

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: AFP via Getty Images

An **Israeli** negotiating team travelled to Qatar for indirect talks with Hamas over a [possible ceasefire](#) in **Gaza** and the release of hostages still held in the enclave. The office of Binyamin Netanyahu, Israel's prime minister, said Hamas had asked for “unacceptable” changes to an American-backed proposal, which includes a 60-day truce. Mr Netanyahu will meet Donald Trump in Washington on Monday.

America's treasury secretary, Scott Bessent, said countries which failed to [secure trade agreements with America](#) would see tariffs “boomerang” back to higher rates on August 1st. Mr Trump's 90-day reprieve on his heftiest tariffs is set to expire on July 9th. America's president said he would send letters to around 12 unspecified countries with details of his plans on Monday.

Senior officials from the **BRICS** countries gathered in [Rio de Janeiro for a summit](#). The group, which now has 11 members, claims to foster co-operation in the global south. The leaders of three of its five founding countries—Brazil, India and South Africa—are attending the summit. But China's leader, Xi Jinping, is absent and Russia's president, Vladimir Putin, will only speak remotely.

At least 69 people were killed and dozens more are missing after **heavy floods** swept through **Texas**. Many of the victims were girls staying at a summer camp near the Guadalupe river; 27 are still unaccounted for. Emergency workers have rescued several hundred people and are searching for more. Mr Trump signed a “major disaster declaration” to allow federal support for the state.

China said that it would stop procuring some medical devices from [European companies](#) in retaliation for curbs that the European Union announced last month. The limit pertains to contracts worth over 45m yuan (\$6.3m) and won’t apply to European firms that build devices in China. On Friday China also imposed anti-dumping duties on some European brandy.

Weeks after his [falling out](#) with Mr Trump, **Elon Musk** claimed he would create a new political party. “Today, the America Party is formed to give you back your freedom,” wrote the billionaire and former Trump aide on X, his social-media site. The Federal Election Commission has yet to publish documentation showing the party has been officially registered.

South Korean prosecutors said they had requested permission to detain the country’s former president, **Yoon Suk Yeol**, in relation to allegations of abuse of power and obstruction of justice. The charges are linked to Mr Yoon’s short-lived attempt to impose martial law in December, which led to his [impeachment](#). The former president was questioned on Saturday as part of the investigation, officials said.

Word of the week: Kleptosomes, sac-like structures which sea slugs use to store chloroplasts. [Read the full story.](#)



Photograph: Alamy

An awkward BRICS summit in Brazil

On Sunday representatives from the BRICS are meeting in Rio de Janeiro for their [annual summit](#). The BRICS, which was founded by Brazil, Russia, India and China in 2009, now includes 11 countries. Iran joined last year. Originally the bloc gave emerging economies a way to exert global influence. But as geopolitical tensions have increased, it has started to look more anti-Western.

The two-day meeting will be the BRICS's first big gathering since Israel and America bombed Iran. Brazil strongly criticised the attack, risking America's ire. Still, the host wants to focus the summit on less controversial topics, such as vaccine co-operation and green energy. It may fail. Russia and China may try to discuss plans to diminish the dollar's role in global commerce, an idea that Donald Trump hates. Iran could use the summit to lambast America. So far Brazil has avoided unwanted attention from Mr Trump. Hosting an anti-Western pow-wow could change that.

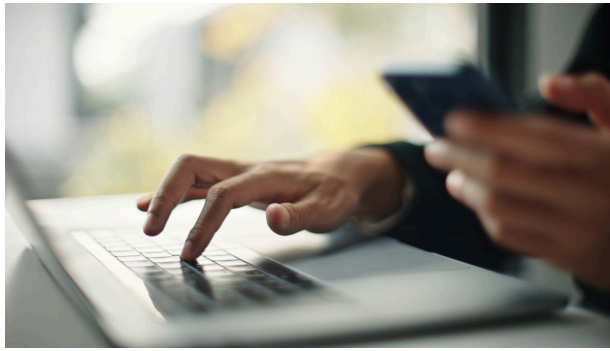


Photograph: AP

The Kremlin's strategy of death and distraction

Vladimir Putin shows no sign of slowing his war in Ukraine. On Thursday Russia's president reportedly told Donald Trump that he would only seek to end the conflict once its "root causes" had been addressed. By that, Mr Putin means making Ukraine a country under Russia's thumb. Mr Trump said he was "very disappointed" by the call. But he has taken little action to pressure Mr Putin towards peace. Hours after the leaders spoke, Russia launched its largest drone attack yet on its neighbour.

Inside Russia, the Kremlin is tightening repression. Last week it introduced an order curbing what citizens can say about government institutions or preparations to mobilise more people to fight. Meanwhile officials are driving consumption as a means of distraction. Moscow's mayor is hosting a [three-month summer festival](#), replete with flower displays, open-air cooking classes and artisan ice-cream kiosks. Yet summers in Russia are short—and Mr Putin's regime offers no vision of the future.



Photograph: Getty Images

Anti-phishing training may be useless

Phishing attacks trick victims into handing over personal details and passwords, often by sending emails that impersonate messages from legitimate businesses. Such [scams](#) can be costly. According to America's Federal Bureau of Investigation, American companies reported losses of \$70m from phishing and similar scams last year.

To avoid falling victim, many businesses buy expensive anti-phishing training for their staff. But a study by academics at Purdue University suggests they are wasting their money. The researchers divided 12,511 employees of an American fintech firm into three groups. They either got no anti-phishing tuition, a standard 15-video "awareness" course or the same videos plus interactive exercises. The researchers later subjected the workers to a mock phishing attack. One in ten employees clicked on the fake links regardless of training; the most expensive interactive lessons only raised by 1% the likelihood that an employee would report an attack. Business leaders may have to find another way to avoid becoming phish food.



Photograph: Reuters

A test of American football prowess

On Sunday the United States will play Mexico in Houston, Texas, in the final of the CONCACAF Gold Cup, the ugliest acronym in the beautiful game. The winner of the tournament, which is for men's national teams in North and Central America and the Caribbean, will receive a boost to their [preparations](#) for the World Cup, which begins in just under a year in North America.

The United States is trying to raise the profile of its men's team. It has splurged to hire Mauricio Pochettino, a well-respected Argentine coach, paying him \$6m a year to run its men's team. During the Gold Cup, Mr Pochettino has been without many of his best players. Still, he has steered a second-string side through difficult assignments against Costa Rica and Guatemala. Mexico, whose star striker is Raúl Jiménez, a forward for England's Fulham at club level, will provide a much stiffer test. The game should provide both teams with a challenge as they prepare for next year's main event.

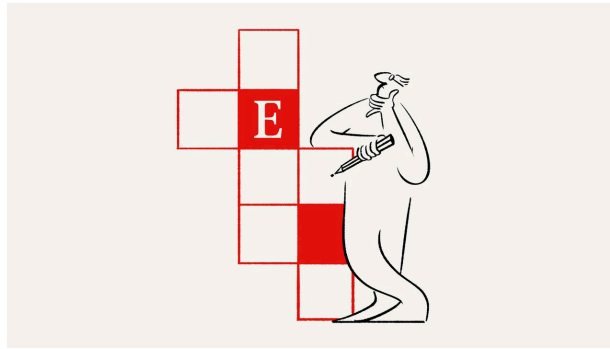


Illustration: The Economist

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

1 across Artist clutches magic stick in central Africa (6)

2 across Slight reorganisation brings illumination (6)

3 across Self-contained frilly collar for the nape of the neck (6)

1 down Several cheer upset politician under pressure (6,6)

Factual

1 across Country that last month signed a truce with the Democratic Republic of Congo (6)

2 across Could be traffic, Northern, electric or lungs (6)

3 across An untidy person (6)

1 down Britain's chancellor for many years to come, says Starmer (6,6)

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.

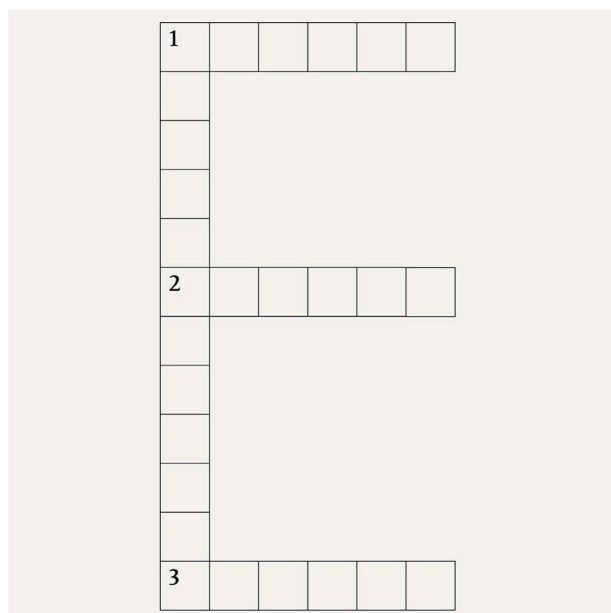


Image: The Economist



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:

Fred Edwards, Toronto, Canada

Peter Graham, Bertrange, Luxembourg

Isabelle Ljunggren, Gothenburg, Sweden

They all gave the correct answers of: clocks, sounds, fix, Sky and Yellow river. The theme is songs by Coldplay: Clocks, Speed of Sound, Fix You, A Sky Full of Stars and Yellow

The questions were:

Monday: Horology is the study of what?

Tuesday: Plymouth, Puget and Roanoke are all examples of which geographical feature?

Wednesday: What word can mean both an awkward predicament and a narcotic dose for an addict?

Thursday: Rupert Murdoch founded which British satellite TV company?

Friday: The Huanghe river is better known by what name in English?

*All music is folk music. I ain't
never heard a horse sing a song.*

Louis Armstrong