

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: AFP

Japan's prime minister, [Ishiba Shigeru](#), resigned in an effort to contain splits in his Liberal Democratic Party. Mr Ishiba, who took office in October, has come under significant pressure following disastrous election results, in which the LDP's coalition lost its majority in both houses of parliament. He said he would remain in office until the LDP picks a new leader.

Russia launched its largest air-raid on **Ukraine**, setting the main government building in Kyiv ablaze. Several other cities were targeted. Three people, including a child, were reported dead. Ukraine's air force claimed to have shot down 751 of the 805 drones used in the raids, and four of 13 missiles. Meanwhile, Ukraine attacked a Russian oil pipeline—an [increasingly effective tactic](#).

The **Israeli army** urged residents to leave **Gaza city** and head to a “humanitarian zone” in the south of the strip, ahead of [a planned new offensive](#). The warning, posted on social media, did not specify when the offensive would start. It came after Hamas released a new video of two of the 20 Israeli hostages believed to still be alive in Gaza.

British police arrested more than 400 people who were protesting against a ban on **Palestine Action**. In July the government proscribed the pro-Gaza campaign group as a terrorist organisation, following attacks on defence manufacturers it says aid Israel, and a break in at an air-force base. The designation makes supporting the group, which targets property not people, illegal—a [heavy-handed](#) suppression of free-speech, protesters say.

The Universal Postal Union said there was an 80% drop in the volume of **post going into America** after the Trump Administration [ended](#) the *de minimis* exemption. The UN agency compared traffic on August 29th—the day that small parcels became liable for duty—with a week before. UPU said that 88 postal operators worldwide have either fully or partially suspended services to the country.

South Korea said it held talks with America about the more than 300 Korean workers arrested during an immigration raid in Georgia on Friday. It added it planned to send a plane to retrieve them. The detainees were working on the construction site of a Hyundai battery plant; American officials said the people were not authorised to work.

Aryna Sabalenka beat Amanda Anisimova in straight sets to retain her us **Open tennis** crown. It is the world number one's fourth grand slam title. It was an assured performance by the Belarusian, who admitted afterwards that she had “completely lost control” over her emotions during her past two losses in major finals.

Word of the week: *hukou*, China's residency system that bars rural migrants from a range of urban benefits. [Read the full story.](#)



Photograph: Getty Images

Waiting for the next push in Ukraine

After much unwarranted gloom a few weeks ago about Russian breakthroughs in the Donetsk region and the supposedly imminent fall of Pokrovsk, a logistics hub Russia has been trying to take for 18 months, the front lines are essentially back where they were. Ukrainians have systematically destroyed small Russian infiltration groups in the area; on Tuesday they cleared Udachne, the last of the villages the Russians had briefly held.

DeepState, an independent Ukrainian monitoring group, reports that Russia conquered just 464 square kilometres of territory in August, 18% less than the month before. Meanwhile, Ukraine estimates that Russia has amassed an army of 100,000, including elite troops from other parts of the front, near Pokrovsk for another attempt to take the city before autumn mud slows operations. Their aim is to envelop it and bypass Ukraine's Donetsk fortress belt from the west. But the price to Russia of its slow advance is growing: it has lost 291,000 soldiers this year through death and injury, according to Ukraine.



September 4th 2025

Russian-controlled
 Russian advances
 Claimed Russian-controlled

Sources: Institute for the Study of War; AEI's Critical Threats Project



Photograph: Christophe Viseux/The New York Times/Redux/eyevine

OPEC's expansion strategy runs out of road

Eight members of the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies, known as OPEC+, will meet on Sunday to decide whether to [continue cranking up crude-oil production](#). This year they have raised output quotas much faster than expected, by a collective 2.5m barrels per day since April, or 2.4% of global demand. To their delight, that has not reduced prices. At \$67 a barrel, these are higher than they were in April, when the group decided to reverse some of the 6m b/d of output cuts it had enacted in recent years. New Western sanctions on Russia and Iran, along with high petrol consumption over the holiday driving season, have helped.

But oil prices may not remain firm. Summer is ending, and many refineries will soon go into maintenance. Donald Trump's tariffs are starting to hurt economies worldwide, which will dampen demand. And supply remains ample outside OPEC, notably from wells in America, Brazil and Guyana. OPEC+ may decide against addition.



Photograph: AP

The first millennial saint

On Sunday Pope Leo XIV canonised a tech-savvy teenager, “God’s Influencer”, as the first Roman Catholic saint from the millennial generation. [Carlo Acutis](#), an Italian who died from leukaemia aged 15 in 2006, used digital media to promote his faith. A teenager who played video games and taught himself to code, Acutis used his digital skills to build websites on Catholic themes, such as apparitions of the Virgin Mary.

Some Catholics see Acutis’s evangelising as a model for how to reach young people in the digital age. The church is making more use of social-media influencers; last month the Vatican hosted 1,000 digital missionaries. Acutis’s tomb in Assisi has attracted thousands of teenage pilgrims. The church confirmed his canonisation in 2024 after verifying that he had performed two miracles.



Photograph: Peter Kramer/HBO

A tour through the world of motorcycle gangs

Expect police corruption, missing bags of fentanyl and shootouts in the Pennsylvania forest in “Task”. The first episode of the new weekly series will air on HBO on Sunday. Tom Brandis (Mark Ruffalo) is an FBI agent and former priest, and thus a complicated man. When he is not drinking, he leads a cross-agency task force to put an end to a spate of home-invasion robberies scattered around a cluster of working-class suburbs of Philadelphia. Robbie is a garbage collector who is stealing drugs from the Dark Hearts, a local biker gang.

There are some gratuitous scenes of gory violence—among the hierarchical ranks of the Dark Hearts any sign of disloyalty provokes revenge. But in tackling the topic of the messy family lives of law-enforcement agents, Brad Ingelsby, the Emmy-nominated creator of “Mare of Easttown”, draws some stunning performances. Together with a string of plot twists, this makes for a solid, seven-episode crime drama.



Photograph: Getty Images

A fierce rivalry continues at the US Open

[Carlos Alcaraz of Spain](#) (pictured) will face Jannik Sinner of Italy in the men's final of the ^{us} Open on Sunday. It will be their third consecutive grand-slam final, after this year's French Open and Wimbledon. But fans will not be complaining. Despite their youth (Mr Alcaraz is 22, Mr Sinner 24), the pair have already forged an epic rivalry. Their matches have been lit up by a contrast in styles: Mr Sinner's brute power against Mr Alcaraz's skills on court.

So far Mr Alcaraz has the edge, leading 9-5 in their overall head-to-heads and having won five grand slams so far against Mr Sinner's four. But bookies slightly favour Mr Sinner, who has been in imperious form and is currently world number one (Mr Alcaraz is number two). Regardless of the result, the match sounds an ominous warning to the rest of the tour. It will mark two years since anyone other than Mr Alcaraz or Mr Sinner has claimed a men's grand-slam title.



Illustration: The Economist

Mini crossword

We now publish an interactive edition of our crossword twice a week, 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 A kiss with a Spanish girl and a non-German dude — it's ideal! (6)

2 across No way Iceland starts to be like Sweden or Norway (6)

3 across Musk's AI without its king — with no one! — is what the economy needs (6)

1 down Between letter and email, with no end of jingoism, he summoned the world's autocrats (2,7)

Straight clues

1 across In Coleridge's poem, it is where Kubla Khan decreed his pleasure dome (6)

2 across A group of far northern European nations (6)

3 across In economics, it is the increase in the production of goods and services over time (6)

1 down The host of this week's Shanghai Co-operation Organisation summit (2,7)

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.

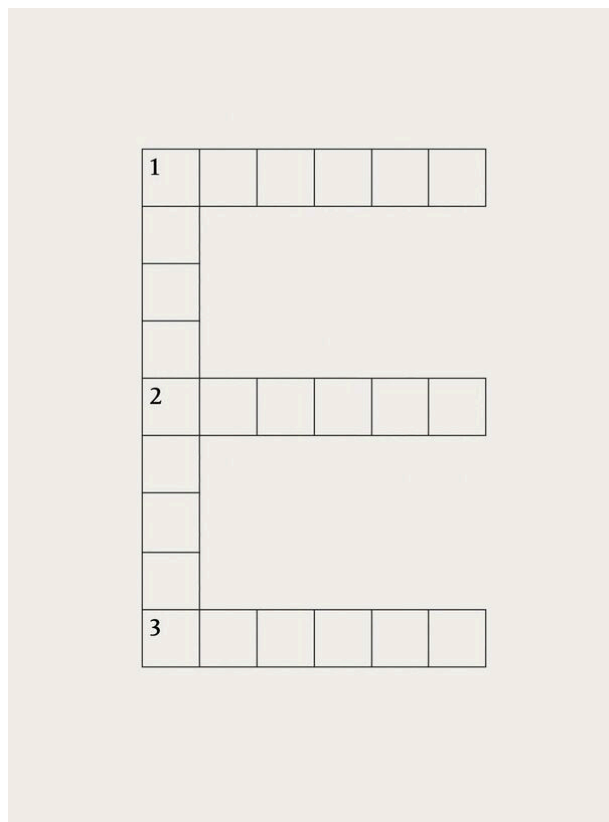


Image: Crossword



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:

Martha Baker, Überlingen, Germany
Serban Ionescu, Bucharest, Romania
Jane Mund, The Hague, Netherlands

*Friendship makes one love life,
love gives taste to death.*

Sully Prudhomme