

# The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: Getty Images

**Donald Trump** said he would fire the head of America's Bureau of Labour Statistics, Erika McEntarfer, after it published disappointing jobs data. The agency's figures showed that **America** added just 73,000 jobs in July, far below expectations. Hiring figures for May and June were also revised down by 258,000. Mr Trump claimed without evidence that the figures had been manipulated for political reasons.

**Mr Trump** said he ordered two **nuclear submarines** to be positioned in "appropriate regions", in response to "highly provocative statements" made by Dmitry Medvedev, Russia's former president. On Tuesday Mr Trump threatened Russia with tariffs if it did not reach a ceasefire with Ukraine within 10 days. This week Mr Medvedev accused the American president of "playing the ultimatum game with Russia".

Earlier Mr Trump unveiled new **tariffs** on more than 60 countries. Some exports from Canada to America face a 35% levy from August 1st, the president's deadline for imposing his postponed **"reciprocal" tariffs**. The Trump administration said that levies on other trading partners would take effect on August 7th. India and

Taiwan face rates of 25% and 20% respectively. Global stockmarkets fell after the news.

Steve Witkoff, **America's** special envoy to the Middle East, visited a [food-distribution site](#) in **Gaza**. Hundreds of Palestinians have been killed by the Israel Defence Forces en route to such sites or trampled to death at them. America and Israel have faced growing pressure to relieve hunger in the enclave.

**Álvaro Uribe**, Colombia's former president, was sentenced to 12 years of house arrest for arranging the bribing of witnesses and perverting justice. The 73-year-old was also banned from holding public office for eight years. He said he would appeal the conviction, which his supporters claim is political. The case looks set to [further polarise Colombia's politics](#) ahead of elections next year.

A court in Florida found **Tesla** partially liable for a crash in 2019 in which a car using its Autopilot technology killed a 22-year-old woman. The jury said the [electric-vehicle maker](#) should pay \$200m in punitive damages, as well as a proportion of \$129m in compensation to the victim's parents and boyfriend, who was severely injured in the crash. Tesla said it would appeal the decision.

**Nintendo** posted strong quarterly results after the release of the [Switch 2](#). The games console had the Japanese firm's best-ever launch, selling 3.5m units in its first four days. Net sales surged 132% compared to last year and profit rose 19%. The firm left its forecast for the year unchanged, adding that American tariffs had yet to affect its expectations.

**Figure of the day:** 11%, the share of Harvard's operating budget constituted by federal funds. [Read the full story.](#)



Photograph: Reuters

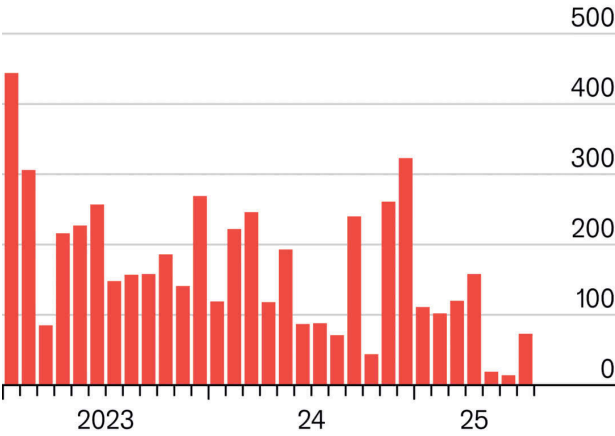
## Hiring slows sharply in America

For months, every scrap of economic data in America has been scrutinised for signs of an economic slowdown. July's jobs figures, released on Friday, will sow concern. At 73,000, the number of jobs added was well below the 110,000 that forecasters expected. Hiring figures for May and June were also revised down by a combined 258,000.

Treasury yields fell as traders bet the Federal Reserve would hasten the pace of interest-rate cuts. Doves on the Fed's board of governors have pointed to weakness in the labour market to argue it should do so. Christopher Waller, who [dissented](#) from the central bank's decision to hold rates on Wednesday, voting for a quarter-point cut, will feel vindicated. Having judged the labour market's wobbliness correctly, his chance of succeeding Jerome Powell as the Fed's chair next year may rise. For his part, Donald Trump called again for the Fed to cut rates and lambasted Mr Powell.

Waller worries

United States, non-farm payrolls,  
increase on previous month, '000



Source: Bureau of Labour Statistics



Photograph: Getty Images

## **Another liberation day**

Donald Trump has twice postponed his deadlines for introducing higher tariffs, but he now looks set to impose most of them. On Thursday the president said Canada would be hit with a 35% levy from August 1st. His administration also announced that more than 60 other countries would face new tariff rates from August 7th. Switzerland will be hit with a levy of 39%, one of the highest rates.

Others have sealed deals that mean they will avoid the full brunt of the tariff onslaught. Lots of goods from Japan and South Korea will face a 15% tariff. Goods from the [European Union](#) will face the same rate. British exports will face baseline duties of a mere 10%. China, which saw tariffs on its goods soar to 145% this spring amid tit-for-tat escalation, faces tariffs of 30%. It is still in talks with America. America's effective tariff rate is now the highest since the 1930s. But some governments will console themselves that things are better than they could have been.



Photograph: EPA

## Japanese politics in flux

Japanese members of parliament gathered for an extraordinary session on Friday, following an [upper-house election](#) on July 20th in which the ruling centre-right Liberal Democratic Party lost its majority. The result was bruising for Ishiba Shigeru, the prime minister. The balance of power is now felt in the divvying-up of posts. Opposition parties gained important appointments to committees in the upper house. Sanseito, a hard-right outfit that surged in the recent vote, secured a committee chair for the first time.

One priority is fiscal policy. Most opposition parties now support scrapping the country's 10% consumption tax, applied to most goods and services. Getting rid of it was once solely the cause of the left, who opposed it because it is regressive. Such pledges have [rattled bond markets](#), already uneasy about Japan's mounting public debt. Mr Ishiba, a fiscal hawk, has criticised such proposals as reckless. Even so, his government has agreed to scrap a long-standing petrol tax.

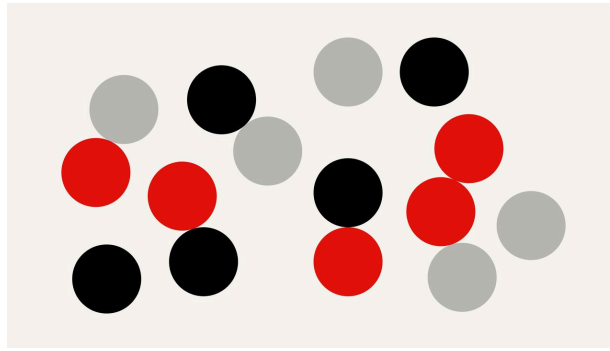


Photograph: Getty Images

## Seals' songs are as complex as nursery rhymes

Humans are not the only species to sing. Coyotes are crooners. Tree frogs are shrill songsters. Birds have varied chirps. Now, give it up for leopard seals. The male of the species, found in the [Antarctic](#), sings for up to 13 hours a day during mating season. A study published in *Scientific Reports*, a journal, finds that their songs are similar to nursery rhymes.

Scientists at the University of New South Wales compared the songs of 26 male leopard seals with those of other animals and a range of human music, from Baroque to The Beatles. They found that the information entropy (the measure of how predictable or random a sequence is) of leopard seals' songs was close to that of nursery rhymes. But unlike humans, the seals do not sing for their young. The researchers reckon that their music's main purpose is to attract a mate and defend territory. The simple structure helps their tunes carry far and wide.



## Data bite: Where will be the Detroit of EVs?

Different parts of China are battling for electric-carmaking supremacy. Thanks largely to BYD, an electric-carmaking giant, in the city of Shenzhen, Guangdong province dominates (see map below); it produced 5.7m cars last year. Chongqing, a city, and Anhui, a province, made around 2.5m and 2.6m cars last year, respectively. Competition is fierce between local governments: the Communist Party believes a push into high-end manufacturing will spur the country's economic growth.

Read the [full story](#) on the race for EV production in China.



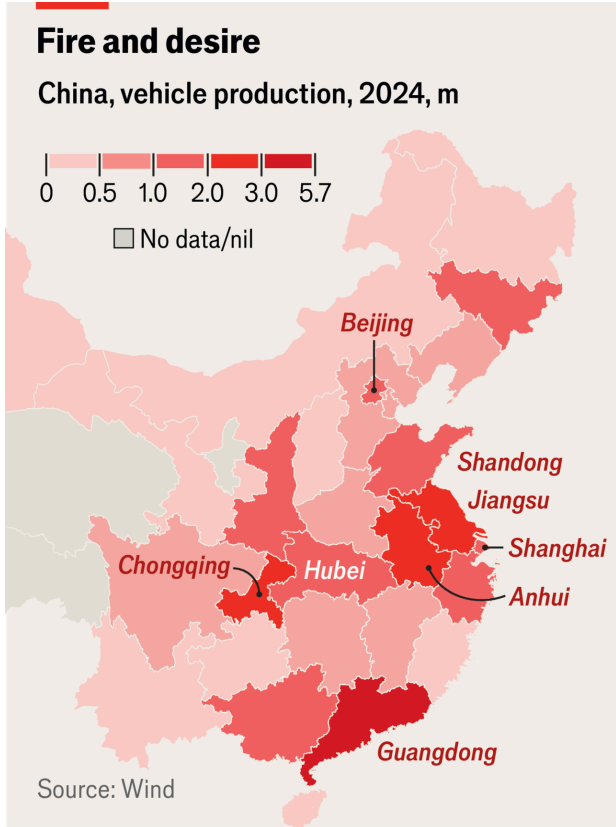


Image: The Economist



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:** What is the name of the airport in Santa Ana, California?

**Thursday:** In the original “Terminator” movie, which character returns from the future to protect Sarah Connor?

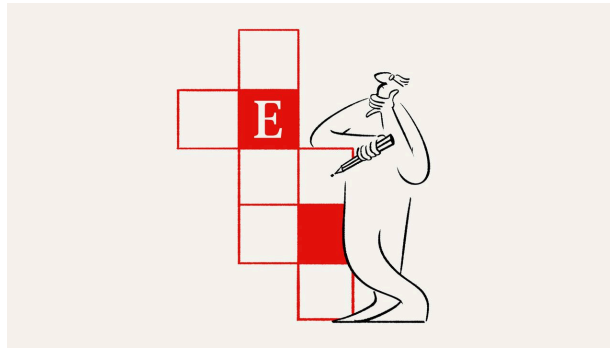


Illustration: The Economist

## 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:

**Martyn Abbott**, Heckington, England

**Orly Mashal**, Montreal, Canada

**Makarand Desai**, Mumbai, India

They all gave the correct answers of garlic, Seoul, Newton and [Genghis Khan](#).

*It is not down on any map; true  
places never are.*

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***Herman Melville***