

Catch up: Zelensky sacks air-force commander; Brazil's ban on X takes effect



Volodymyr Zelensky, Ukraine's president, sacked the commander of the **air force**, Mykola Oleshchuk. Mr Zelensky did not specify a reason, but the dismissal comes a day after Ukraine confirmed that an **F-16 fighter jet** was destroyed, and its pilot killed, during a Russian missile barrage earlier in the week. Mr Oleshchuk had said that America was helping to investigate the incident's cause. Ukraine's army had long sought the [American-made F-16s](#). NATO allies recently supplied a handful as part of an initial batch. The country had just enough pilots trained to fly them.

A block on **X**, a social-media platform, came into force in **Brazil**. Alexandre de Moraes, a Supreme Court judge, had ordered the firm, which is owned by **Elon Musk**, to appoint a legal representative in the country, but it missed the deadline to do so. [Mr Moraes's clampdown](#) on X is part of a broader effort to tackle online disinformation in the country; [Mr Musk](#) has repeatedly called Mr Moraes's work "evil".

The **Israel Defence Forces** hit the first vehicle of an aid convoy in **Gaza**, killing at least four people. The **IDF** said that the missile strike had prevented “armed assailants”, who had “seized control” of the car, from attacking the convoy. The American Near East Refugee Aid agency, the convoy’s organiser, said that the lead vehicle’s occupants were from a local transport company.

Donald Trump said he would vote against abortion rights in Florida. A proposed amendment to the state constitution protecting them will appear on the ballot in November’s election. Mr Trump had seemed to endorse the amendment during an interview on Thursday, sparking fierce criticism from conservative supporters. The topic of abortion is [energising the middle ground](#) in America.

Osiel Cárdenas, an infamous **Mexican drug lord**, was released from prison in America. He served a 21-year sentence for his role as a former leader of the Gulf Cartel and Los Zetas, feared crime organisations specialising in marijuana and cocaine trafficking and extreme violence. As of May 2024, cartels controlled around a third of Mexico’s territory, according to the Council of Foreign Relations, a think-tank.

A **Russian** glide bomb struck an apartment block in Kharkiv, in north-eastern **Ukraine**, killing at least six people and injuring 55 more. Mr Zelensky said that the attack could have been prevented if his army had been able to use Western long-range weapons inside Russian territory. Ukraine can only [strike Russia](#) using home-produced drones, which have limited utility.

Eton College, an elite [British boarding school](#), said its annual fees would rise by 20% in January, from around £53,000 to over £63,000 (\$82,600). The school said its decision followed the Labour Party’s plans to reform Britain’s [value-added tax](#) system, which includes removing exemptions for private-school fees. It added that the bursaries some [students](#) receive would cover the increased fees.

Word of the week: Digital twin, a virtual representation of something, capable of modelling its behaviour in real time. [Read the full story.](#)

China's flagging economy



For the past year China-watchers have anxiously waited for the country's [fragile economy](#) to turn a corner. Now they worry that it is taking a turn for the worse. Investment in the all-important property sector shows no signs of improvement, while outside of property it is beginning to flag. Exports, a bright spot, face new obstacles. This week Canada said it would impose tariffs of 100% on China's electric vehicles, which already face steep tariff barriers in America and the European Union.

The economy's weakness was reflected in the purchasing-managers' indices (important economics barometers) for August, published on Saturday. They showed manufacturing contracting for the fourth month in a row. The index for expectations has also fallen well below its long-term average. Over the past year China's economy has dismayed the optimists. Now there are fewer of them left to disappoint.

Ukraine wants to hit back



For months Volodymyr Zelensky, Ukraine's president, has been pleading with the Biden administration to [allow his country](#) to use American long-range weapons on military targets inside Russia. The barrage of missiles and drones that Russia launched against Ukraine on August 26th—the biggest such attack since the war began—has only bolstered Mr Zelensky's case. He argued that long-range strikes could destroy Russian forces “exactly in the areas” from where they launch attacks.

But there are no signs that America, which fears prompting an escalatory response from Russia, is considering changing policy. It is reportedly even stopping Britain and France from allowing Ukraine to use their missiles against such targets. So Ukraine is developing its own missile systems. At the same press conference in which he pushed for free rein in Russia, Mr Zelensky announced that Ukraine had successfully tested a ballistic missile. Meanwhile, Ukrainian long-range drones are increasingly hitting Russian airfields and oil depots. Mr Zelensky recently revealed a new, faster jet-powered drone, the “Palanytsia”.

Decision day for FIFA



The [war in Gaza](#) is reaching international sport. Earlier this year the Palestinian Football Association (PFA) asked FIFA, football's global governing body, to ban Israel from the game. PFA argues that Israel has broken FIFA's statutes. It points to Israel's use of football stadiums in Gaza to detain displaced Palestinians and the existence of Israeli clubs in settlements in the occupied West Bank.

It is not the first time the PFA has called on FIFA to suspend Israel. The association made a similar request in 2015, accusing Israel of discriminating against Palestinian players. It ultimately dropped its bid. FIFA has said it will make a decision by Saturday, but it has pushed back deadlines before. Another delay is possible. But to increase the pressure, the PFA has pointed out the speed with which FIFA acted to suspend Russia in 2022, after its full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Literary celebrities in London



British literary festivals are having a tough year. After a row with activists, [Baillie Gifford](#), a Scottish asset manager, cut sponsorship ties with ten book festivals in May and June, including Hay, Britain's most prestigious. With state subsidies shrinking, organisers face the daunting task of cobbling together funding.

The future of book festivals may be uncertain, but the events themselves are joyous. This weekend, in a leafy corner of north London, bibliophiles will gather for "Queen's Park Book Festival". The event, which relies on state funding, sponsors and donations, boasts a stacked line-up of literary celebrities. Headliners include Alan Bennett, the esteemed author of "Talking Heads" and "The History Boys", and Sir Michael Palin of "Monty Python". Elif Shafak, a British-Turkish bestselling writer, will discuss [her new novel](#). The festival has "the charm of a village fete"—with crafts for children and a lively comedy evening—yet its big-speaker events are sold out. That should be an encouraging sign for bibliophiles everywhere.

Weekend profile: Sahra Wagenknecht, Germany's potential kingmaker



Sahra Wagenknecht launched a political party only in January, but it is already shaking up politics in eastern Germany. With her brightly coloured suits, sleek hairstyle and good looks, Ms Wagenknecht has been a star of television chat shows for years—criticising Angela Merkel’s “welcome culture” for migrants, the government’s measures to fight the covid pandemic and, more recently, its support for Ukraine.

But her party, the Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance (BSW)—which offers a hotch-potch of far-right policies (on immigration and culture) and far-left ones (on social spending)—has propelled her to political stardom. It is forecast to win 15-20% of votes in elections in Saxony and Thuringia, two states in eastern Germany, on September 1st, compared with 6.2% nationally in European Parliament elections in June. The hard-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) is [forecast to come first](#) in Thuringia and a very close second in Saxony, but it is shunned by every other party likely to cross the threshold of 5% of votes, which is needed to

enter parliament. The BSW will be an essential part of an anti-AfD coalition.

This is a remarkable achievement for a woman who joined the already failing successor of the East German Communist Party, in 1989, at the age of 20. She was born in Jena, in the former East Germany, to a German mother and Persian father who returned to Iran when she was three, and grew up in East Berlin with her mother. She stayed a Communist after the fall of the Berlin Wall and has lavished praise on some of Stalin's policies. She has sometimes expressed nostalgia for the old German Democratic Republic, and refuses to call it a dictatorship. She pushes back on her reputation for being chilly—one commentator said she has “a freezer's ability to empathise”—describing herself as “very emotional, someone who can also cry”.

The BSW's rise alarms centrists. Ms Wagenknecht blames NATO more than Vladimir Putin for the war in Ukraine. She wants immediate negotiations to end the war and opposes the federal government's recent agreement to allow American missiles to be stationed in Germany from 2026. This weekend's elections are “a vote on war and peace”, she says.

Such views are among the biggest obstacles to the BSW joining in coalition with the centre-right Christian Democratic Union (CDU). But to keep the AfD out of power, the CDU might well pursue one. The conservative mainstream might otherwise sympathise with her desire for sharp curbs on immigration and her criticism of “woke” politics.

The BSW's reliance on its eponymous leader is likely to become its biggest problem. Ms Wagenknecht sees herself as an outsider who revels in rebellion. As party leader and kingmaker she will need diplomacy and a talent for compromise—skills she has so far shown few signs of possessing.

Weekly crossword



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 down Exile affected tainted poor (11)

1 across Give fellow tea, stirred (6)

2 across Guttled fugitive makes airstrip (6)

3 across Element tops nitrogen, iridium, carbon, krypton, even lithium! (6)

Factual clues

1 down Donald Trump's solution to irregular immigrants (11)

1 across What Americans can do with their blood to earn \$40 (6)

2 across Some think Heathrow needs another of these (6)

3 across Australian mines are suffering from faltering demand for this metal (6)

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

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 Kivlichan, Toronto, Canada

Teresa Stewart, Nashville, Tennessee, America

Tetsuyuki Maruyama, Ito, Japan

They all gave the correct answers of Patty Hearst, cheese, a lettuce, pickleball and a bun. The theme is ingredients of a Big Mac: beef patties, cheese, lettuce, pickles and a bun.

The questions were:

Monday: Which heiress was kidnapped by the Symbionese Liberation Army in 1974?

Tuesday: Cheshire, Cornish Yarg and Stracciatella are all types of what?

Wednesday: In October 2022, an Economist leader said that Liz Truss, Britain's then prime minister, had the shelf life of which vegetable?

Thursday: Which sport, similar to tennis but with a plastic ball and an underarm serve, is the official sport of Washington state, where it was invented?

Friday: What term is used for a hairstyle, where hair is wrapped in a ball at the top or back of the head?

Digital twin

a virtual representation of something, capable of modelling its behaviour in real time. .

Read the full story

**The child gives us a beautiful lesson—that
in order to form and maintain our
intelligence, we must use our hands**

Maria Montessori