

Catch up: diplomatic backlash over Israeli strikes; India's slowing economy



The **Israel Defence Forces** said they would conduct “a thorough review” after strikes on southern **Lebanon** injured two **United Nations** peacekeepers. The attacks drew condemnation from world leaders; the [UN](#)’s peacekeeping mission in Lebanon called it a “grave violation of international humanitarian law”. Meanwhile Israeli air strikes on central Beirut killed at least 22 people and injured 117 more, according to Lebanon’s health ministry. A senior [Hizbullah](#) official, Wafiq Safa, is reported to be in critical condition.

India’s industrial output declined for the first time in nearly two years. Production contracted by 0.1% from a year earlier in August; analysts had forecast an increase of 1%. The figure suggests that the country’s rapid growth is starting to taper off. India’s economy expanded by more than 8% in the fiscal year through March 2024, but seems to be [losing momentum](#).

Tesla’s shares fell by almost 9% after Elon Musk unveiled “cybercab”, a fully automated robotaxi. The keenly awaited event

in Los Angeles leaned heavily on performance—the [EV-maker's](#) boss rode around a studio lot in the car, which has no steering wheel or pedals—but investors thought it was light on detail. If regulators approve, cybercab production will begin in 2026 and retail for less than \$30,000 (£23,000).

America expanded **sanctions** against **Iran**, targeting its petroleum and petrochemical trade in retaliation for its [attack on Israel](#) earlier this month. Iran's **oil** terminals provide most of its foreign-currency income. Israel, which is [preparing its own counter-attack](#), may be considering striking them. But President Joe Biden has publicly warned against the move, which would cause [energy prices](#) to spike.

British Airways said it would cancel hundreds of long-haul flights because of “delays to the delivery of engines and parts” from [Rolls-Royce](#), a manufacturer. The supply-chain snafu has forced the carrier to ground some of its aircraft; older planes that had been plugging the shortage now require downtime for routine maintenance. Rolls-Royce said it was working to “minimise the impact” of its limited supplies.

North Korea accused **South Korea** of using drones to scatter leaflets containing propaganda over Pyongyang, its capital, warning that such “provocation” risked leading to “armed conflict”. South Korea said it could not confirm the validity of the claims and cautioned its neighbour not to “act rashly”. North Korea has been sending [trash balloons](#) to the South since May, escalating tensions on the peninsula.

The **Nobel peace prize** was awarded to **Nihon Hidankyo**, a group of atomic-bomb survivors from Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The Norwegian Nobel Committee, which awards the prize, said that the Japanese grassroots organisation won for “its efforts to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons”. Next year will mark 80 years since

America's [atomic bombings](#) of Japan, which killed more than 100,000 people.

Word of the week: Metamaterials, a class of materials engineered to have surprising effects not commonly found in nature. [Read the full story](#).

In the run-up to America's presidential election, read [The US in brief](#)—a daily update to help you keep on top of the political stories that matter. [Sign up here](#) to receive it as a newsletter, each weekday, in your inbox.

Sir Keir Starmer's rocky start



On Saturday [Sir Keir Starmer](#) marks 100 days as Britain's prime minister. Since Labour's general-election victory on July 4th his government has unveiled some chunkily interventionist economic policies, with legislation to give workers more rights, to renationalise railway operators and to create a state renewable-energy firm.

But its first weeks were marred by [anti-immigration riots](#). And it has since made political missteps. Sir Keir has been dogged by accusations that he accepted free clothes and concert tickets, having promised to clean up Westminster. Weeks of internal feuding ended with the removal of [Sue Gray](#), his chief of staff, on October 6th. Internal critics grumble that the government's project for office is [undefined](#).

Two chances to regain its footing are coming up. On Monday the government will host international investors in London. Then on October 30th Rachel Reeves, the chancellor, will present a budget which, she strongly indicates, will promise higher public borrowing for investment in infrastructure.

Life beyond Mars



Besides Earth, Mars has long been considered the place in the solar system most likely to host life. That is changing. If all goes according to plan, on Saturday a spacecraft called *Europa Clipper* will blast off for [Europa](#), one of Jupiter's 95 moons.

Europa is a snowball with a surface temperature of -180°C and a crust of thick ice. Below the ice, though, sits an enormous ocean, kept liquid by gravitational kneading and squeezing from Jupiter itself. There are several such [“icy moons”](#) in the solar system. Besides Europa, Jupiter hosts Ganymede and Callisto. Enceladus orbits Saturn, while Triton orbits Neptune.

Saturday's mission will help scientists work out whether, besides water, Europa possesses the other ingredients necessary for life, such as six essential elements (carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, oxygen, phosphorus and sulphur) and an energy source to power them all. There is already evidence that Saturn's Enceladus possesses them. Perhaps Europa does too.

Zelensky tries to sell his victory plan



On Saturday President Volodymyr Zelensky was hoping to present to the Ramstein group, a collection of Ukraine's arms donors, his five-point "victory plan" for ending the war next year. But [Hurricane Milton](#) intervened. President Joe Biden decided to monitor the storm from Washington and preside over the relief effort, postponing his state visit to Germany this week. The Ramstein summit will be rescheduled.

In the meantime Mr Zelensky is holding separate meetings with the leaders of Britain, France, Germany and Italy to gain their support for the plan. Though still secret, it undoubtedly includes increases in military support, permission to hit military targets in Russia with Western missiles and an accelerated path to NATO membership.

In Ukraine itself, Mr Zelensky's frequently outnumbered and outgunned troops are continuing to [fight bitter defensive actions](#) across the Donetsk region. But separate strikes deep into Russia have destroyed a drone-storage base and set ablaze an arms depot crammed with North Korean shells and missiles.

The rise of Donald Trump



As if the weeks leading up to America's presidential election weren't eventful enough, this weekend "The Apprentice", a drama about [Donald Trump](#), hits cinemas. Directed by [Ali Abbasi](#), an Iranian-Danish film-maker, it is a shrewd character study of a callow bumbler (played by Sebastian Stan) desperate to establish himself as a real-estate mogul in 1970s New York.

He finds a mentor in Roy Cohn (Jeremy Strong), a proudly amoral lawyer with three key rules: always attack, never accept blame and never admit defeat. Ring any bells? As Donald takes those rules to heart, a snappy black comedy curdles into a bitter tragedy. The fictional Mr Trump is even depicted raping his first wife, Ivana (Maria Bakalova).

A spokesperson for Mr Trump has described the film as "pure malicious defamation". His legal team sent a "cease and desist" letter after the film debuted at the [Cannes Film Festival](#) in May. But "The Apprentice" probably doesn't reveal anything that his supporters and detractors don't already know.

Weekend profile: Sir Jim Ratcliffe, chemicals magnate turned sports mogul



One of Britain's richest men, Sir Jim Ratcliffe was long considered a magnate who kept a low profile. It helped that INEOS, a chemicals firm he founded in 1998, produced materials that consumers needed but rarely thought about, such as plastics used in food-packaging. But now Sir Jim has stepped into the limelight by expanding into a business that is not needed, but is constantly thought about: sports.

Since buying FC Lausanne-Sport, a Swiss football club, in 2017, Sir Jim and INEOS have built a sprawling sports empire. On Saturday INEOS Britannia, the group's sailing venture, will become the first British team since 1964 to take part in the final of the America's Cup, the oldest competition in the sport. Success would be an astonishing coup in the rarefied world of sailing. But it would not quell doubts about INEOS's sporting strategy.

The biggest source of concern comes from Sir Jim's [investment in Manchester United](#). In February he spent \$1.6bn to purchase a 27.7% stake and control over sporting operations at the football

club from the Glazers, an American family. United's fans rejoiced: the Glazers are unpopular owners and Sir Jim, a supporter himself, was well placed to restore the club's past glories. So far, such success has proved elusive: United are 14th in the Premier League.

A guiding mantra at INEOS, Sir Jim has said, is "don't do dumb shit". The phrase features on the "INEOS compass", a diagram he devised to guide the firm's growth from a single chemicals plant in Belgium to a global conglomerate reporting \$65bn in annual revenue. Pointing north are words Sir Jim likes: "scepticism", "safe", "a beer". To the south are those he doesn't: "politics", "winging it", "lukewarm cappuccino".

The buzzwords also refer to Sir Jim's upbringing. "Northerners" is on the positive side of the chart. Now 71, he was born on a council estate in Failsworth, a town now in Greater Manchester. The smokestacks outside his bedroom window sparked his interest in industry. That led to an early career in the oil sector and then private equity, which sharpened his dealmaking skills. He grew INEOS through a series of acquisitions.

Critics argue Sir Jim is now trying to launder his and his company's reputation through sports. His strong support for fracking provokes environmentalists. Sir Jim has suggested the sporting ventures are simply an enjoyable way to spend his company's profits. He is a fitness and adventure enthusiast, who in April ran the London marathon in just over four and a half hours. As well as sport, INEOS has moved into carmaking, producing a 4x4 off-road truck, the Grenadier. Why is Sir Jim pursuing such projects? He would probably respond: "Why not?" The unlikely sports mogul might even add that answer to the company compass.

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*:

October 13th edition

Cryptic clues

- 1 down Popular British foodstuff ruined? Send a kebab (5, 5)
- 1 across Cobra ingests part of organ (5)
- 2 across Don't exhale lest harmful infection starts in this city (5)
- 3 across Quiet! Beer is source of gas (5)

Factual clues

- 1 down Fibre-rich canned pulses (5,5)
- 1 across The only part of the body that named itself (5)
- 2 across Capital city beleaguered by air pollution (5)
- 3 across Fissile rock from which gas can be extracted (5)

Email all four answers, along with your home city and country, by

9am BST 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



The Economist

Thank you to everyone who took part in this week's quiz. The winners, chosen at random, were:

Alexandra Millbrook, London, Britain

Giovanni Collot, Conegliano, Italy

Shin Inagaki, Tokyo, Japan

They all gave the correct answers of: Point Break, a lock, crack cocaine, Invisible Touch and a melt. The theme is words ending in down: breakdown, lockdown, crackdown, touchdown and meltdown.

The questions were:

Monday: Which film from 1991 featured Patrick Swayze as the leader of a group of surfers who were also bank robbers?

Tuesday: What is the mechanism on a canal that allows the water level to be raised or lowered?

Wednesday: In the early 1980s, which smokable and highly addictive drug saw an explosion in use in the US?

Thursday: Which was the only Genesis song to reach number 1 in the Billboard Hot 100 ranking?

Friday: In America, a sandwich including cheese and meat or fish is generally known as a what?

Metamaterials

A class of materials engineered to have surprising effects not commonly found in nature.

Read the full story.

Human society must be regarded as one part of a continuous natural entity that includes all animals and plants.

Kisho Kurokawa