

# The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: Gerry Images

**Ukraine** attacked a **Russian** nuclear power plant in the western Kursk region, causing a fire which has now been extinguished, according to Russian officials. Radiation levels were normal and there were no casualties. **Russia** also said its forces had captured two villages in the eastern Donetsk region on Saturday. Meanwhile Ukraine prepared to celebrate independence day on Sunday.

**Israel** intensified strikes on **Gaza city's** outskirts. Tanks and warplanes shelled homes and roads in Zeitoun, Shejaia and Jabalia. Israel Katz, Israel's defence minister, vowed to press ahead with a takeover of the city, **Hamas's** last stronghold. On Friday he warned that it would be razed unless Hamas surrendered. A UN-backed monitor has officially declared that there is **famine** in Gaza city and nearby areas.

America's defence secretary, **Pete Hegseth**, fired the head of **the Pentagon's** intelligence agency, Lieutenant General Jeffery Kruse, and two other senior military commanders. No explanation was given. In June a leaked intelligence-agency report found that strikes on Iran had only delayed its nuclear programme by a few months, an evaluation the White House described as "flat out wrong".

**Texas's Senate** approved the redrawing of the state's congressional map, creating five seats in America's House of Representatives that Republicans are likely to win in next year's midterm elections. Once Greg Abbott, the state's governor, signs the map into law, state Democrats are expected to launch a legal challenge. Earlier this month Democratic lawmakers fled the state in order to deprive the legislature of a quorum.

America's Department of Justice released an interview transcript from July with **Ghislaine Maxwell**, who is serving a prison sentence of 20 years for sex offences linked to [Jeffrey Epstein](#), a paedophile. She said she never saw Donald Trump do anything wrong. Meanwhile the department sent Epstein-related documents to Congress. Democrats complained that officials are "stonewalling" by sending material that is already public. They have released less than 1% of the files, Democrats said.

The military junta that runs **Guinea** suspended the three main political parties ahead of a constitutional referendum next month. One of the parties is led by the former president, Alpha Condé, who was ousted in a coup led by Mamady Doumbouya in 2021. The three parties are all against the proposed new constitution, in part because of fears that it would allow Mr Doumbouya to run for the presidency.

Criminals in England and Wales could be barred from pubs, concerts or sports matches and face driving bans under [new non-custodial sentences](#). The government hopes reformed sentencing rules will ease overcrowding in **prisons**. Britain has western Europe's highest incarceration rate, according to the World Prison Brief, a database. It locks up roughly twice as many people per person as do the Netherlands and Germany.

**Word of the week:** *Aussenkanzler*, meaning "foreign chancellor", a nickname given to Friedrich Merz, Germany's head of

government, as a result of his many foreign trips since becoming leader, even as he struggles at home. [Read the full story.](#)



Photograph: Getty Images

## **Starship tries again**

On SpaceX's website a clock is counting down to 18:30 Central Time on Sunday. That is when the tenth test flight of the company's Starship launch system is scheduled to blast off from its facility at the southern tip of Texas. The previous three tests all failed to meet their intended goals. In January and in March the Starships exploded during ascent. Control of the one launched in May was lost after it reached space. Another Starship blew up on the ground in June, damaging a test pad. SpaceX, which makes and operates rockets, spacecraft and satellites, and its boss, Elon Musk, will be keener than ever on success this time round.

The test flight's main objective for Starship is to show that it can turn one of its engines back on again in space, deploy some dummy satellites and survive re-entry in fettle fine enough to allow a controlled touchdown manoeuvre. It will then sink into the Indian Ocean.



Photograph: Alamy

## Bernie Sanders takes on the “oligarchy”

On Sunday [Bernie Sanders](#) will take his “Fighting Oligarchy” tour to Chicago, after stops in Iowa, Wisconsin and Michigan. At the age of 83, the senior senator from Vermont shows no signs of winding down his campaign for left-wing goals. A quarter of a million people attended his rallies during a similar six-week tour in March and April with Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a congresswoman from New York, according to his office.

The campaign’s popularity attests to the growing influence of the left within the Democratic Party. Much of the party’s base wants punchy left-wingers to take on Donald Trump. [Zohran Mamdani](#), a socialist who won the primary to be the Democrats’ candidate for mayor of New York City in June, is one such figure. Mr Sanders’s latest tour has been through places that voted for Mr Trump. Chicago will be his first stop in friendly territory. True believers will turn out in force. The rest of the electorate may not share their enthusiasm.



Photograph: Getty Images

## The US Open begins

American men used to dominate their half of the US Open. Between 1974 and 1984 Jimmy Connors and John McEnroe won the [tennis](#) tournament nine times. Andre Agassi and Pete Sampras won seven titles between 1990 and 2002 and Andy Roddick won in 2003. No American male has won since.

Home fans could have more to cheer about in this year's tournament, which begins on Sunday. Four American men—Taylor Fritz, Ben Shelton, Tommy Paul and Frances Tiafoe—now rank among the world's top 20. At least one should stay in the tournament until its late stages. But the likelihood of a homegrown winner is small. Italy's Jannik Sinner and Spain's Carlos Alcaraz outclass the rest of the field and have shared the last seven Grand Slam titles. None of the four Americans has a winning record against the two superstars. America's wait is likely to continue.



Photograph: Getty Images

## **The Notting Hill Carnival's uncertain future**

Notting Hill Carnival will take over west London on Sunday. Booming sound systems, steel drummers and feather-clad dancers will throng the streets. It is the second-largest street festival in the world, after Rio de Janeiro's Carnival. Rooted in Trinidadian culture, the celebration began in 1966 as a response to racial tensions in London. Now it attracts 2m people each year.

Yet with scale come problems. This year's event was at risk of cancellation after an independent review commissioned by the carnival's organisers and paid for by the local council identified safety risks. Violence is a worry: last year two people were killed. Police also worry about dangerous overcrowding. Organisers have received £1m (\$1.3m) in extra funding to improve safety. Whether such measures will secure the carnival's future is uncertain. But for now, it is the best place to grab a patty and a Red Stripe beer and enjoy reggae music.





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:

**Stefano and Chinghan Wong**, Bishan, Singapore

**Donna Singmaster**, Pebble Beach, California, America

**Richard Small**, Johannesburg, South Africa

They all gave the correct answers of: a pod, exaltation, Murder at the Vicarage, parliament and Pride month. The theme is collective nouns for animals: a pod of whales or dolphins, an exaltation of larks, a murder of crows, a Parliament of owls and a pride of lions

The questions were:

**Monday:** String beans, garden peas and okra are found in what kind of natural container?

**Tuesday:** What word for happiness also means “the raising of someone to an important position”?

**Wednesday:** What was the first Agatha Christie novel to feature Miss Marple?



**Thursday:** The Althing is the oldest-known example (still in existence) of what type of institution?

**Friday:** An extended celebration of LGBTQ people in June is generally known under what title?



Illustration: The Economist

## Weekly crossword

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* - One hundred rooms for top executives (1-5)

*2 across* - Alarm father with a little noise (5)

*3 across* - Look briefly upon defaced rubbish heap, and accept better offer (6)

*1 down* - Coddle genius about way to make it rain (5-7)

### Straight clues

*1 across* - Who normally sits below a company's board (1-5)

*2 across* - A mythical danger for unwary sailors (5)

*3 across* - An act frowned upon when selling property (6)

*1 down* - What definitely wasn't to blame for the Texas floods (5-7)

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.

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.

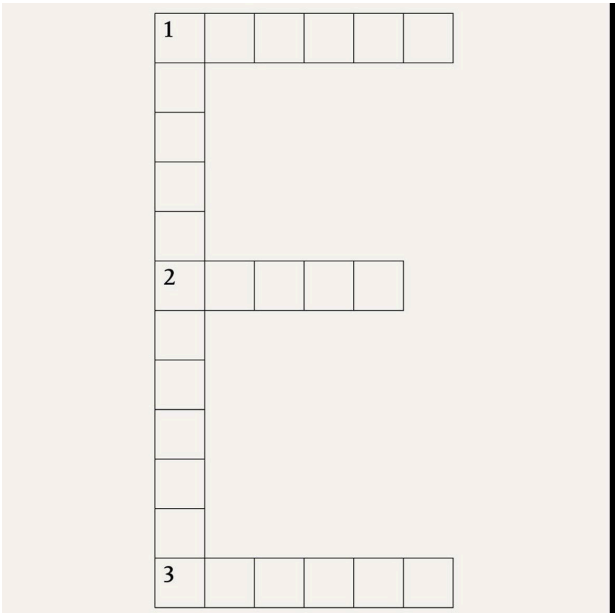


Image: The Economist

*They sicken of the calm, who  
knew the storm.*

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***Dorothy Parker***