

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter

Israel agreed to an American-backed **ceasefire** proposal for **Gaza**, which is now being reviewed by **Hamas**. The deal reportedly includes a 60-day pause in [fighting](#) and the resumption of aid flows through UN agencies. But Hamas will probably reject the proposal because it does not include a commitment to [end the war](#).

Scott Bessent said trade talks between **America** and **China** had stalled. America's treasury secretary suggested that President Donald Trump may have a call with President Xi Jinping in the coming weeks; China's government did not respond. On May 12th [America](#) agreed to cut "reciprocal" tariffs on China from 125% to 10% for 90 days; China agreed to lower its retaliatory levies, too.

American consumer spending softened in April as companies adjusted to tariffs. The personal-consumption expenditures index, the Federal Reserve's preferred measure of inflation, climbed by 2.1% from a year earlier, lower than the 2.3% increase in March. Personal spending adjusted for inflation also slowed. Imports dropped by nearly 20% in April, the biggest such decline on record.

Gerry Adams won his libel case against the BBC. The former leader of [Sinn Fein](#) sued the broadcaster after it reported an allegation that he ordered the murder of Denis Donaldson, a senior member of the Irish Republican Army, after he was outed as a British spy. Mr Adams will be awarded €100,000 (\$113,000) in damages.

Flash floods in central **Nigeria** killed around 110 people. A local official told the BBC that water washed away 50 houses "with their occupants". The chairman of the local area told AP that bad infrastructure had worsened the impact of the floods, and asked the

government to begin construction work on a planned waterway project. The search and rescue operation is still ongoing.

Saskatchewan, a western province in **Canada**, declared a state of emergency as **wildfires** continued to spread. A day earlier officials in neighbouring Manitoba advised 17,000 people to evacuate. Over 1.5m acres have burned across these two provinces. The situation is “unlike anything we have faced in quite some time, if not ever,” said Scott Moe, the Premier of Saskatchewan.

Archaeologists discovered the remains of a 3,000-year-old Mayan city in northern Guatemala. The researchers named the city Los Abuelos, meaning “the grandparents”, after a statue of an “ancestral couple” found on the site. They also found pyramids and monuments sculpted in styles unique to the region. The country’s culture ministry said in a statement that it may have been a significant ceremonial site.

Figure of the day: 47%, the share of Albertans who support secession from Canada, according to recent data from Léger, a pollster. [Read the full story.](#)



Photograph: Getty Images

Twists in the tariff saga

On Wednesday the United States Court of International Trade put America's wide-ranging "reciprocal" tariffs (though not sector-specific levies) on hold. [The ruling](#) delighted markets: the s&p 500 index jumped by 1.5% in futures trading, to just a few percent below all-time highs. But on Thursday afternoon a federal appeals court temporarily reinstated the levies in response to a request from the Trump administration.

Ordinary Americans appear to be growing accustomed to the whipsawing news. A consumer-sentiment measure from the Conference Board, published on May 27th, rebounded in May. So far, "soft" data like consumer surveys have fallen farther and faster than "hard" data on production, sales and spending. In line with that trend, new numbers released on Friday showed a softening in household spending in April as consumers began adjusting to Mr Trump's tariff tear.



Photograph: AP

America's allies in Asia hope for reassurance

Pete Hegseth, America's defence secretary, will deliver a big speech on the Trump administration's Asia policy on Saturday. He is attending the Shangri-La Dialogue, a meeting of defence ministers, brass, academics and industry held every year at Singapore's Shangri-La Hotel.

American allies in Asia have not been given as many reasons as European ones to fear abandonment by Donald Trump. But [concern remains](#) about the president's commitment to their protection. Previous defence secretaries used speeches at Shangri-La to lay out the administration's approach to the region, respond to critics, and reassure doubters. But it is unclear how influential Mr Hegseth is with Mr Trump on these issues, leading to doubts about how authoritative his remarks will be.

In past iterations, Shangri-La has also served as neutral ground for America and China's defence ministers to meet. But for the first time since 2019 China is not sending its minister. The two may go another year before their first sit-down.



Photograph: AP

Germany's various inflation pressures

On Friday Germany's federal statistics agency, Destatis, said that according to preliminary data, the country's inflation rate to have stayed at 2.1% year on year in May. Analysts had been expecting a drop, continuing the trend of the past months, owing to slowing energy and food prices.

International trade tensions and Germany's massive fiscal stimulus will affect German prices this year in opposite ways, according to ING, a Dutch bank. A trade war might cause deflation by strengthening the euro and encouraging Chinese manufacturers to send goods to Europe that they might have sold to America. But the ambitious plans of Friedrich Merz, Germany's new chancellor, to [invest](#) in defence and infrastructure could foster inflation.

Construction and engineering firms in particular raised prices in recent years because of the high costs of materials and a dearth of qualified labour. The trend is expected to continue.



Photograph: Alamy

What's in a surname?

Feminists have their work cut out in Japan. *The Economist's* [glass-ceiling index](#), looking at the role of women in the workplace, ranked Japan 27th out of 29 countries in 2024. Recently their biggest talking point has been [surnames](#). Married couples in Japan must adopt a single family name, a rule that results in the woman taking her husband's name 95% of the time. But people increasingly view the law as archaic. A recent poll by Kyodo, a news agency, showed that 71% of respondents believed that people should be allowed to keep their names after marriage. But conservative politicians say that could confuse children, sow discord in marriages and even undermine the family unit.

On Friday Japan's parliament began debating the issue for the first time in 28 years. The ruling Liberal Democratic Party is divided on the issue. A vote before the session ends in June is unlikely. For now, Japanese women will keep grumbling—under someone else's name.



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: Braeburn, Gala and Pink Lady are all types of what?

Thursday: A mass audition for a showbiz event is colloquially known by what term?

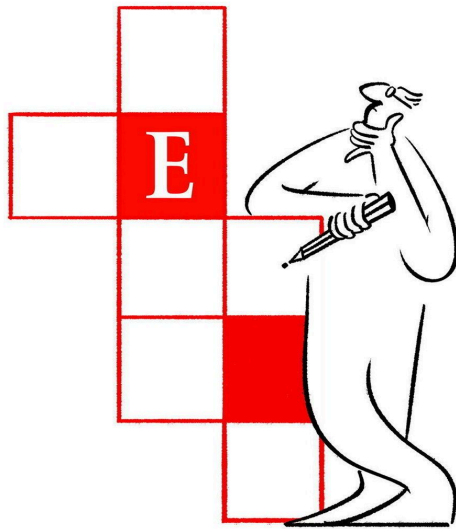


Illustration: The Economist

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:

Amelia Cheng, Coquitlam, Canada

Michael Bryant, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Axel Ehrstrom, Helsinki, Finland

They all gave the correct answers of [Chicago](#), [author](#), [Alawite](#) and [Cyril Ramaphosa](#).

*When the people are being beaten
with a stick, they are not much
happier if it is called “the
People’s Stick”.*

Mikhail Bakunin