

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: AFP

Marco Rubio arrived in Israel for talks with **Binyamin Netanyahu**. America's secretary of state accompanied Israel's prime minister to visit the Western Wall in Jerusalem. Mr Rubio admitted that his boss, Donald Trump, was unhappy about Israel's attempt last week [to assassinate Hamas leaders](#) in Qatar. Meanwhile Israeli forces continued their assault on Gaza city, levelling 30 residential buildings.

Romania scrambled F-16 jets after a **Russian drone** entered its airspace, the country's defence ministry said. They tracked the low-flying drone until "it disappeared from the radar." It is the second time in the past week that Russia has breached the airspace of a NATO country. On Wednesday 19 drones were fired into Poland, in a [test of NATO's credibility](#).

According to exit polls from elections in the **German** state of North Rhine-Westphalia the ruling Christian Democrats won with 34% of the vote. But the hard right **Alternative for Germany** more than tripled its support, to almost 17%. Fourteen million people were eligible to vote in Germany's most populous state, often seen as a political bellwether for the rest of the country.

Police estimated that up to 150,000 marched in central **London** on Saturday in a rally organised by Tommy Robinson, a **far-right** activist. The tech billionaire Elon Musk spoke to the rally via videolink. **Sir Keir Starmer**, Britain's prime minister, commenting on the huge number of Union Jacks on display, said that "Our flag represents our diverse country and we will never surrender it to those that use it as a symbol of violence, fear and division."

Tyler Robinson, the 22-year-old from Utah accused of killing **Charlie Kirk**, will be formally charged on Tuesday, the Utah County attorney said. He is due to appear in court on the same day. On Friday the widow of the [right-wing activist](#) gave an address in which she asked Americans to join Mr Kirk's political organisation, Turning Point USA.

Nepal's new prime minister said she will hand over to a new government after elections on March 5th next year. **Sushila Karki** was sworn into office on Friday after [anti-corruption protests](#) toppled the previous government. Seventy-two people died during the upheaval, including 59 demonstrators and three police officers. Ms Karki said she was not leading the government "to taste power".

Ricky Hatton, a boxing world champion at two weight classes, died unexpectedly at the age of 46. The Briton, known as "The Hitman", originally a carpet fitter, was one of the most successful pugilists of his era, winning 45 of his professional fights across a 15-year career. After retirement he suffered from depression and other mental-health issues. He was due to make a comeback.

Word of the Week: *Nitazenes*, a dangerous new synthetic opioid, stronger than heroin and sometimes fentanyl, that is sweeping America. [Read the full story.](#)



Photograph: Getty Images

Le Pen and Bardella ride high

Marine Le Pen and Jordan Bardella, the leaders of France's National Rally (RN), will take to the stage for a big assembly of their supporters on Sunday in Bordeaux. The pair are in a buoyant mood. On September 8th the hard-right outfit helped to [bring down](#) the government of François Bayrou, a centrist, in a parliamentary vote of confidence. It was the second time in nine months that they had helped to topple a prime minister and embarrass the president, Emmanuel Macron.

But following the vote, the RN did not get the immediate parliamentary elections its leaders had called for. Instead, Mr Macron appointed [another prime minister](#)—Sébastien Lecornu, from his centrist camp. Still, the RN is stronger than ever. According to a poll published on Tuesday, if parliamentary elections were held, the RN and its political allies would win 34% of ballots cast in a first round of voting; the left, 24%; Mr Macron's centrists, just 14%.



Photograph: NurPhoto via Getty Images

Germany's biggest state goes to the polls

Were the west German state of North Rhine-Westphalia an independent country, its 18m souls would make it the European Union's seventh biggest. The state contains multitudes, from the rural wealth of the Münsterland to the post-industrial cities of the Ruhr. Its politics are correspondingly diverse. So Germans will pay close attention to its local elections on Sunday.

Two things are worth watching. First is the performance of the conservative Christian Democrats and the Social Democrats, who together with the CDU's Bavarian ally, the Christian Social Union, make up Germany's federal government. This four-month-old coalition is already squabbling, and [polling badly](#). Poor results would hardly help the mood in Berlin.

But the bigger story is probably the hard-right [Alternative for Germany](#) (AfD). Riding high in national polls, the AfD will bag scores of council seats in North Rhine-Westphalia. It has a shot at mayoralties in troubled cities such as Gelsenkirchen. That will dismay Germans who see it as a threat to democracy.



Photograph: Duffy Archive & The David Bowie

David Bowie's all Hunky Dory at the V&A

London's powerhouse of design and decorative arts, The Victoria & Albert Museum, enjoyed one of its most successful exhibitions with "David Bowie Is..." in 2013, a show of the rock musician's artefacts. It was still touring the world two years after [he died](#) in 2016.

Such was the interest that the museum is now opening a David Bowie Centre at v&A East Storehouse, in east London, to display over 90,000 items from Bowie's archive. These range from the innovative and wild stage costumes he wore during diverse phases of his career to photographs, notes for unrealised projects and artwork for album covers.

The archive has been separated into smaller, themed exhibits, some curated by guests such as Nile Rodgers, leader of the band Chic, who collaborated with Bowie. That's a wise decision. Otherwise the scale and variety of the collection might overwhelm the visitor. It is a testament to Bowie's [creative breadth](#), unrivalled by any pop musician before or since.

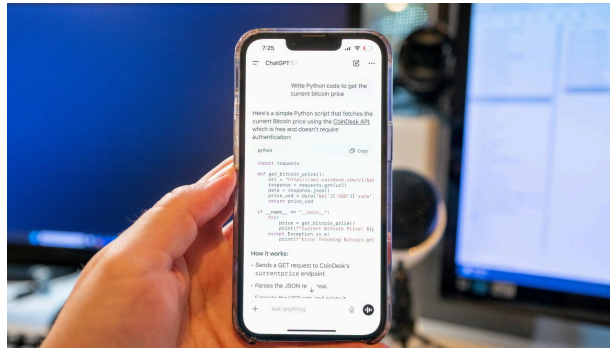


Photograph: Shutterstock

Sumo's new season

Sumo's autumn tournament begins in Tokyo on Sunday. Wrestlers have just returned from intensive summer training tours, stronger in body and mind. Fans remain as enthusiastic as ever; all 15 days of the season have sold out. A new generation of stars will draw much of the attention. Onosato, a 24-year-old wrestler, recently became a *yokozuna*—the highest rank in sumo—after just 13 tournaments, the fastest ascent on record.

But behind the excitement, [sumo](#) is facing a crisis; the number of active wrestlers in Japan fell below 600 last year, down from nearly 1,000 in the 1990s. To expand the pool of recruits, the Japan Sumo Association scrapped its long-standing physical requirements for apprentices in 2023. Aspiring wrestlers once had to stand at least 167cm tall and weigh 67kg. Now smaller, lighter men with dreams of standing on the sacred *dohyo* ring have a chance.



Photograph: Getty Images

AI code is simpler, but not better

Programmers increasingly use artificial-intelligence tools to [write code for software](#). But is it any good? A recent study by researchers at the University of Naples Federico II suggests not. The researchers compared more than 500,000 software functions written in Python and Java, two popular programming languages. Humans wrote some of the samples; popular AI models such as ChatGPT, DeepSeek-Coder and Qwen created the rest.

The scientists found that AI tends to write shorter, simpler programs. But its output was riddled with errors and showed more serious security weaknesses, particularly in Java. The identified vulnerabilities were serious: they could have allowed hackers to insert nefarious commands at an operating-system level, or left credentials such as usernames and passwords unprotected. In contrast, the human-written code was more complex, making it less vulnerable to hackers but harder to troubleshoot. The researchers suggested that AI coders can be useful—but only with a rigorous check.



Illustration: The Economist

Mini crossword

We now publish an interactive edition of our crossword, allowing you to enter and check the answers, and see explanations, instantly. Try it [here](#). Or, if you prefer to do things the old-fashioned way, use the grid below.

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*:

Cryptic clues

- 1 across* Place occupied by settlers I hear: why (6)
- 2 across* E's very loud in court and gets result (6)
- 3 across* Uncle, I switched seats (6)
- 1 down* Call her pop, an exuberant singer (8,4)

Straight clues

- 1 across* Commune or outpost, perhaps controlled by others (6)
- 2 across* Consequence or upshot of an action (6)
- 3 across* Centres, specifically of cells (6)
- 1 down* American songstress behind hits like Femininomenon and Pink Pony Club (8,4)

Email all four answers, along with your home city and country, by 9am GMT on Monday to [\[email protected\]](#). We will pick randomly from those with the right answers and crown three winners in next week's edition.

1						
2						
3						

Image: The Economist



Illustration: The Economist

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:

Jani Mikkola, Espoo, Finland

Nedko Kyuchukov, London, Britain

Chinghan Wong, Subang Jaya, Malaysia

They all gave the correct answers of: Archduke Franz Ferdinand, Emperor of France, Joy Division, "Moonlight" and Elise Stefanik. The theme is works by Ludwig van Beethoven: the Archduke Trio, Emperor piano concerto, "Ode to Joy", "Moonlight sonata" and "Für Elise".

The questions were:

Monday: Which Austrian dignitary was assassinated, along with his wife, in Sarajevo on June 28th, 1914?

Tuesday: What title did Napoleon Bonaparte assume in December 1804?

Wednesday: Which British rock band had a hit single with "Love Will Tear Us Apart" before reforming as New Order?

Thursday: Which film was really awarded the Oscar for best movie in 2017, after the presenters mistakenly announced the winner as “La La Land”?

Friday: Which New York congresswoman was nominated by President Donald Trump to be ambassador to the United Nations, only for her nomination to be withdrawn?

*If it is art, it is not for all, and if it
is for all, it is not art.*

Arnold Schoenberg