

## The world in brief, June 22nd 2024



**Israeli attacks** on Gaza City, in the north of the besieged enclave, killed 42 people according to Gaza's Hamas-controlled authorities. Israel said it had struck military infrastructure, but the director of Gaza's government media office told Reuters that Israel had hit houses, including in al-Shati, one of Gaza's refugee camps. As well as Hamas, Israel is fighting Hizbullah, the Iran-backed movement that controls much of Lebanon. On Friday António Guterres, the UN's secretary-general, expressed concern that clashes on the border might "trigger a catastrophe".

**China** and the **European Union** agreed to begin talks to reduce tensions around exports of [cheap electric vehicles](#). The EU said this month that it would raise tariffs on Chinese EVs as high as 48%, following an anti-subsidy investigation begun in 2023. Germany's vice-chancellor, Robert Habeck, who is visiting Beijing, welcomed the decision as a "first step" of many.

**Eric Coquerel**, of the hard-left Unsubmissive France party, said that the country's left-wing alliance would raise the highest marginal [income-tax](#) rate to 90% if successful in [elections](#) on June

30th and July 7th. The current top rate is 45%. France's constitutional court rejected a similar law in 2012, but Mr Coquerel argued that his new proposal would be legally robust.

**Toomaj Salehi**, a popular Iranian rapper, has had his death sentence overturned by the country's supreme court. Mr Salehi was condemned for supporting [the demonstrations](#) that erupted in Iran in 2022 after the death in custody of Mahsa Amini. He wrote songs about Amini's treatment at the hands of the morality police who detained her for her supposedly incorrect hijab. He now faces a retrial.

**Russian** guided bombs hit an apartment building in **Kharkiv**, Ukraine's second-biggest city, killing three people and injuring 52 more. Volodymyr Zelensky, Ukraine's president, said Russia had launched more than 2,400 guided [bombs](#) at Ukrainian targets in June. Earlier, Ukraine's energy facilities were again the target of a substantial attack by Russian missiles. The attacks have left Ukraine needing to buy energy from the EU.

**Donald Trump** encouraged **Christians** to "go and vote" and said that the religion would be left "in tatters" if Joe Biden, Mr Trump's rival in America's presidential race, was re-elected. Speaking at a conference of [evangelical](#) leaders in Washington, Mr Trump also endorsed Louisiana's recent decision to require all public schools to display the Ten Commandments.

Thirteen people were arrested after fireworks launched from a yacht reportedly ignited a fire on the **Greek island** of Hydra, near Athens. The blaze, which destroyed a pine forest, has been brought under control, but Greece remains on high alert for fires. On the back of its warmest winter on record, the country has been enduring an early-summer heatwave in which temperatures have exceeded 44°C (111°F).

**Word of the week:** *Cohabitation*, a French word that describes a political situation in the country where the president represents a different party to that which commands a majority in parliament.  
[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.*

## Britain's disruptive populists



Reform UK, the party of [Nigel Farage](#), Britain's perennial populist, will hold a rally in the West Midlands on Sunday. Mr Farage's return to front-line politics as leader of the insurgent party has been the only surprise in an otherwise static election campaign. In some polls Reform UK is close to overtaking the ruling Conservative Party.

Despite its high vote share, Britain's first-past-the-post system—which elects MPs for each constituency—means that the party will win few, if any, seats. Even the most bullish forecasts give it only a handful, including Clacton, the depressed seaside town where Mr Farage is standing. But Reform UK will shape the future of the Conservatives, which must decide whether to embrace Mr Farage and his far-right politics or face him down. The rise of Reform UK will not change the outcome of this election, in which Labour are cantering to an enormous win. But it may well have a big effect on the next.

## Israel's beleaguered prime minister



Israel's major ground operations in Gaza are drawing to an end, according to senior military officers. They claim to have destroyed most of Hamas's military capabilities there, and say that Israel must now focus on the growing threat from Hizbullah on its northern border. But [Binyamin Netanyahu](#), the prime minister, does not agree.

He is increasingly under pressure on the civilian front as well. On Thursday he met families of Israeli hostages who are presumed dead. Some of the families boycotted the meeting, saying that it came too late. Others demanded that Mr Netanyahu accept a ceasefire agreement with Hamas, to release the remaining hostages in Gaza. He is due for another grilling from such families on Sunday.

Mr Netanyahu appears to be avoiding the Israeli media: he has not given them an interview since the war began. (He has been interviewed by non-Israeli outlets.) On Thursday he was scheduled to appear on Channel 14, a friendly outlet. But he never showed up.



# The world's other big football tournament



While [football fans in Europe](#) are glued to events in Germany, those farther west have their own international tournament to savour. The 48th edition of the Copa América began in the United States on Thursday. The 16 teams are drawn from the two football confederations of the Americas. Argentina are defending the title they won in 2021; 15-time winners Uruguay and the giants of Brazil will also be hopeful. Only once has a team from North or Central America made the final; the strength of the South American squads means this is unlikely to change in 2024.

If any team is to cause an upset it could well be Ecuador. Piero Hincapié, a defender, plays for Bayer Leverkusen, which recently won the domestic league in Germany. Chelsea paid \$147m for Moisés Caicedo, an Ecuadorian midfielder, and also signed the 17-year-old playmaker Kendry Páez. The team could face Lionel Messi's Argentina in a mouth-watering semi-final. Vamos!

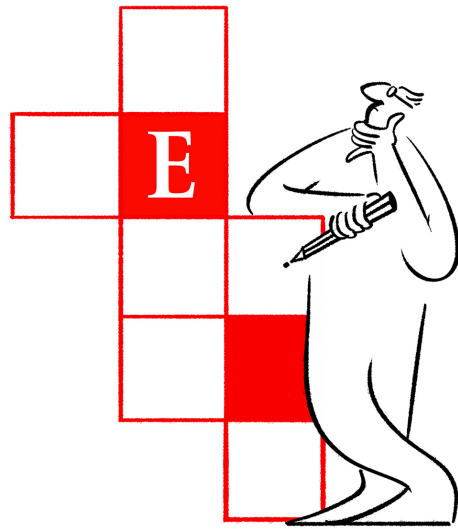
## To save seabirds, clear islands of rats



Oceanic archipelagos are [biodiversity](#) hotspots, home to more than 15% of terrestrial species. But most also host invasive rats, which are one of the main causes of animal extinctions on islands. Seabirds are especially vulnerable; rats devour their eggs and chicks. Marine scientists have modelled how eradicating rats from tropical islands could rescue some species.

Writing in *Conservation Biology*, a journal, a group of scientists say that de-ratting 25 of the Indian Ocean's Chagos Islands could increase by 18-fold populations of lesser noddies, sooty terns and red-footed boobies. This could help other species. Seabirds' droppings fertilise the surrounding coral reefs, leading to more fish biomass, which in turn sustains larger seabird populations. De-ratting an island is feasible. A big drop of poisoned bait, by helicopter or drone, would do the job.

# Weekly crossword



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:

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

## Cryptic clues

1 down Drunk person, alas, is without large source of energy (5,6)

1 across Son receives endless donations of fish (6)

2 across Autocrat's portion of output I nicked (5)

3 across Legislative body consumed by old Japanese money (6)

## Factual clues



1 down What will provide about 6% of the world's electricity this year (5,6)

1 across Britain's biggest food export in 2023 (6)

2 across Who is engaged in a bromance with Kim Jong Un (5)

3 across What Republicans are favoured to win (6)

## The winners of last week's quiz



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

**Peter Pendergest**, Burbank, Canada

**Carlos Sangil**, Madrid, Spain

**Joy Pinsky**, Walnut Creek, California, America

They all gave the correct answers of Spencer, bacon, El Salvador, the Jackson 5 (also the Jacksons) and Pablo Escobar. The theme is 20th century artists: Stanley Spencer, Francis Bacon, Salvador Dali, Jackson Pollock and Pablo Picasso.

The questions were:

**Monday:** What was the family name of the late Diana, Princess of Wales?

**Tuesday:** The terms streaky, back and short cut are associated with what type of meat?

**Wednesday:** Which central American country was the first in the world to adopt bitcoin as legal tender?

**Thursday:** Jackie, Tito, Jermaine, Marlon and Michael were the members of which musical group?

**Friday:** Which drug baron was the founder of the Medellín cartel?

# Cohabitation

*A French word that describes a political situation in the country where the president represents a different party to that which commands a majority in parliament.*

*Read the full story.*

**Do it big, do it right, and do it with style.**

*Fred Astaire*