

Catch up: Biden vows to continue campaign; Israel strikes Houthi targets



Joe Biden, America's president, vowed to return to the campaign trail next week after self-isolating with covid. Meanwhile more Democrats called on him to [abandon his re-election bid](#). Mark Takano, a congressman from California, joined a number of other lawmakers in calling on Mr Biden to "pass the torch" to Kamala Harris, the vice-president. More than 30 Democratic members of Congress have now called on Mr Biden to step aside.

Israel said that it carried out an air strike on military targets in and around the Al Hudaydah Port in Yemen. The strikes were directed at the Houthis, an [Iran-backed militia](#) that previously claimed responsibility for a drone strike which killed one person and injured as many as ten others in Tel Aviv on Friday. Israel's army said the strikes had been carried out in response to "hundreds of attacks" by the Houthis on Israel in recent months.

HDFC Bank, India's largest private-sector bank, posted strong financial results for the most recent quarter. The firm's net income rose by 35% to 161.7bn rupees (\$1.9bn) from March 31st to June

30th compared to the same period one year ago. The bank's performance—which many analysts view as an indicator for the health of [India's finance sector](#)—was boosted by growth in both loans and deposits.

Volodymyr Zelensky, **Ukraine's** president, was updated on the investigation into the death of Iryna Farion, an ex-MP who was shot dead in Lviv, in western Ukraine, on Friday. Mr Zelensky said that Ukraine's security services were investigating the possibility of Russian involvement in the killing of the outspoken nationalist politician. Last year Ms Farion suggested that it was unpatriotic [for Ukrainians to speak Russian](#), “the language of the enemy”.

Bangladesh's government imposed a curfew and deployed the army to suppress student protests. The demonstrations, which began a few weeks ago and have grown increasingly violent, decry a policy that reserves some government jobs for relatives of people who died fighting for [Bangladesh's](#) independence. Schools and universities have been shut and news programmes taken off air. More than 100 people have died.

Elliott Global Management, an activist investor, has reportedly acquired a minority stake in **Starbucks**. The precise size of Elliott's position in the [American coffee chain](#) is unclear but it is believed to be significant. Elliott is also considering ways to boost Starbucks's shares, which have slumped by 17% since the start of the year amid a slowdown in sales.

Germany's government announced a crackdown on gangs that have been bombing ATMs in order to steal the cash inside. The most recent data show a sharp increase in the bombings, which rose by 26.5% in 2022 compared with 2021. Sentences for those found guilty will be increased from a minimum of one year to two years, with a maximum sentence of 15 years if an uninvolved person is harmed, according to a draft law.

Word of the Week: *Hengst*, an Old Germanic word for “stallion”.
[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.

Bibi goes to Washington



The backdrop to Binyamin Netanyahu's first overseas visit since the war in [Gaza](#) began is sombre. On Sunday, two days after Tel Aviv came under attack from Houthi drones and with Israel on the brink of all-out war with Hizbullah in Lebanon, Israel's prime minister sets off to Washington. Relatives of the 120 hostages still held in Gaza have criticised him for leaving when Israel may be on the cusp of a ceasefire deal with Hamas. It isn't even clear whether Mr Netanyahu will meet President Joe Biden, who is down with a case of covid-19.

But Mr Netanyahu's main interest is in Congress, where he will address a joint session on Wednesday. He is discredited at home and distrusted abroad. But Mr Netanyahu believes that he can convince those calling for a ceasefire in Gaza that Israel is fighting a wider war against Iran and its proxies. He will argue that Israel must be given more time and support to see things through.

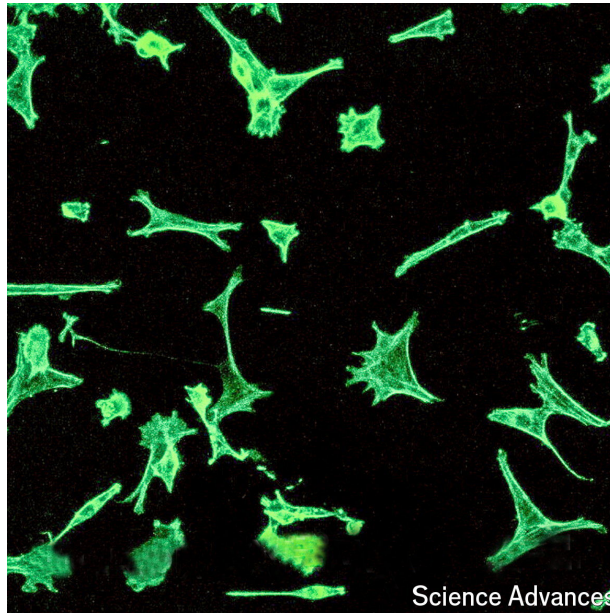
Protests rock Bangladesh



On Sunday students across [Bangladesh](#) were due to take high-school exams. Those have now been postponed indefinitely. The students' reprieve, however, is laced with tragedy. Bangladesh is roiled by protests, which have killed at least 100 people this week. In response, the government has imposed a curfew and deployed the army.

The demonstrations were triggered by a court's decision last month to reinstate a controversial affirmative-action policy that had been scrapped in 2018. It reserved 30% of government jobs for families of those who died fighting for Bangladesh's independence in 1971, and other minorities. The revival of the quota has been put on hold until August 7th, when the Supreme Court will deliver the final verdict. If judges rule in favour of Bangladesh's protesters, government jobs would remain more accessible but it would do little to alleviate the deeper problem of youth unemployment. Around 40% of 15-24 year olds are neither in education nor employed, nearly double the global percentage.

Electric eels inspire jelly batteries



What is flexible, self-healing and 60% water? Among the right answers are the human body and hydrogels. That similarity makes hydrogels useful in bioelectronics, according to research newly reported in *Science Advances*, a journal. Researchers at the University of Cambridge have used hydrogels to make “jelly batteries”. With their stretchable coloured cells, the batteries resemble confectionary snakes. But they were in fact inspired by electric eels: the batteries use ions to carry charge through layered cells, generating a current. They can stretch to more than ten times their original length while maintaining the same levels of conductivity.

These capabilities mean that the batteries could be implanted into the brains of people with epilepsy, or elsewhere in the body to power [wearable diagnostic devices](#). Since the dawn of electronics engineers have been using metallic materials as the basis for their inventions. But it seems that following nature’s softer, squishier path can provide benefits.

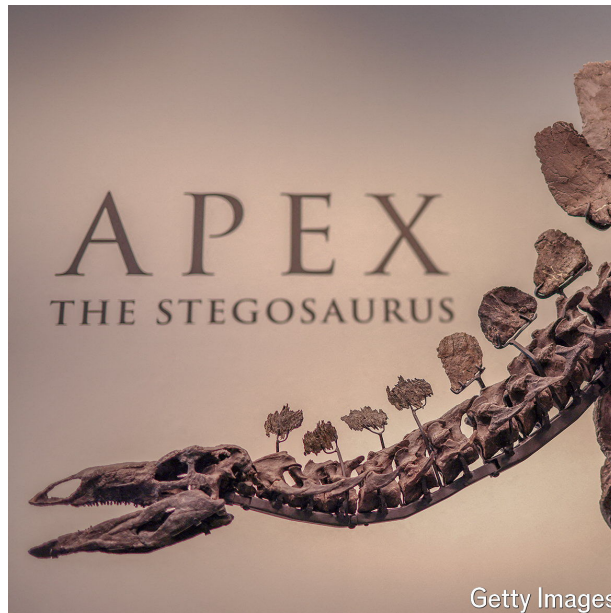
Pogacar dominated the Tour de France



This year's [Tour de France](#) should have been thrilling. There was fierce competition for the top spot: Tadej Pogacar, a Slovenian cyclist, and Jonas Vingegaard, a Danish one, have each won two of the past four Tours. Remco Evenepoel, a talented Belgian, was making his Tour debut. Mark Cavendish, a Brit, was looking to clinch a record 35th stage win; Biniam Girmay was seeking to become the first black African cyclist to win a stage. (Both were successful.)

But after the riders roll into Nice on Sunday, the race will be remembered as one that never quite caught fire. This is largely down to Mr Pogacar, who dominated throughout: even with a comfortable lead he attacked his opponents to gain an additional second or two. In 2022 and 2023 his relentlessness cost him in the final stages as he began to lose steam. But in 2024 Mr Pogacar played the Tour to perfection.

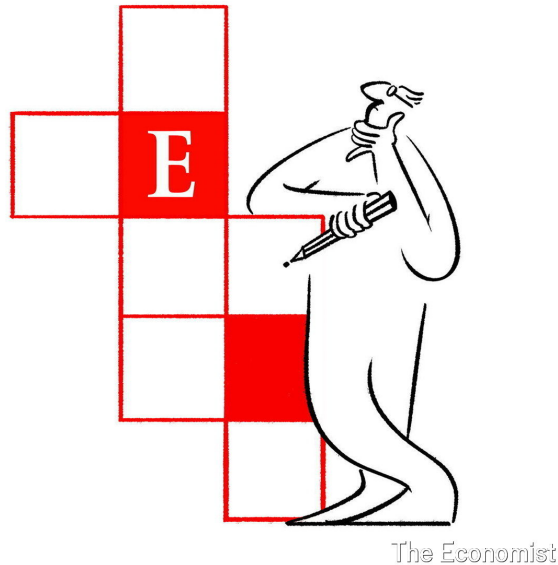
A staggering stegosaurus sale



The great auction houses of Europe and America have long sold Old Master paintings. Today they also market dinosaur fossils. This week the largest stegosaurus ever found sold at Sotheby's in New York for \$44.6m—a record for a fossil. “Apex”, the 150m-year-old dinosaur, was bought by Ken Griffin, the boss of Citadel, an investment firm.

Scientists fear the fossil has been lost to the public. That may not be the case. Mr Griffin reportedly intends to put it on display at a museum. “Apex was born in America and is going to stay in America,” he said. (In 2022 he loaned a copy of the constitution worth \$40m to the Crystal Bridges Museum in Arkansas.) Cretaceous capitalism has other upsides, too. A legitimate market helps curb smuggling and dodgy sales. [Privatised fossil-hunting](#) may lead to even more impressive discoveries. That is better than leaving fossils in the ground, or allowing smugglers to unearth them.

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 GMT on Monday to 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 Designing buildings to have curved structure—one with pronounced tactile quality (12)

1 across Portion of lamb an insult for mega-rich family (6)

2 across Sat back to embrace former lover in a state (5)

3 across Mass migration featured in the bible (6)

Factual clues

1 down Of which modernism is an increasingly unpopular style—for people and penguins alike

1 across A dynasty known for throwing incredibly lavish weddings

2 *across* Where Ted Cruz is a senator

3 *across* What some are expecting from Hong Kong because of its new national-security legislation

Winner's 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:

Mike Carter, San Diego, CA, United States

Peter Lynch, Santiago, Chile

Ailsa Green, Choma, Zambia

They all gave the correct answers of The Cherry Orchard, Zero Dark Thirty, vanilla, classics and diets. The theme is that they are all, or have been, types of Coke: cherry, zero, vanilla, classic and diet

Hengst

*An Old Germanic word for “stallion”.
Read the full story.*

Love is like a friendship caught on fire.

Bruce Lee