The world in brief

Catch up quickly on the global stories that matter

Photograph: AP

At least 67 people were killed by **Israeli** forces on Sunday while waiting for UN food trucks in northern Gaza, according to the Hamas-run health ministry. The Israeli Defence Forces disputed the figures, and said it had "fired warning shots in order to remove an immediate threat posed to them". On Saturday, 36 Gazans were shot dead near a food-distribution centre. Israel also issued evacuation orders for a part of central Gaza.

The city of **Suwayda** in southern **Syria** was reported to be quiet on Sunday after days of fighting between Bedouin tribesmen and gunmen from the predominantly Druze province. The Syrian government has been struggling to enforce a ceasefire it had announced following an agreement with Israel, which had been trying to protect the Druze following the outbreak of sectarian violence.

Moscow's main airports were closed temporarily due to **Ukrainian** drone attacks. Russia's defence ministry claimed to have downed 230 such weapons over the whole of the country, and 27 over the capital itself. Russia launched its own drone attack; Ukraine's air force said it has shot down 18 out of 57 of them.

Exit polls suggest that in an election on Sunday **Japan's** ruling Liberal Democratic Party and its coalition partner, Komeito, may have lost their majority in the upper house of parliament. This would be a serious blow to the LDP-led government of Ishiba Shigeru, which lost its majority in the more powerful lower house in October.

Iran's semi-official Tasnim news agency reported that the country will resume negotiations about its **nuclear programme** with Britain, France and Germany. The Europeans had warned that failure to do so would lead to the reimposition of international sanctions that were lifted after a previous deal in 2015. Last month Israel and America bombed Iran's nuclear facilities in the so-called 12-day war.

Hong Kong hoisted its highest signal, number 10, for the first time in two years as typhoon Wipha approached, bringing winds of more than 167kph (103mph). More than 200 flights were cancelled, public transport was suspended and people were ordered to stay indoors. Such storms are becoming stronger, slower, wetter and wilder because of climate change.

Ivan the Terrible returned to wreak havoc at Wembley Stadium on Saturday night. **Oleksandr Usyk** demolished Daniel Dubois to become the undisputed heavyweight champion of the world for a second time. The Ukrainian floored the Briton in the fifth round with a fearsome left hook, which Mr Usyk affectionately calls Ivan. Mr Usyk can now claim to be one of the best heavyweights in history.

Word of the week: *Erinnerungskultur*, Germany's "memory culture" which has built up over decades. Read the full story.
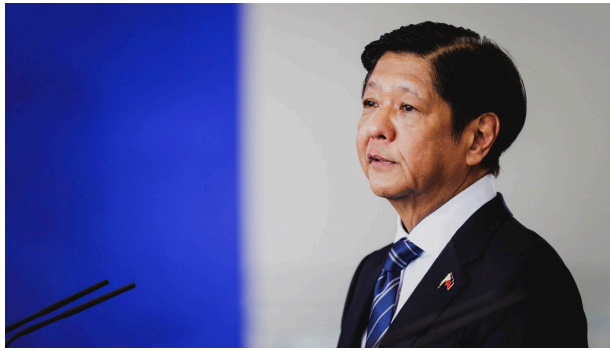
Photograph: Alamy

Chaotic times in Japanese politics

Japan's Liberal Democratic Party has been in power almost continuously for seven decades. Yet in recent years it has been beset by crises. Its ties to the Unification Church, a cult, emerged after the killing of Abe Shinzo, a former prime minister, in 2022. Later a tax-evasion scandal led many of the party's internal factions to disband. Then last year the LDP and its junior partner Komeito lost their majority in the lower house of parliament. On Sunday voters returned to the polls for an upper-house election. Exit polls suggest the parties have lost control there, too.

The campaign's dominant issue was supposed to be inflation. But politicians have offered tax cuts and fiscal giveaways, unnerving the bond markets. A darker trend has also emerged. The Do It Yourself Party, a hard-right upstart founded just five years ago, has surged on a "Japan First" platform. Japan was long seen as immune to populism. That may no longer be so.

Photograph: Getty Images

The Philippines tries to keep Trump sweet

On Sunday President Ferdinand Marcos junior of the Philippines (pictured) began a visit to Washington, for talks with Donald Trump. America and the Philippines are allies. They work together to deter China from using armed force to impose its will on those parts of the western Pacific that it covets: democratically governed Taiwan, and waters to which the Philippines has rights in international law.

American and Philippine warships mounted a joint patrol of contested waters as recently as Wednesday. Such operations indicate that their partnership holds firm, despite Mr Trump's sometimes cavalier attitude towards America's allies. Still, uncertainty persists. Philippine resilience in the face of Chinese expansion depends on America being a solid economic partner as well as a military one. Mr Trump has threatened tariffs of 20% on Philippine exports to America. Mr Marcos will no doubt try to persuade his host to ditch them.
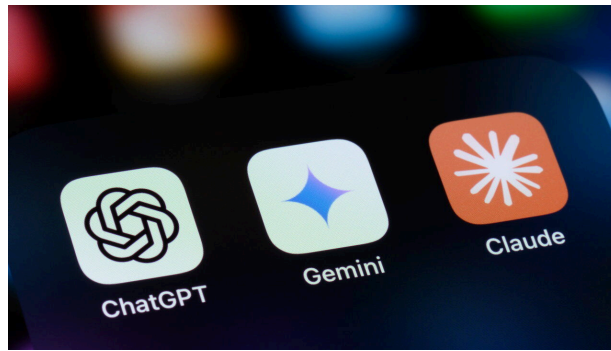
Photograph: Alamy

Fiscal problems for Colombia's president

Colombia's left-wing president, Gustavo Petro (pictured), will present his economic plans to Congress on Sunday. He has said he will prioritise "social investments", despite the government's high debt and slumping tax revenues. Tax collection fell by 18.5trn pesos ($4.6bn) in 2024 compared with 2023, equivalent to 2.2% of GDP. The government has tried to alleviate its cashflow problem in part by raising levies on sectors that don't fit comfortably into Mr Petro's ostensibly green agenda, such as hydrocarbons.

In June Germán Ávila—Mr Petro's fourth finance minister since he took office in 2022—removed a cap on state spending and borrowing for three years. The deficit is expected to surpass 7% of GDP this year. Mr Petro has said the country must reduce its debt; one fifth of Colombia's budget goes on servicing it. Yet the president also refuses to cut spending on social programmes, casting doubt on his commitment to fiscal responsibility.

Photograph: Getty Images

The political persuasion of AI chatbots

Elon Musk's artificial-intelligence company, xAI, recently apologised after its chatbot, Grok, praised Adolf Hitler and made other antisemitic comments. The firm said Grok had become too reliant on posts from X, Mr Musk's social-media platform, that contained "extremist views". The incident was a reminder that large language models have their own political persuasions. In general, however, Grok seems to be an exception; if anything, LLMs skew slightly leftward, rather than to the far right.

Researchers at New York University and Dropbox, a file-storage platform, ran seven popular AI chatbots (not including Grok) through tests to measure their moral, political and cultural views. Most sat to the left of the average American. ChatGPT and Perplexity were most progressive, scoring -34% and -27% on a scale where -100% is "extremely liberal". The typical American adult, placed on the same spectrum, would score +3%. The researchers suggest factors such as liberal-leaning training data and human testers' cautious fine-tuning tweaks explain the phenomenon.
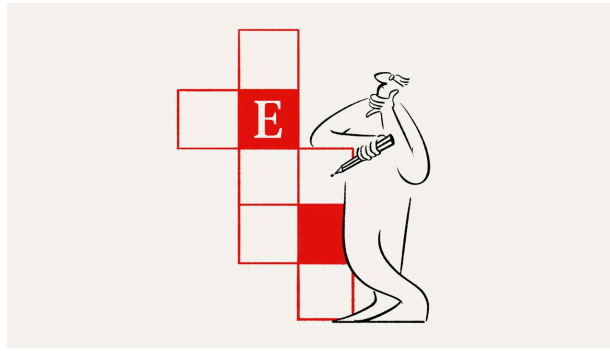
Illustration: The Economist

Weekly 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 Bugle call creates an indelible impression (6)

2 across Uttered "alright" during initially strenuous exercise class (5)

3 across He had a light bulb moment when turning side on (6)

1 down Mix on stereo after experiment that puts hairs on your chest (12)

Factual clues

1 across Signal for soldiers to return to their quarters (6)

2 across Helps give a bike wheel its strength (5)

3 across Inventor whom New York hotel is named after (6)

1 down More and more American men want to be injected with this hormone (12)

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

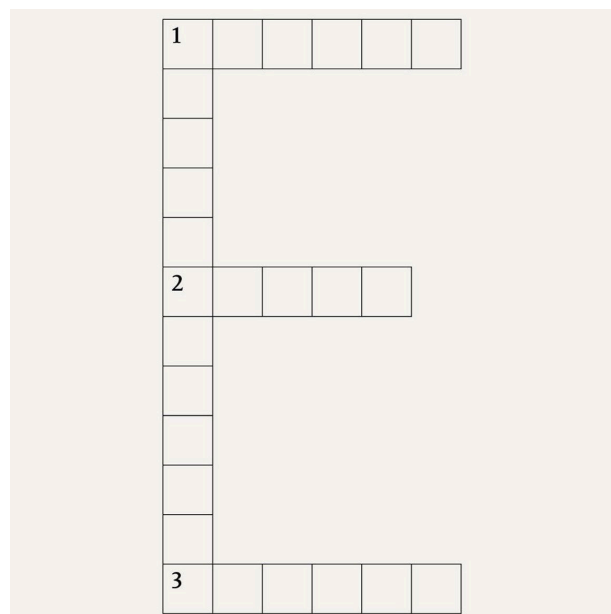Image: The Economist

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:

James and **Diane McGinnis**, Delaware, America
Mike O'Sullivan, London, Britain
Hans Olsson, Lund, Sweden

They all gave the correct answers of: Eddy Merckx, René Magritte, Hergé (Georges Remi), Jean-Claude van Damme and Hercule Poirot. The theme is that they are all Belgian.

Genius will live and thrive without training, but it does not the less reward the watering pot and pruning knife.

Margaret Fuller