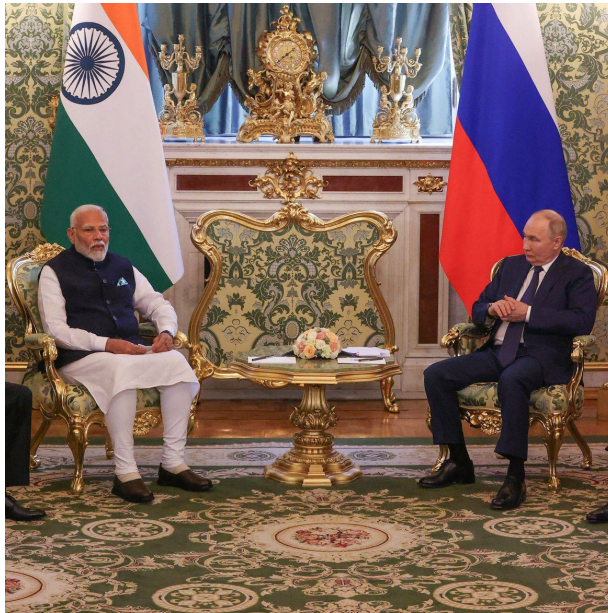


## The world in brief, July 10th 2024



During a meeting with **Vladimir Putin** in Moscow, **Narendra Modi**, India's prime minister, said that war "cannot solve problems" and that peace is "of utmost importance". On Monday Russia launched the deadliest strike on Ukraine in months, killing at least 41 people. Since the invasion which prompted Western sanctions on Russia, India has become an important [buyer](#) of Russian oil.

**Sir Keir Starmer** gave his first speech to Britain's Parliament since his Labour Party was elected to government in a [landslide victory](#). The prime minister emphasised the importance of a "politics of service", and welcomed new MPs. The government has announced a slew of reforms including restoring mandatory local housing targets and ending bans on onshore wind farms.

**NATO's** procurement agency ordered nearly \$700m worth of Stinger missiles from several countries. [Jens Stoltenberg](#), the military alliance's outgoing chief, said that the move was intended to boost countries' defence industries. The announcement came on the first day of NATO's summit in Washington, DC. With some

Republicans in Congress sceptical of sending more weapons to Ukraine, European countries [are under pressure](#) to increase defence spending and production.

A court in **Moscow** ordered the arrest in absentia of **Yulia Navalnaya**, the widow of [Alexei Navalny](#), a Russian opposition leader who died in a Siberian penal colony in February. Russia accused Ms Navalnaya—who is now the chair of Mr Navalny’s Anti-Corruption Foundation, an investigative group—of participating in an “extremist organisation”. President Vladimir Putin outlawed the foundation in 2021.

**Dyson** will fire 1,000 employees in Britain, more than a quarter of its local workforce, as part of a global cost-cutting drive. The British maker of vacuum cleaners and air filters is facing stiff competition from manufacturers in Asia. The announcement comes as Britain’s new Labour government on Tuesday gathered around 170 business leaders to [share its priorities](#).

Floods in northern **Bangladesh** displaced about 40,000 people, according to the country’s government. [Heavy rain](#) destroyed homes, dams and bridges. Meanwhile water levels fell in Assam, across the border in India, where flooding killed six people in recent days. The World Meteorological Organization forecasts above average rainfall in South Asia during this year’s monsoon season.

A cactus in Florida reportedly became America’s first local species to go extinct because of **rising sea levels**. The population of Key Largo tree cactus stems fell from 150 to just six by 2021; researchers blamed saltwater intrusion and soil depletion from hurricanes. The cactus still grows in a few places elsewhere. Globally, [sea levels](#) have risen by roughly 21cm to 24cm since 1880.

**Figure of the day:** 350, the approximate number of condors flying free in parts of America in 2023. [Read the full story.](#)

*In the run-up to America's presidential election, we've launched The US in brief—a daily update to help you keep on top of the political stories that matter. Sign up here to receive it as a newsletter, each weekday, in your inbox.*

## All eyes on Biden, and his alternates



Joe Biden's dire performance in a presidential debate against Donald Trump on June 27th prompted serious questions about his fitness to run again. So far, nine Democratic congressmen have either publicly or reportedly suggested that he should step aside in favour of a younger candidate, as have several [big donors](#). The president has [stood his ground](#). But scrutiny will only increase as he hosts NATO leaders this week. Pundits will be watching to see if Mr Biden can manage the intensity of a high-level international meeting.

They will also be looking at Kamala Harris, the vice-president, whom some consider the most obvious replacement for Mr Biden. On Wednesday she will address a sorority convention in Texas. The event will receive more coverage than it would normally warrant. Ms Harris is an uneven speaker: her sometimes bizarre cultural references are perfect fodder for memes. But the 59-year-old's interviews following her boss's disastrous debate earned her good reviews.

# Taxing China's shopping basket



Cigars, fireworks, golf balls and disposable wooden chopsticks: these are on the list of goods that incur a consumption tax in China. (The tax also falls on petrol, bling, booze, cars and motorbikes.) The list could lengthen as part of a fiscal reform under consideration by China's leaders, according to state-owned media. The changes could broaden the tax's scope and share some of its revenues with local governments, which can no longer rely on land sales to balance their books.

But any increase in the tax's rate or range would be badly timed. Consumer confidence is low and the growth of retail sales is below its pre-pandemic trend. One consequence is weak inflation. Figures released on Wednesday will probably show that consumer prices rose by only half a percent or so in June compared with a year earlier. To escape subpar growth, [China's economy](#) will need more consumer spending on golf balls and much else besides.



# A hot summer in oil markets



On Wednesday the [Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries](#) publishes its monthly report on global oil markets. The cartel has been consistently optimistic about the second half of 2024. In June it predicted that oil demand would rise by 2.2m barrels per day by the end of the year, the same as it forecast in May.

OPEC believes that tourism and other kinds of travel—which are rebounding from their pandemic-era slump—will help to drive up demand. [Oil prices](#) rallied to a two-month high earlier this month, partly on the expectation that record numbers of Americans would hit the road for the July 4th holiday. And global demand for flights is expected to grow by 10% this year compared with last, according to the International Air Transport Association, which represents airlines. OPEC hopes that increased demand, combined with its own production cuts, will push up oil prices (currently around \$86 per barrel). The cartel may yet get its wish.

## Senegal's new era



Wednesday marks 100 days since Bassirou Diomaye Faye became Senegal's president. His [surprise election triumph](#) largely dispelled doubts about the country's democracy that were sparked when his predecessor, Mackey Sall, tried to delay the vote. As a candidate Mr Faye promised a new era of clean government, economic nationalism and [“anti-imperial” pan-Africanism](#).

The government's domestic policy has so far included introducing subsidies to lower the cost of some types of rice and bread. On the international stage, meanwhile, Mr Faye is trying to repair relations in a divided region. He has tried to reconcile the Economic Community of West African States, the fractious regional bloc, with military leaders in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger. The bloc hopes to preserve economic ties and co-operation in combating terrorism. But Mr Faye's efforts have so far failed: last week the three juntas announced the creation of a rival confederation.

# Painting Tokyo's futuristic architecture



When it opened in 1958 Tokyo Tower was widely seen as a symbol of Japan's post-war recovery. Nomata Minoru, a Japanese artist who has been inspired by Tokyo's architecture, sees the building's vast steel lattice as a sign of how the city's character was changing at the time. [Modern buildings](#) multiplied in the 1960s as Japan's capital became a metropolis.

“Continuum”, an exhibition of Mr Minoru's paintings , opens on Wednesday at White Cube Mason's Yard, a gallery in London. The show brings together more than 20 examples of the artist's “towering edifices” and “spherical forms”. Many of the paintings are surreal: some depict colossal structures made of ice, water or clouds. Others are more realistic. Foliage creeps up the side of his steel towers, bringing to mind the rooftop gardens that thrive above Tokyo's polluted streets. The greenery contrasts with today's cityscape, just as those first towers did in the 1960s.



## 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 [QuizEspresso@economist.com](mailto:QuizEspresso@economist.com). We'll pick randomly from those with the right answers and crown three winners on Saturday.

**Wednesday:** Which Chinese-American dish which consists of meat, eggs and mixed vegetables may owe its name to a term for “miscellaneous leftovers”?

**Tuesday:** Which term in ice hockey was used as the title of a film from 1977 about the sport, starring Paul Newman?

**350**

*The approximate number of condors flying free in parts of America in 2023.*

*Read the full story.*

**Life's been tough but I've been tougher.**

*Zohra Sehgal*