

## The world in brief, July 6th 2024



A fifth Democrat legislator—Angie Craig, a congresswoman from Minnesota—called on **President Joe Biden** to step aside, suggesting that his television [interview](#) on Friday has failed to quell an uprising in his party. During it, Mr Biden struck a defiant tone. Asked by ABC news whether he would [step aside](#) if Democratic grandees urge him to, he said “they’re not gonna do that”. Pressed whether he has a viable shot considering his approval rating of 36%, he replied: “that’s not what our polls show”.

Masoud Pezeshkian, a reformist candidate, won **Iran’s presidential election**. The [former health minister](#) secured 16.5m votes, around 3m more than Saeed Jalili, a hardliner. Mr Pezeshkian has promised to pursue better relations with the West and ease enforcement of the country’s mandatory headscarf law. He was helped by greater voter turnout, which jumped to around 50% compared with a record low of 40% in the first round.

Sir Keir Starmer held the first meeting of his newly appointed **Labour** cabinet. [Angela Rayner](#) is the deputy prime minister, [Rachel Reeves](#) Britain’s first female chancellor of the exchequer,

David Lammy foreign secretary and Yvette Cooper home secretary. Sir Keir seems intent on a flying start. He is to visit all four nations of the United Kingdom, before heading to Washington for a NATO summit.

An **Israeli** strike hit a school run by UNRWA, the UN's refugee agency in Gaza, killing at least 16 people and injuring many more, according to Palestinian officials. The building was sheltering displaced people in the Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza. Earlier, Israel said it would send a [delegation](#) to **Qatar** to resume ceasefire talks with Hamas.

**Russian** strikes left more than 100,000 people without power in Sumy, a region in northern [Ukraine](#). The attack targeted a power facility, according to Ukraine's energy ministry. There were no reported casualties. In March Russia began a campaign of attacks on Ukrainian energy infrastructure; the resulting damage could take years to rebuild.

The leaders of three military governments in **West Africa** met in Niamey, Niger, where they established the "Alliance of Sahel States". The governments in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger have all been installed by coups since 2020. In January they [withdrew](#) from the Economic Community of West African States, the region's main bloc, which is to hold its own summit in Nigeria on Sunday.

**China** anchored its biggest coastguard vessel within the **Philippines'** exclusive economic zone, according to the Philippine Coast Guard, which accused its Chinese counterpart of "intimidation". China's expansive territorial claims in the South China Sea have long caused frictions with other littoral countries. The Philippine government recently began highlighting China's actions as part of a "[transparency initiative](#)".

**Word of the week:** *umrah*, a Muslim pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia that takes place all year round. [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.*

## France's parliamentary vote



The French will vote on Sunday in the final round of their snap parliamentary election. The chances of Marine Le Pen's hard-right National Rally (RN) securing a majority of seats have receded somewhat since the first round on June 30th, as [tactical deals](#) were struck among 224 candidates in 577 constituencies. Scores of candidates from both the left-wing New Popular Front and from President Emmanuel Macron's centrist alliance have stood down, in order not to split the anti-Le Pen vote.

By Friday, the last day for the publication of polls under electoral rules, they suggested that the RN could gain 174-250 seats, short of the 289 needed to control parliament. Even without a majority, however, Ms Le Pen's party may be asked by Mr Macron to try to form a government. If she accepts, she would put forward Jordan Bardella, her 28-year-old protégé, to be prime minister. Mr Bardella may not manage to scrape together a majority. But the invitation itself would represent a political earthquake.

# Death Valley lives up to its name



In Death Valley National Park, mostly in eastern California, there is a famous thermometer. Tourists brave the region's scorching temperatures to pose in front of it. But that photo opportunity might best be avoided this weekend. Between Sunday and Tuesday the mercury may reach even  $54.4^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $130^{\circ}\text{F}$ ), the highest reliably recorded temperature on earth. (In 1913 one observer in the park recorded  $56.7^{\circ}\text{C}$ , though that number is disputed.)

The peak heat in Death Valley is no outlier. [Heatwaves](#) are wreaking havoc across the northern hemisphere, where more than 85% of the world's population lives. Climate change, caused by greenhouse-gas emissions, has led to the world's average temperature rising by  $1.2^{\circ}\text{C}$  since the 19th century. Heatwaves are among the [deadliest consequences](#), putting vulnerable people, especially the old and poor, at grave risk. Governments must do more to [protect](#) them as sizzling summers become the norm.



# Bulls on the charge in Pamplona



On Sunday the first bull run of the festival of San Fermín begins in Pamplona, in northern Spain. The weeklong jamboree centres around the daily running of six bulls down an 848-metre stretch of narrow streets, with white-clad, red-handkerchiefed people running pell-mell ahead of them. Most injuries are caused by falls, though last year a visitor took a horn to the scrotum.

Then, each afternoon, the six bulls will be killed in a bullfight. Spain has recently undergone a periodic bout of [debating the bloody practice](#). Adherents consider it sublimely beautiful (it is not a sport, as the bull has little chance of “winning”, supporters acknowledge). But the culture minister, from a far-left party, has called it “animal torture”. Colombia banned bullfighting this year; Catalonia no longer hosts bullfights. But in some places—Seville, Madrid and of course Pamplona—it is deeply rooted, and going nowhere fast.

## Just when you thought it was safe to watch the TV...



There is supposedly no such thing as bad publicity. But not in the case of sharks. “Jaws”, a blockbuster film of 1975, not only created a widespread fear of the fish, but also encouraged people to hunt them for sport. (Steven Spielberg, the director, has lamented the film’s role in the “decimation of the shark population”.) In response, executives at the Discovery Channel launched “Shark Week” in 1988, a series of documentaries to educate the public about the creatures and aid conservation efforts.

Shark Week is now one of the hits of the entertainment calendar. Discovery says it is the longest-running cable-TV event. This year’s extravaganza, hosted by John Cena, a former wrestler, begins on Sunday. Commissioners seem keener to terrify viewers than mollify them, with programmes such as “Belly of the Beast: Bigger and Bloodier”, “Great White Serial Killer: Sea of Blood” and “Deadliest Bite”. Galeophobes would be better off watching something else.

# Boeing's woes over the 737MAX



Boeing must decide on Sunday whether to accept an offer from America's Department of Justice to plead guilty to fraud in connection with two deadly plane crashes involving its 737MAX some five years ago. The aerospace giant is accused of violating a deal that it made with the authorities to head off a charge of conspiracy to defraud the government. It did this by allegedly misleading regulators over the cause of the crashes. The blowout of a [door panel](#) on another 737MAX in January appeared to invalidate an agreement to oversee safer manufacturing.

The Department of Justice may impose a fine on Boeing. If Boeing rejects the offer it faces a criminal trial, or might have to make another deal that would include even greater regulatory oversight of the company's production process. Such an outcome could further hamper the rate at which it makes new planes.



## 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:

**Martin Lampa**, Victoria, Canada

**Marilyn Lipschultz**, Folgueroles, Spain

**Himmat Kalsia**, Delhi, India

They all gave the correct answers of crystal, Doctor Doom, sundial, the fourth crusade, the Raiders. The theme was Indiana Jones films: "Indiana Jones and the Crystal Skull", "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom", "Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny", "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade", "Raiders of the Lost Ark".

The questions were:

**Monday:** What gift is associated with the 15th wedding anniversary?

**Tuesday:** Which comic book character is the archenemy of the Fantastic Four?

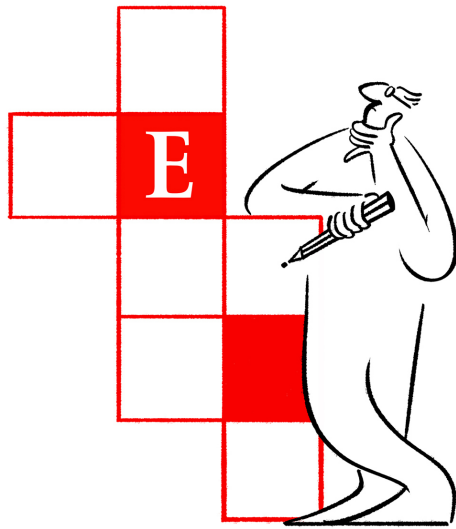
**Wednesday:** What ancient time-telling device only worked in the

daytime?

**Thursday:** During what event in 1204 did Latin soldiers sack Constantinople?

**Friday:** Which NFL franchise moved from Oakland to Las Vegas in 2020?

# 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.

## July 6th edition

### Cryptic clues

1 down Drink frothy cup for panic (11)

1 across Country's old money precedes introduction of the Euro (6)

2 across Proper egghead is the best (5)

3 across Egad! Look briefly in the mirror for cause of decline (3,3)

## **Factual clues**

1 down Blended iced coffee drink (11)

1 across Election-holding country in Europe (6)

2 across America's fourth-most-watched video-streaming service (5)

3 across A stumbling block in Joe Biden's campaign (3,3)

# umrah

*a Muslim pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia that takes place all year round.*

*Read the full story.*



**Fall in love with yourself, with life and  
then with whoever you want.**

*Frida Kahlo*