

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: AFP via Getty Images

America's House of Representatives passed the **“One Big Beautiful Bill”** by 218 to 214 votes, sending it to **Donald Trump's** desk ahead of his July 4th deadline. Two Republicans voted against it. [The bill](#), which extends the tax cuts from Mr Trump's first term, is likely to [hugely increase](#) the budget deficit and could leave an additional 12m Americans without health insurance.

Mr Trump said that he “didn't make any progress” towards ending the war in **Ukraine** after a phone call with **Vladimir Putin**. Russia launched a drone attack on Ukraine hours afterwards. Volodymyr Zelensky, Ukraine's president, said he would soon speak with Mr Trump about [a recent halt in America's delivery of weapons](#). Earlier Russia said that its second-highest naval commander was killed in Russia.

The **European Union** said that it was hopeful of reaching a “framework” **trade deal** with **America**, but that a comprehensive agreement would be “impossible” before July 9th, when the Trump administration's threat of 50% tariffs is due to kick in. The two sides [might agree](#) exemptions for certain industries, similar to the narrow deal America and Britain reached in May.

Russia became the first country to formally recognise the **Taliban** government in Afghanistan since the militant group retook power in 2021. Russia said it would work with it on trade, energy and fighting “threats of terrorism”. Islamic State Khorasan Province, a terrorist outfit based in Afghanistan and a foe of [the Taliban](#), carried out an attack in Moscow last year.

The number of workers on non-farm payrolls rose by a surprisingly healthy 147,000 in **America** during June. The unemployment rate fell slightly to 4.1%, also confounding expectations. The robustness of the labour market means the Federal Reserve may have less room to lower interest rates. Jerome Powell, the Fed’s [beleaguered chair](#), had said that a rate cut in July was not “off the table”.

French air-traffic controllers began a two-day strike over pay and working conditions, affecting hundreds of flights across Europe. France’s civil aviation authority asked airlines to cancel a quarter of their flights to and from Paris on Thursday, and almost half on Friday. Philippe Tabarot, France’s transport minister, called the strikes, which coincide with the start of summer holidays in France, “unacceptable”.

Immigration officers in America arrested **Julio César Chávez Jr**, a former world champion boxer, in order to deport him to Mexico. ICE agents said the 39-year-old pugilist had overstayed his visa and has a warrant issued against him in his native country for organised-crime charges. On Thursday Mr Chávez Jr lost a bout in California to Jake Paul, an influencer.

Figure of the day: \$19, the price of the individually wrapped strawberries that made a grocery chain go viral. [Read the full story.](#)



Photograph: Getty Images

Starmer's first year ends in tears

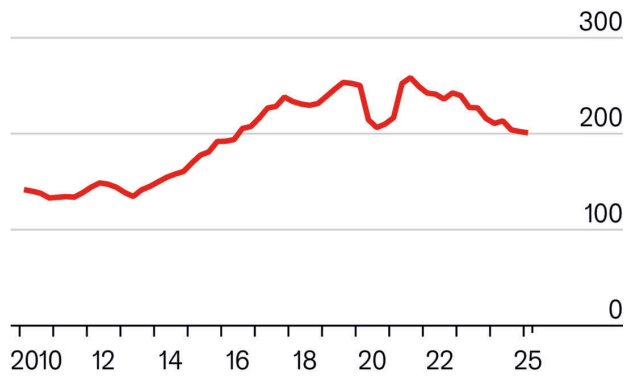
The first birthday of Britain's Labour government on Friday could scarcely offer a greater contrast in fortunes. Sir Keir Starmer won last year's general election by a landslide, consigning the Conservative Party to its worst-ever defeat. Yet 12 months on, [Labour's polling](#) is dreadful, trailing [Reform UK](#), a hard-right party. All its promises—to grow the economy, build more houses—are off track. On Tuesday the government was humiliated by its own backbenchers, who gutted a bill to cut welfare benefits. The sight of the chancellor, Rachel Reeves, weeping in Parliament seemed to sum it all up.

[What went wrong?](#) Sir Keir tweaks systems that need reinvention and shores up institutions that should be demolished. Labour's reforms to the planning code, Brexit, the National Health Service and taxation are too timid. Consequently, the government has blown its political capital on measures that are often sensible, frequently unpopular, but invariably too small and shallow to make a difference.

Nothing to see here

England

Housebuilding, four-quarter
moving total, estimate, '000



NHS hospitals, patients receiving
consultant-led care within 18 weeks, %



Sources: Home Builders Federation;
MHCLG; NHS England; *The Economist*



Photograph: Getty Images

India and Argentina on common ground

On Friday President Javier Milei of Argentina is expected to welcome Narendra Modi, India's prime minister, to Buenos Aires for talks, which will begin on Saturday. It will be the first bilateral visit to Argentina by an Indian prime minister in 57 years.

Mr Modi is on a five-nation tour across Africa, the Caribbean and South America that culminates at the BRICS conference in Brazil this weekend. Argentina made the list in part because of India's interest in its minerals, such as lithium. The two countries have set up a working group to encourage Indian investment in mining in Argentina.

Attracting foreign money is an important part of Mr Milei's plan to revive his country's economy. He'd also like Argentina to sell more food and eventually liquefied natural gas to the world's most populous country. New partners would also help politically. Argentina trades heavily with China but is tightly [aligned with the United States on policy](#). That can be a difficult balance.



Photograph: Getty Images

A Capitol Fourth

Spare a thought for the leader who fights on after the battle is lost. Hakeem Jeffries, the top Democrat in America's House of Representatives, spoke for nearly nine hours on Thursday morning, postponing a vote on the [One Big Beautiful Bill act](#). It was no use. Donald Trump, America's president, and Mike Johnson, the Republican speaker, had whipped enough would-be rebels into submission. The tax-and-spending bill passed by 218 to 214 votes. Mr Trump intends to sign it into law on Friday—Independence Day.

Mr Jeffries spoke at length about the Americans who would be hurt by the bill. He is not wrong—it will significantly reduce the money spent on health care and welfare. It also extends lavish tax cuts, adding some \$4.5trn to America's debt over the coming decade, according to preliminary estimates. That is likely to harm economic growth. The bill illustrates [the long-term damage](#) Mr Trump is doing to the foundations of America's economy.



Photograph: Getty Images

Oasis goes all around the world, again

In a summer of big-ticket tours, some musical artists—including even the once unassailable Beyoncé—have been struggling to fill venues. Not Oasis. In perhaps the most anticipated return to the stadium circuit of any artist, every single date to see the reunited British rock legends, across five continents, has long since sold out. They begin their tour on Friday in Cardiff.

The shows mark a pause in the notorious feud between brothers Liam and Noel Gallagher, the band's core members. Thirty years ago Oasis were one of the dominant stories in British news. It is testimony to their [enduring popular appeal](#) that they managed to repeat the feat when announcing their reunion. Fans, many of whom have [paid far over the odds](#) for tickets, will hope that this truce of convenience holds better than on the band's previous tour. In 2009 Oasis broke up after a pre-concert backstage fight between the Gallaghers. All remaining performances were cancelled.



Illustration: The Economist

Daily quiz

We will serve you a new question each day this week. On Friday your challenge is to give us all five answers and, as important, tell us the connecting theme. Email your responses (and include mention of your home city and country) by 1700 BST on Friday to [\[email protected\]](#). We'll pick randomly from those with the right answers and crown three winners on Saturday.

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

Thursday: Rupert Murdoch founded which British satellite TV company?



Illustration: The Economist

The winners of this week's crossword

Thank you to everyone who took part in our weekly crossword, published in the weekend edition of Espresso. The winners, chosen at random, were:

Simon Woollard, Kent, Britain

Catherine Oikonomou, California, America

Frank Lowther, New York, America

They all gave the correct answers of [Hasina](#), [Italy](#), [Yangon](#), and [happy birthday](#).

Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood.

Marie Skłodowska-Curie