

Catch up: heavy fighting in southern Lebanon; Russia captures key Ukrainian town



President Joe Biden said that America would not support an attack by **Israel** on **Iran's nuclear sites**, as [Israel weighs a response](#) following [Tuesday's missile attack](#). Meanwhile the Israel Defence Forces clashed with **Hizbullah** in southern **Lebanon**; Israel said that eight of its soldiers had died after a day and a half of heavy fighting. Separately, Israel banned António Guterres, the UN secretary-general, from entering the country for failing to “unequivocally condemn” Iran’s attack. Mr Guterres had denounced the “broadening of the Middle East conflict”.

Russia took control of Vuhledar, in eastern **Ukraine**. Russian forces have been trying to take the town—which is strategically located on high ground in the Donbas region—since the start of the war in 2022. Ukraine has been [gradually losing ground](#). In recent months Russia has been closing in on several Ukrainian strongholds near the front line.

OpenAI, the maker of ChatGPT, completed a \$6.6bn deal that raised its valuation to \$157bn. The [fundraising round](#) was led by Thrive Capital, a venture-capital firm, and included money from Microsoft, Nvidia and SoftBank, a Japanese conglomerate. The valuation made OpenAI only the second ever \$100bn-plus startup in America after SpaceX, a rocketry giant led by Elon Musk.

Sir Keir Starmer, Britain's prime minister, met Ursula von der Leyen, the president of the European Commission, in Brussels. The pair want to "reset" relations between Britain and the EU. Sir Keir is hoping to deepen cooperation with the bloc on areas like security and defence. He will also meet Charles Michel, the head of the European Council.

President Joe Biden urged port operators to increase their wage offer as a [strike](#) by port workers on America's east coast entered its second day. The alliance representing terminals and carriers has offered a 50% wage rise, but port workers want an increase of nearly 80%. The shutdown is [disrupting](#) the delivery of billions of dollars' worth of consumer goods during peak shipping season.

Claudia Sheinbaum was sworn in as Mexico's first female president. She promised continuity with Andrés Manuel López Obrador, founder of the Morena party and her predecessor as president, and to bolster women's rights, green energy and railways. Mr López Obrador is accused of lurching towards authoritarianism after imposing [a slew of constitutional changes](#). Ms Sheinbaum also inherits a huge budget deficit and slow economic growth.

An American-made **bomb** dating back to the **second world war** exploded at an airport in **Japan**. Officials said more than 80 flights were cancelled and the taxiway was damaged. There were no reported injuries. The Miyazaki airport was built in 1943 as a former imperial Japanese navy air base. Several unexploded bombs

dropped by American forces during the war have been discovered around the area.

Figure of the day: 200,000, the number of bikes that were reported stolen in England and Wales last year. Though the real number is likely much higher. [Read the full story.](#)

Fight and flight of the climate ministers



Having just wrapped up the United Nations General Assembly in New York, the climate and environment ministers of the G20 will fly to Brazil to prepare for another major meeting. They will seek to lay the groundwork for their next summit in Rio de Janeiro on November 18th-19th—an event that coincides with COP29, the United Nations climate conference, in Azerbaijan.

That gives ministers several long-distance flights to mull the environmental priorities laid down by Brazil, which has the G20 presidency, such as strengthening responses to extreme weather events and creating mechanisms to pay for “ecosystem services” (such as the carbon sequestered by the [Amazon rainforest](#)). Brazil’s environmentally-minded president, [Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva](#), is determined not to let other concerns get in the way. That includes war. In New York he argued that the money needed to fight climate change should be taken from the more than \$2trn that the world’s militaries spend each year.

A turn in the global housing cycle



As central bankers cut interest rates, mortgages are becoming cheaper. Data due on Thursday are expected to show that the rate on a fixed, 30-year mortgage in America is down by more than 1.5 percentage points from its ten-year peak of 7.8% in October 2023. But that doesn't mean housing is getting cheaper. House prices are rising by roughly 5% a year.

There is reason to believe that house prices will [continue to drift upwards](#), and not just in America. Housebuilding remains extremely weak by historical standards, limiting new supply. Despite the hype over working from home, cities are back, with a large share of new jobs being created in urban centres. And high levels of immigration to the rich world are stoking demand. There are ups and downs, of course. But nothing seems able to stop the global housing juggernaut.

A “pro-peace” rally in Germany



October 3rd, the Day of German Unity, is a celebratory moment for a country cleaved in two until 1990. But a controversial “peace demonstration” in Berlin on Thursday may spoil the day for some. The event will attract Germans sceptical about their government’s military support for Ukraine, as well as its recent agreement to host [long-range American missiles](#). The participation of MPs from Germany’s ruling Social Democrats has upset Ukraine-backers; some worry that the country’s most important European ally could waver.

The march will be modest by historical standards: an expected turnout of 25,000 is a far cry from the million-plus who filled West German streets in the peace marches of the 1980s. But it will be a reminder that not all Germans are pro-Ukraine. One of the event’s stars will be [Sahra Wagenknecht](#), leader of a new “left-conservative” party that in recent state elections in Germany’s east campaigned hard against aid for Ukraine—and is now heading for government there.

The politics of pollution in India



Delhi's annual battle with pollution is becoming a real fight. Earlier this year officials deployed “anti-smog” guns to clear the air, which gets especially filthy in winter. But India's Supreme Court thinks that the Commission for Air Quality Management, a [pollution-control agency](#) launched in 2021, is not doing enough—last week judges said it had turned a blind eye to farmers burning stubble, contributing to poor air quality. On Thursday the CAQM will file its response to the court.

Since the rebuke, the agency has deployed “flying squads” to curb fires at farms in Haryana, a neighbouring state, and Punjab, next door but one. But the CAQM's mandate to co-ordinate the work of various agencies has become hostage to local politics. The Aam Aadmi Party, which runs Delhi and Punjab, has long clashed with the Bharatiya Janata Party, which governs Haryana. State elections in Haryana later this week will only make the rivalry more acute.

Australia's fearsome female cricketers



Can anyone stop Australia? In women's Twenty20 cricket, Australia have been utterly dominant, winning six of the eight World Cups since the tournament began in 2009. The 2024 event begins on Thursday in the UAE, to which it moved because of political unrest in Bangladesh.

Australia are again a strong side, featuring Alyssa Healy as captain and Ellyse Perry, an all-rounder. Grace Harris adds the power to the middle order and Darcie Brown bowls at express pace. Spin-bowlers Sophie Molineux and Georgia Wareham should also prosper on pitches that will turn.

England and India will try to knock down Australia. England have Sophie Ecclestone, the world's best spinner, but their aggressive batting is a risky approach in unfamiliar conditions. This could be [India's time](#). They have never won the competition but they have a calm captain in Harmanpreet Kaur, explosive batting from Jemimah Rodrigues and an abundance of spin bowling.

Daily quiz



The Economist

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. We'll pick randomly from those with the right answers and crown three winners on Saturday.

Wednesday: What do the Olympic rings represent?

Thursday: Which US national monument was originally dedicated on October 28th, 1886?

200,000

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**Any fool can make something complicated.
It takes a genius to make it simple.**

Woody Guthrie