

Catch up: Israel orders more evacuations in Gaza; the Olympics closing ceremony



Israel issued new evacuation orders to residents of the south Gazan city of **Khan Younis** as it carried out the third military operation there since Hamas's attack on Israel on October 7th. The UN says that 75,000 Palestinians have been forced to flee from southern Gaza in the past few days. Earlier, the American vice-president **Kamala Harris** condemned the loss of life caused by an Israeli air strike on a school in Gaza, saying that "yet again, far too many civilians have been killed" and reiterating calls for a ceasefire. Hamas claimed that the strike killed 100 people on Saturday. Israel claimed it had hit a Hamas "command-and-control centre" in the school.

Russia's defence ministry said that [Ukrainian troops](#) have advanced up to 30km inside Kursk. The governor of the Russian region ordered authorities to speed up the evacuation of tens of thousands of civilians. On Saturday Volodymyr Zelensky, Ukraine's president, acknowledged the incursion for the first time and said it was bringing "exactly the kind of pressure that is needed—pressure on the aggressor".

Donald Trump's presidential campaign said its internal communications had been hacked by “foreign sources hostile to the United States” and suggested Iran was to blame. The campaign published the claims after Politico, a news website, reported that it was sent internal campaign documents by an anonymous source. [The Trump campaign](#) did not provide direct evidence of the hack or of Iran's involvement.

Paul Kagame was sworn in for his fourth five-year term as president of **Rwanda**. The ceremony was watched by several African leaders in a 45,000-seater stadium in the capital Kigali. The autocratic Mr Kagame claimed to have won 99% of the vote in an [election](#) last month that was neither free nor fair. He has been the *de facto* leader of Rwanda since the genocide in 1994.

The chancellor of **Austria** argued that his government should have more powers to monitor messaging apps after the police thwarted a plot to attack a **Taylor Swift** concert in Vienna. Karl Nehammer also said that all the main suspects in the case, who had been inspired by the IS jihadist group, had been captured, although more arrests were likely.

The Philippines accused **China** of “dangerous and provocative actions” by two of its aircraft, which it said had dropped flares in the path of a Philippine plane patrolling the South China Sea. China said it had been acting professionally. Chinese coastguards regularly [harass Philippine vessels](#) in the disputed maritime region; but this was the first time that the Philippines has complained about aerial harassment.

The 2024 **Olympic games** closed with a spectacular ceremony at the Stade de France in Paris. The French swimming star Léon Marchand took centre stage before the medallists paraded around the arena. The next games in 2028 will be held in Los Angeles.

Word of the week: Siesta, an afternoon nap or rest period. It is still a serious business in Europe's south. [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.

Another push for a Gaza ceasefire



Some people in Gaza are losing track of how many times they have been displaced. On Friday the Israeli army sent troops into Khan Younis, its third ground offensive in the southern city since the war began in October. Thousands of Palestinian civilians were ordered to evacuate; most left on foot, carrying their meagre possessions in backpacks.

America, Egypt and Qatar have called for talks on Thursday to try to finalise a ceasefire. They insist that an agreement is close and that the talks—to be held in either Cairo or Doha—can resolve the outstanding issues. But Binyamin Netanyahu, Israel's prime minister, is ambivalent about a deal that would upset his right-wing base. Yahya Sinwar, the [new leader of Hamas](#), is hardly enthusiastic either. He insists that any deal must include a full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, a condition Mr Netanyahu will not accept. The talks may bring little relief for Palestinians on the run for nearly a year.

Sánchez's Catalan quagmire



Spain's prime minister, Pedro Sánchez, last week managed to install Salvador Illa, from his Socialist party, as Catalonia's president, ending 14 years of government of the region by separatists. This was despite a last-minute distraction from [Carles Puigdemont](#), who unconstitutionally declared Catalonia's independence in 2017. A fugitive from justice since then, he appeared in Barcelona on Thursday, gave a speech and then disappeared, evading arrest with the apparent complicity of the Catalan police.

The price of Mr Illa's victory may come to haunt Mr Sánchez's minority government. It offered Esquerra, one of the two main separatist parties, a deal granting Catalonia, one of Spain's richest regions, fiscal sovereignty. That undermines the federalist spirit of the constitution and is anathema to the conservative opposition and many in the Socialist party. Mr Sánchez may not get the deal through Spain's parliament. If he fails the Catalan separatists, on whom his government depends, may block the budget for a second year. Mr Sánchez survives, but Spain drifts.

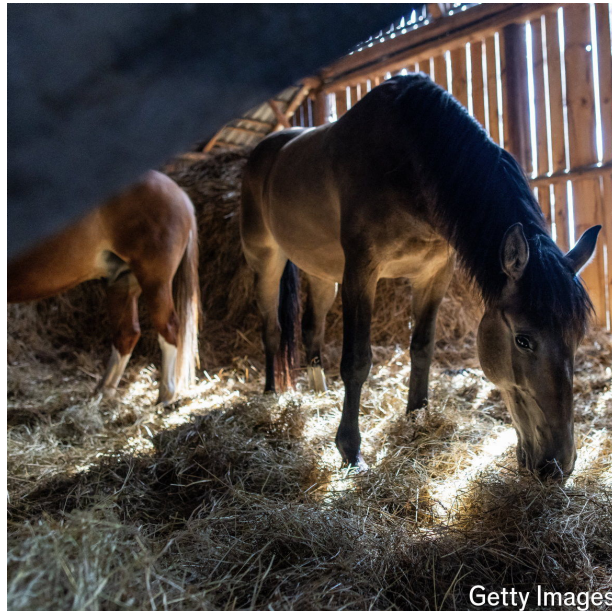
How the games got their groove back



Organisers of the Paris Olympics have had to contend with bad weather, an ugly row over [eligibility in boxing](#) and, allegedly, worms in the food at the athletes' village. But there are always logistical problems at huge events. These will not be the abiding memories from the games, which end on Sunday. Instead, Paris will be remembered as the place where the Olympic movement got its groove back, after the corruption and drug scandals of the winter games at Sochi (in 2014) and the joyless obligation-fulfilment of Tokyo (in 2021) during the pandemic.

These games had plenty of stars. Leon Marchand, a French swimmer, was a sensation; Simone Biles was back to her best in the gymnastics; and in Noah Lyles athletics may have found a sprinter with the star power of Usain Bolt. The youth-focused events—BMX, skateboarding and breaking—were hits. As yet, no big stars have failed drugs tests. Organisers in Los Angeles, to which the summer Olympics head in 2028, can focus less on rehabilitation and more on celebration.

Healthier ice cream with horse milk



About 230,000 horses produced milk for human consumption in the Soviet Union. It is the basis for making koumiss, a slightly heady fermented milk of ancient origin, which is quaffed across Central Asia. The peoples of the steppe have long believed it has health-giving properties, and not without reason. A growing body of evidence suggests that mare's milk can prevent and treat gastrointestinal and respiratory disorders.

Polish scientists have been experimenting with using mare's milk to make ice cream. They reported the results of its health benefits this week in *PLOS ONE*, a journal. The new product is reassuringly tasty, creamy and white—with added probiotic benefits. Mare's milk is similar to human breast milk: it is sweeter than cow's milk, and has immune-boosting enzymes like lactoferrin and lysozyme. It is also lower in fat and less allergenic. Ordinarily, healthier ice cream would sell itself. But Western consumers might hesitate before sitting down to a bowl of vanilla, with added Shergar.

Berlioz at Bard



W. H. Auden, a poet, once remarked that understanding Hector Berlioz, a French composer, is “essential” to “understand[ing] the 19th century”. The composer became famous—and ruffled feathers—by writing innovative works like “Symphonie Fantastique”, a passionate ode to a suffering romantic. Niccolò Paganini, a great violin virtuoso, once threw himself at Berlioz’s feet and declared him the successor to Beethoven. But since his death in 1869 the composer’s reputation has been mixed.

The out-of-fashion genius is the focus of the 34th Bard Music Festival at Bard College in New York. Two weekends of concerts and lectures (as well as a companion book of essays) dive into the music of Berlioz’s day and its political context. Musicologists will discuss Berlioz’s interest in literature, the composer’s own voluminous writings and his influence on his peers. Attendees can also learn about Berlioz’s love life. The musical programme is vastly varied: concerts on Sunday include one focused on French art song and another on music written by Berlioz’s female contemporaries.

The winners of this week's quiz



The Economist

Thank you to everyone who took part in this week's quiz. The winners, chosen at random, were:

Jörg Hackenberg, Mainz, Germany

Jos Aarts, Nijmegen, The Netherlands

Shin Chang Sup, Incheon, South Korea

They all gave the correct answers of Top Gun, James Garfield, Tom Joad, Sylvester and Felix Mendelssohn. The theme is cartoon cats: Top Cat, Garfield, Tom, Sylvester and Felix (one of the first animated characters in film history).

The questions were:

Monday: Maverick, Goose and Iceman are nicknames for characters in which 1986 movie?

Tuesday: Which President was assassinated in 1881, only six months into his term of office?

Wednesday: Which character in John Steinbeck's novel "The Grapes of Wrath" inspired an album by Bruce Springsteen?

Thursday: Which singer had a disco hit with the song “You Make Me Feel (Mighty Real)”?

Friday: Who composed the widely used “wedding march” and the Hebrides Overture?

Siesta

An afternoon nap or rest period. It is still a serious business in Europe's south.

Read the full story.

**It is the heart of life to have a real meeting
with another human being.**

Fay Honey Knopp