

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Donald Trump said he would meet **Vladimir Putin**, Russia's president, in Alaska on August 15th to discuss the war in [Ukraine](#). Mr Trump's announcement came hours after he said that a peace deal would involve "some swapping of territories". Earlier Mr Putin spoke to Xi Jinping, China's leader, who welcomed the peace talks, according to Chinese state media.

Germany banned the export of arms that "could be used in the Gaza Strip" to **Israel**. Germany, once a stalwart supporter of Israel's war on Hamas, shifted its stance after Israel's security cabinet on Friday approved a plan to launch a [full-scale military occupation](#) of Gaza City. The proposal has drawn wide criticism, including from Britain and the United Nations.

Armenia and **Azerbaijan** signed a declaration of peace at the White House on Friday, [marking the end](#) of decades of conflict. Previous negotiations between the neighbouring countries had repeatedly stalled. As part of the agreement, America plans to develop a transport route through the region called the "Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity".

America's Commerce Department reportedly started issuing licences to **Nvidia** to export its H20 chips to **China**. The world's

most valuable company designed the chips for the Chinese market after the Biden administration imposed export controls. In April the Trump administration told Nvidia that it could not sell H20s to China, but [reversed course in July](#) after Jensen Huang, the firm's boss, met Mr Trump at the White House.

America's **Justice Department** reportedly opened an investigation into the office of **Letitia James**, New York's Democratic attorney-general, and issued two subpoenas. It is apparently probing whether Ms James, whose office brought a [civil lawsuit](#) against Donald Trump for fraud after his first term, violated the president's rights. It is also looking into a case Ms James brought against the National Rifle Association.

America unexpectedly levied tariffs on **one-kilo gold bars**, according to sources from the Customs and Border Protection agency cited by the *Financial Times*. It was widely assumed that gold would be exempt from tariffs. Such a levy would be [especially disastrous for Switzerland](#), which is a big exporter of gold to America. The price of gold futures in New York reached record highs on the news.

Kosovo's constitutional court tweaked the rules on electing a new parliamentary speaker in a bid to break a political deadlock that has lasted months. Judges said candidates for the role, which needs to be filled before a government can be formed, could only be nominated a maximum of three times. The country's biggest party has nominated the same candidate repeatedly since elections in February.

Word of the week: Braumeister, Germany's master brewers. They are trying new recipes to tempt young Germans back to drinking beer. [Read the full story.](#)

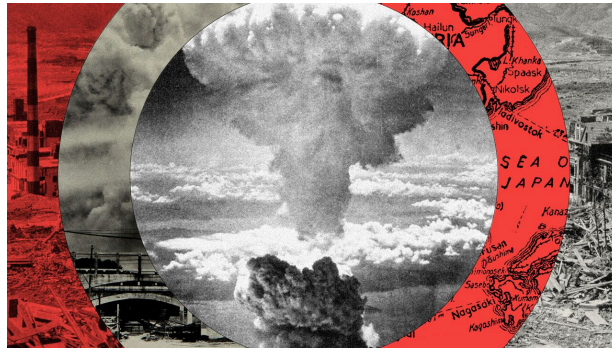


Illustration: The Economist/Getty Images

Nagasaki, 80 years on

On Saturday the mayor of Nagasaki will hold a commemoration ceremony at the city's peace memorial. Nagasaki was the second Japanese city that America attacked with nuclear weapons in the final days of the second world war, after Hiroshima on August 6th 1945. The anniversaries come at a [worrying time](#). Russia has made threats to use nuclear weapons in its war in Ukraine. Taboos around this kind of sabre-rattling, which helped control the use of nuclear weapons, are breaking down.

The Economist has republished some of its original reporting on the bombings as part of [Archive 1945](#). On August 11th 1945 we wrote that the nuclear bomb was “one more weapon of destruction to which there is no answer, one more terror which it is better to have on our side, but best not to have at all”. On the grim anniversary of history's only atomic bombings, a new nuclear era is beginning.



Photograph: dpa

Israel's risky escalation

On Friday Israel's security cabinet approved a proposal by Binyamin Netanyahu, the prime minister, to "prepare for taking control of Gaza City". It is the first stage of a wider plan to achieve Israeli military control of the entire Gaza Strip. Israel would then establish "an alternative civil administration" to govern the enclave, in place of Hamas.

The commander of the Israel Defence Forces, Major General Eyal Zamir, objected to the plan, warning that it would take months to achieve, endanger the lives of Israeli hostages held in Gaza and require moving hundreds of thousands of Palestinian civilians out of the war-zone in Gaza City. Foreign leaders, already critical of [Israel's conduct in the war](#), have attacked it, too. Friedrich Merz, Germany's chancellor, announced that his country was pausing the sales of arms that could be used in Gaza. The move, though dramatic, is unlikely to sway Mr Netanyahu, who has placated his right-wing coalition members with his expansionist plan.



Photograph: Getty Images

More protests at Britain's asylum hotels

A year ago rioting [broke out](#) in many British towns and cities, part of a wave of violent protests following the murder of three girls by Axel Rudakubana, then a 17-year-old. Mr Rudakubana was born in Britain. But he was briefly rumoured to be an asylum-seeker, and many rioters targeted hotels where such people are housed while the government considers their cases. Some attempted to set the hotels on fire.

Recent weeks have seen many protests outside hotels, and more are planned for this weekend. The protesters' aims are mixed. Some claim to be defending "our children"; in some towns, rumours swirl that asylum-seekers have been harassing or assaulting local girls. Others object to public money being spent on asylum-seekers, or simply want them gone. The protesters are a mixture, too, of local people and far-right agitators. The police will try to keep order, but it will be a slog. Monday cannot come soon enough.



Photograph: Getty Images

A fragile ceasefire between Congo and Rwanda

This week envoys from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda met in Ethiopia to discuss implementing the peace deal they signed in late June, under heavy American pressure. That ceasefire agreement committed both sides to stop supporting armed groups after M23, a Rwanda-backed militia, seized control of several cities in eastern Congo at the start of the year. Rwanda is also meant to withdraw its own troops from the region. Meanwhile Congo agreed to disarm the FDLR militia, which was founded by Rwandan Hutu extremists who fled to Congo after the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

But progress has been slow. The parties are just starting to talk about how to supervise troop withdrawals and disarmament. Congo may struggle to deal with the FDLR, and its negotiations with M23 are faltering. The ceasefire with Rwanda itself is barely holding. The United Nations recently reported that M23 fighters and Rwandan troops killed over 300 civilians in eastern Congo last month.



Photograph: Alamy

Weekend profile: Pascal Soriot, the pharma titan tiring of Britain

Perhaps unsurprisingly for the boss of a pharmaceutical company, Sir Pascal Soriot is a big believer in science. As chief executive of AstraZeneca, a British drugmaking powerhouse, he has sacrificed immediate returns to shareholders to plough cash back into discoveries. His faith has paid off handsomely. In the early 2010s AstraZeneca was a company in poor health with an anaemic pipeline of blockbuster drugs; it is now Britain's most valuable listed firm.

So Sir Pascal may seem an unlikely ally of Donald Trump, who as America's president has slashed public spending on scientific research and seems determined to scrap the research grants of Ivy League universities. But the two men share a mission to spread the cost of drug research and development (R&D) across rich countries. Their prescription? Bring American-style drug pricing to Europe.

That would be a big shake-up for Europe's public-health systems. European governments control drug prices in various ways—Britain is particularly strict, refusing to pay for medicines that do not meet a threshold of cost-effectiveness. But Sir Pascal is not afraid of a scrap. Born in France in 1959, he had a tough upbringing on the outskirts of Paris. Street fights were common. His father was a tax collector and his mother stayed at home to

raise him and his three brothers. Sir Pascal loved horses as a young man, and initially trained as a vet. He later took an MBA at a prestigious business school in the French capital. He moved to New Zealand and then Australia in the 1980s, where he worked as a sales rep for a German pharmaceutical company. He fell for Australia's easygoing culture and optimism, and now considers it home.

But Sir Pascal's professional life has spanned the globe: he held increasingly important roles at pharma companies. He has international ambitions for AstraZeneca, too. Its biggest bet is on America, where it expects to generate half of its revenues by 2030. Despite having its headquarters in Britain, AstraZeneca does not see itself as a British firm—awkwardly, for the home country, which touted AstraZeneca's Covid-19 jab as a British scientific triumph.

Yet Sir Pascal says that Britain, like the rest of Europe, is “falling behind” in its willingness to spend on innovative medicine. America invests the equivalent of 0.8% of its GDP on drugs, compared with 0.3% in Britain. Sir Pascal wants Britain to boost its share to 0.6%. It is not a popular view. Higher spending on drugs would put further strain on Britain's cash-strapped National Health Service. It has been reported that Sir Pascal has discussed moving the firm's primary listing from London's stockmarket to New York's. He does not comment on the prospect publicly, but even the threat of AstraZeneca breaking up with Britain may alarm the government enough to consider coughing up. Mr Trump has long complained that Europeans should pay more for their drugs. Sir Pascal seems to agree. Will the street fighter get his way?



Illustration: The Economist

Mini crossword

We now publish an interactive edition of our crossword, 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 Initially good north-western state is missing its middle. What a monster! (6)

2 across A capital folder (6)

3 across Amend a clergyman with incomplete praise (6)

1 down Kinky randy merger does not respect boundaries (11)

Straight clues

1 across Mythological female creature that appears in “Wednesday”, a Netflix hit (6)

2 across The capital city of the Philippines (6)

3 across What the Bureau of Labour Statistics did to previous months' job numbers, enraging Donald Trump (6)

1 down Redraw electoral boundary for political gain (11)

Email all four answers, along with your home city and country, by 9am BST on Monday to [\[email protected\]](#). We will pick randomly from those with the right answers and crown three winners in next week's edition.

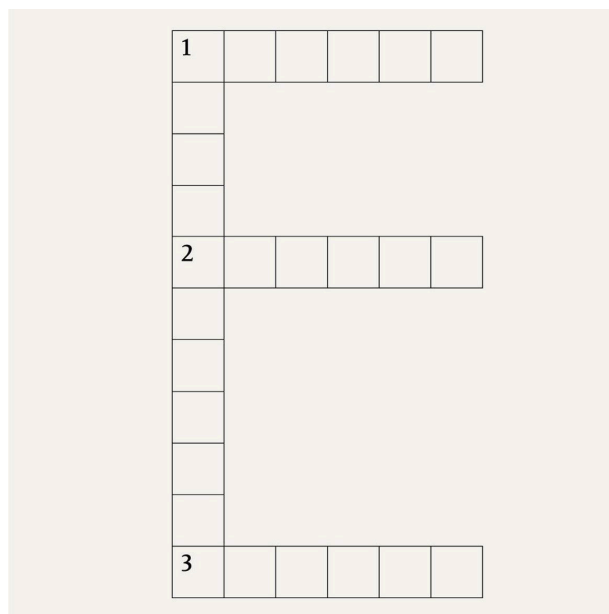


Image: The Economist



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:

Kerst and Annelies Troost, Radda in Chianti, Italy

Dakota Evans, Syracuse, New York, America

Simon Richards, Beaconsfield, Britain

They all gave the correct answers of: No Direction Home, Jenny from the Block, blue period, The Muppets Take Manhattan and Andrew Jackson. The theme is boy bands: One Direction, New Kids on the Block, Blue, Take That and the Jacksons (or the Jackson 5).

The questions were:

Monday: What was the title of Martin Scorsese's 2005 documentary about Bob Dylan?

Tuesday: Which song by Jennifer Lopez, from the "This is Me... Then" album, is about her desire to remain true to her roots in the Bronx?

Wednesday: What term is generally used for Picasso's artistic style in the years 1901-1904?

Thursday: Which film concerns the Muppets attempt to conquer Broadway?

Friday: The face of which US President is featured on the \$20 bill?

When I make something, it's only half finished. When people use it—for years and years—then it is finished.

Issey Miyake