **Bad Bunny takes his world-conquering music home**

This weekend [Bad Bunny](#), a Puerto Rican rapper and singer, kicks off his blockbuster 30-show residency in San Juan, the capital of his homeland. The 400,000 tickets for “No Me Quiero Ir de Aquí” (“I Don’t Want To Leave Here”) sold in four hours. Over the next two months, Bad Bunny—whose real name is Benito Antonio Martínez Ocasio—will entertain audiences with songs from his chart-topping album “Debí Tirar Más Fotos”.

In some ways he is a very local star. He celebrates Afro-Latino sounds and his lyrics, almost exclusively in Spanish, are political, often about gentrification’s impact on the island (“I don’t want them to do to you what they did to Hawaii”). But his appeal is global: fans snapped up more than 2.6m tickets for his forthcoming world tour in a week. Back in Puerto Rico, the residency is expected to bring in around \$200m. Each night promises to be, in the words of one of his biggest hits, a “Baile Inolvidable”—an unforgettable dance.



Illustration: The Economist

## Mini 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 across* A strict regime in eleven months' time? Thanks! (5)

*2 across* English perspective is pointless, so gains nothing (5)

*3 across* The mad, confining virtual world is where we now live (5)

*1 down* A judge and a boozy captain go after a mighty financial institution (8,5)

### Factual clues

*1 across* A military regime (5)

*2 across* An adjective meaning English (5)

3 across The third planet in the solar system (5)

1 down The world's biggest bank (8,5)

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

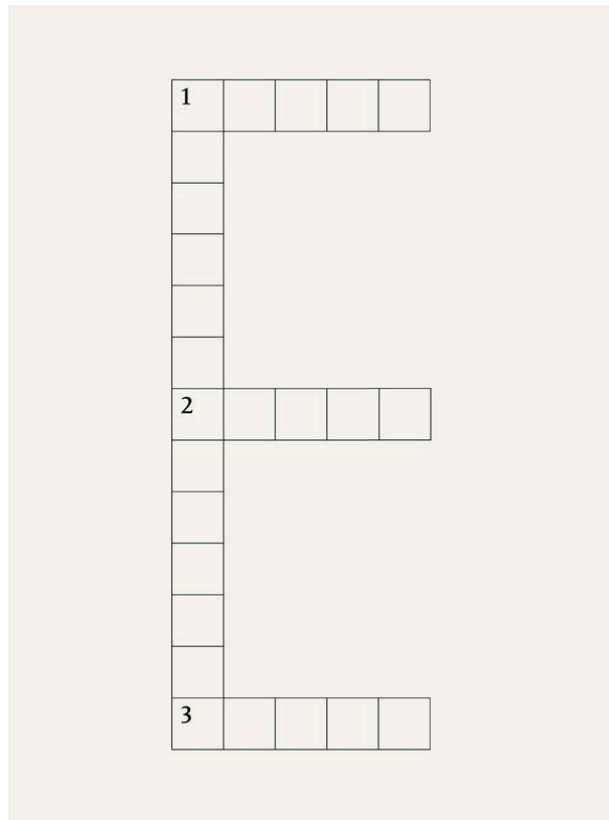


Image: The Economist



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:

**John Banes**, Baltimore, Maryland, America

**Judy Malkin**, Toronto, Canada

**Melanie Mazier**, Luxembourg

They all gave the correct answers of: Sarah Palin, Tracy Chapman, Brian Cox, the Holy Grail and parrots. The theme is the Monty Python comedy group which included Michael Palin and Graham Chapman, performed in the films "Monty Python's Life of Brian" and "Monty Python and the Holy Grail" and are well known for the "dead parrot" sketch.

*Our life is frittered away by  
detail. Simplify, simplify, simplify!*

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***Henry David Thoreau***