

The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter



Photograph: Bloomberg via Getty Images

Donald Trump announced that a 30% tariff would be imposed on goods imported from the European Union and Mexico, from August 1st, unless the foreign partners strike new [trade deals with America](#) by that deadline. Mr Trump warned the European Commission in a letter that he would match any retaliation with an equal additional levy. His threats follow ones made in recent days to Brazil, Canada and Japan, among others.

Revenue gathered from **tariffs** hit a record for the nine months of the fiscal year to June, in America, passing the \$100bn mark for the first time. Customs duties last month quadrupled to \$27.2bn from a year before on a gross basis, according to the Treasury Department. Its head, Scott Bessent, said that America was “reaping the rewards” of [Mr Trump’s trade agenda](#).

A preliminary report into last month’s **Air India crash** found that switches controlling the flow of fuel to the plane’s engines flipped to the “cut-off” position seconds after take-off. India’s Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau said that at this stage there were “no recommended actions” to GE Aerospace, whose engines were used in the plane, or Boeing, the aircraft’s manufacturer. [The accident](#) killed 270 people.

North Korea's leader, Kim Jong Un, hosted Russia's foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, in Wonsan, a coastal city. Relations between the two countries have [grown ever closer](#), especially after North Korea last year deployed an estimated 11,000 [soldiers to help Russia](#) in its war with Ukraine. The Asian country is expected to send at least 25,000 more troops. Russia's top diplomat hailed an "invincible fighting brotherhood".

America's State Department reportedly fired more than 1,300 employees as part of the administration's efforts to [downsize the federal workforce](#). Notices, informing staff that their positions had been "abolished", were sent to 1,107 civil servants and 246 foreign-service officers, according to media reports. Employees at the State Department held a "clap-out" for their dismissed colleagues as they left the building on Friday.

Russia pummelled **western Ukraine** with drones and missiles that struck sites near the borders with Moldova and Romania. It hit the city of Chernivtsi, home to some 265,000 people, for the first time in its full-scale war. Two people were killed and more than a dozen were injured. Russia has ramped up drone production recently, in order to [intensify its bombardments](#).

In a remarkably one-sided final at Wimbledon, **Iga Swiatek** thrashed Amanda Anisimova 6-0, 6-0, to claim the championship. Her winning match took only 57 minutes. It is the 24-year-old Polish player's sixth Grand Slam title. Her American opponent will be remembered for a less appealing reason: no other finalist at [Wimbledon](#), in the modern era, has ever failed to win a single game.

Word of the week: *Izinkabi*, the Zulu word for hitmen, who are on the rise in South Africa. [Read the full story.](#)



Photograph: Getty Images

Power play in the Pacific

On Sunday America and Australia kick off Talisman Sabre. Held every other year since 2005, it is Australia's biggest military exercise. This will be the largest one yet. Over three weeks, more than 35,000 troops from at least 19 countries—including, for the first time, India—will conduct land, sea and air manoeuvres in and around Australia and Papua New Guinea. A feared Chinese invasion of Taiwan is the obvious backdrop. Naval warfare will feature heavily, as will drills to fight off beach landings.

Australia will be hoping to impress America. Donald Trump's administration has slammed the country's defence spending of nearly 2% of GDP as insufficient, and is pushing for 3.5%. In June the [Pentagon ordered a review of AUKUS](#), casting doubt on the Joe Biden-era pact with Britain to provide Australia with nuclear-powered attack submarines. If, to China's delight, that deal does get canned, [Australia's geographic predicament](#) will loom even larger.



Photograph: Getty Images

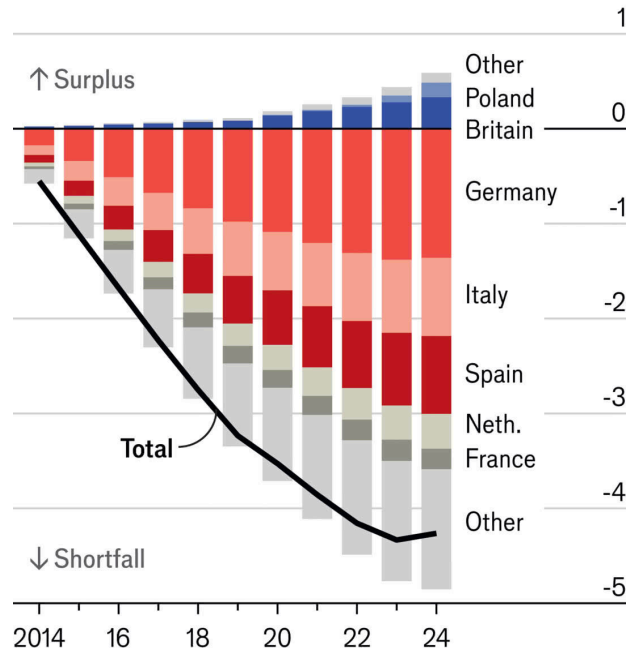
Vive la défense!

On the eve of Bastille Day, France's national holiday, Emmanuel Macron will lay out the country's new defence plans in a speech in Paris on Sunday. Addressing members of the armed forces, France's president will speak about the growing threats to security and freedom in Europe. He will also make the case for his country [spending more on defence](#). Like [other NATO members](#) France has agreed to boost defence spending to 3.5% of GDP by 2035; its current level is just 2%.

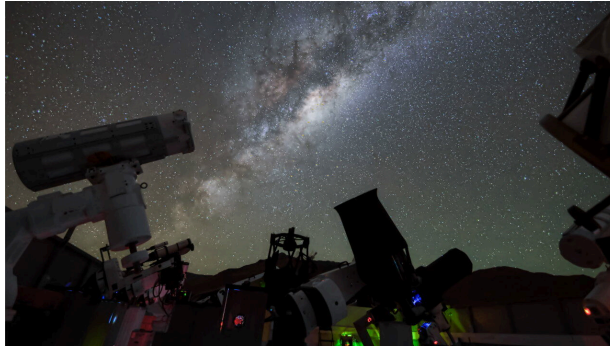
But France is currently running a budget deficit that is expected to end the year at 5.6% of GDP, one of the highest levels in the European Union. The government says it needs to find €40bn (\$46.7bn) of savings in its budget for 2026. By making clear the changing threats, Mr Macron is hoping to create a consensus around the need to boost defence spending. What remains unclear is what he is prepared to spend less on.

Target missed

NATO Europe, cumulative surplus/shortfall since 2014 from defence-spending target of 2% of combined GDP, percentage-points



Sources: NATO; *The Economist*



Photograph: Obtech/El Sauce Observatory

A test for astronomy's newest branch

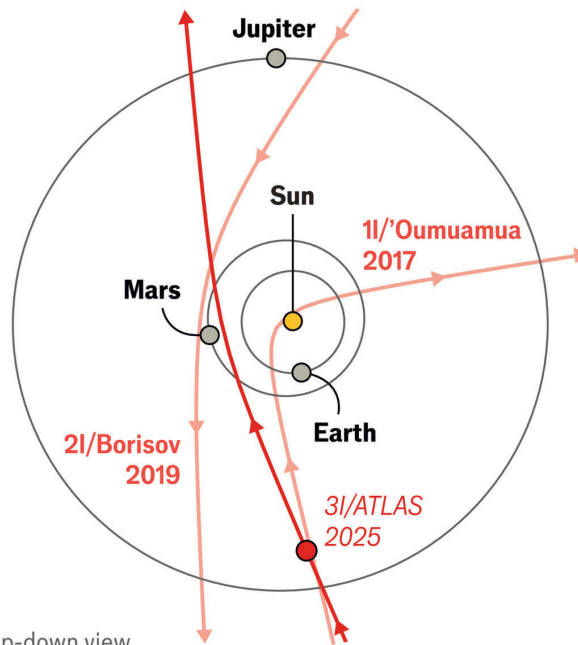
On July 1st a telescope in Chile spotted a visitor to our solar system from another star. 3I/ATLAS, as the object is known, is a comet perhaps 10km across, probably older than the Sun itself, and seems to have travelled from the galaxy's "thick disk", a clustering of relatively old stars that sits above and below the main plane of the galaxy.

3I/ATLAS is the third such visitor that [astronomers have spotted](#), after 1I/'Oumuamua in 2017 and 2I/Borisov in 2019. The study of such objects—which are thought to outnumber stars a million-billion-fold—has become astronomy's newest discipline.

3I/ATLAS's trajectory means it will not be visible from Earth as it makes its closest approach to the Sun, on October 30th. But it will be visible from Mars, and astronomers hope that probes in orbit around that planet might be able to take pictures of the encounter.

Ex astris

Paths of interstellar objects in the solar system



Top-down view

Source: "Discovery and preliminary characterisation of a third interstellar object: 3I/ATLAS",
by Darryl Seligman et al., 2025



Photograph: Getty Images

A football World Cup half full

For Chelsea and Paris Saint-Germain, participating in FIFA's controversial [Club World Cup](#) has served its purpose. On Sunday the teams meet in the final in New Jersey. For Chelsea, the competition has been a cash cow. The club has so far earned around £80m, with another £7m on offer if it can emerge victorious. The windfall has helped finance its recent spending spree on the world's most promising young players. Earlier this week, UEFA fined Chelsea €31m (\$36.3m) for breaching financial rules—but the Club World Cup earnings have softened the blow.

For PSG, the competition has enhanced its claim to be the best team in the world. After demolishing Inter Milan 5-0 in the final of the Champions League in May, it has proved similarly irresistible in America, brushing aside Real Madrid in a one-sided semi-final. Whereas a long season and scorching American summer have taken their toll on other European teams, the Parisians look full of *joie de vivre*.



Photograph: Getty Images

Bad Bunny takes his world-conquering music home

This weekend [Bad Bunny](#), a Puerto Rican rapper and singer, kicks off his blockbuster 30-show residency in San Juan, the capital of his homeland. The 400,000 tickets for “No Me Quiero Ir de Aquí” (“I Don’t Want To Leave Here”) sold in four hours. Over the next two months, Bad Bunny—whose real name is Benito Antonio Martínez Ocasio—will entertain audiences with songs from his chart-topping album “Debí Tirar Más Fotos”.

In some ways he is a very local star. He celebrates Afro-Latino sounds and his lyrics, almost exclusively in Spanish, are political, often about gentrification’s impact on the island (“I don’t want them to do to you what they did to Hawaii”). But his appeal is global: fans snapped up more than 2.6m tickets for his forthcoming world tour in a week. Back in Puerto Rico, the residency is expected to bring in around \$200m. Each night promises to be, in the words of one of his biggest hits, a “Baile Inolvidable”—an unforgettable dance.



Illustration: The Economist

Mini crossword

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.

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 A strict regime in eleven months' time? Thanks! (5)

2 across English perspective is pointless, so gains nothing (5)

3 across The mad, confining virtual world is where we now live (5)

1 down A judge and a boozy captain go after a mighty financial institution (8,5)

Factual clues

1 across A military regime (5)

2 across An adjective meaning English (5)

3 across The third planet in the solar system (5)

1 down The world's biggest bank (8,5)

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.

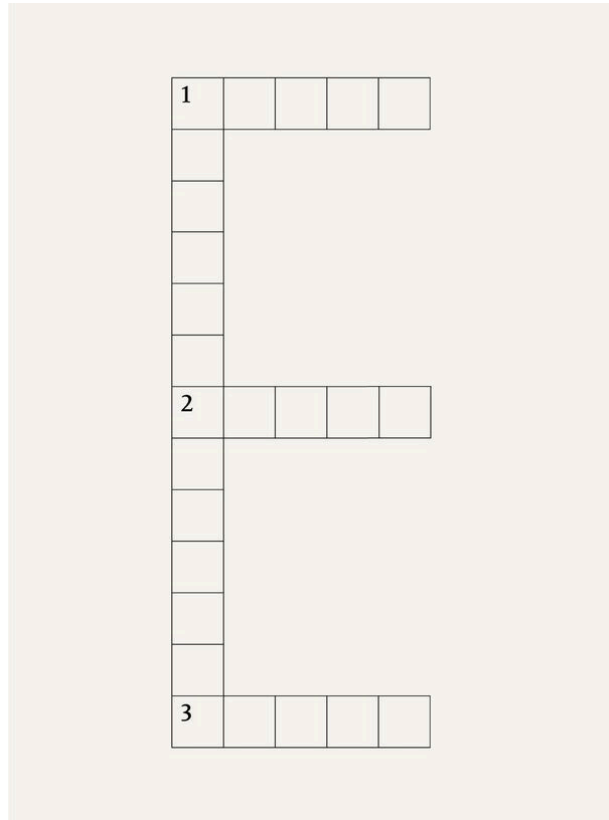


Image: The Economist



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:

John Banes, Baltimore, Maryland, America

Judy Malkin, Toronto, Canada

Melanie Mazier, Luxembourg

They all gave the correct answers of: Sarah Palin, Tracy Chapman, Brian Cox, the Holy Grail and parrots. The theme is the Monty Python comedy group which included Michael Palin and Graham Chapman, performed in the films "Monty Python's Life of Brian" and "Monty Python and the Holy Grail" and are well known for the "dead parrot" sketch.

*Our life is frittered away by
detail. Simplify, simplify, simplify!*

Henry David Thoreau