

Catch up: Tensions grow in the Middle East; Harris spurns a Foxy date



Hizbullah fired a barrage of missiles at **Israel**, as America joined Britain in urging its citizens to leave Lebanon as soon as possible. The attack by the Iran-backed Lebanese militia appears to have been repelled by Israel's Iron Dome defence system. Fears are growing that Iran will [escalate the conflict](#) in the Middle East following the assassination of [Ismail Haniyeh](#), Hamas's political leader, on its territory on Wednesday. In Gaza, Hamas said that Israel had bombed a school that was acting as shelter for displaced Palestinians, killing at least 17 people.

Kamala Harris rejected **Donald Trump's** proposal to switch a televised debate from ABC to Fox News. The ABC date was agreed when Joe Biden was in the running. Mr Trump claimed a conflict of interest because he is suing the network for defamation. Ms Harris's campaign accused him of "trying to back out of the debate he already agreed to and running straight to Fox News to bail him out".

Berkshire Hathaway, Warren Buffett's investment firm, sold \$50bn-worth of its **Apple** shares, cutting its stake in the tech giant by around half. The move was part of a massive sell off of stocks by Berkshire, which totalled \$75.5bn. The move means the firm is now sitting on \$277bn of cash.

There was another night of rioting in **British** towns, as far-right protesters again took to the streets, from Stoke-on-Trent to Liverpool. The trouble has been inspired by the [fatal stabbing](#) of three children earlier in the week, and the subsequent spread of misinformation on social media. Around 90 people were arrested. Keir Starmer, the prime minister, said police had his "full support" to act against "extremists".

Ukraine claimed to have sunk a **Russian submarine** in the Crimean port of Sevastopol and damaged an S-400 air-defence system. It added that the Kilo-class Russian vessel had been struck before, in 2023. This time, though, the work was more thorough. "The Black Sea fish will enjoy their new home," tweeted the defence ministry.

To Lam, **Vietnam's** president, was named general secretary of the Communist Party, the most powerful position in the country. He had taken the role on an unofficial basis upon the death of [Nguyen Phu Trong](#) last month. One job in his in-tray will be responding to the rejection on Friday of his country's bid to be categorised by America as a "market economy", which would have seen tariffs reduced and exports increased.

Lloyd Austin, America's defence secretary, revoked a plea deal that was reached on Wednesday with five men who are accused of masterminding the **September 11th terrorist attacks**. The defendants, including Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the alleged ringleader, reportedly agreed to plead guilty in return for being spared execution. Mr Austin also revoked the authority of the

woman overseeing the war court in [Guantánamo Bay](#), where the men are being held.

Word of the week: *Actas*, a Spanish word that refers to the voting receipts which Venezuela's opposition says show that it won last week's election. [Read the full story](#).

In the run-up to America's presidential election, we've launched [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.

A fearful anniversary in Lebanon



Sunday marks the fourth anniversary of a massive [explosion at Beirut's port](#), which killed more than 200 people and left the city centre in ruins. No one has been held accountable for the blast, which was caused by the improper storage of thousands of tonnes of ammonium nitrate. Efforts to investigate the tragedy have long since stalled. In years past protesters used the anniversary as an occasion to vent about the lack of prosecutions.

This year the memory of August 4th will be overshadowed by another explosion: the [Israeli strike](#) on July 30th that killed Fuad Shukr, one of the top commanders of Hizbullah, a Shia militia and political party. In a speech on Thursday Hassan Nasrallah, the group's leader, vowed to retaliate. Many Lebanese are worried that the back-and-forth bombardment between Israel and Hizbullah that began ten months ago will soon escalate into all-out war. The anniversary will be both an angry and an anxious one.

When will the market madness end?



Global markets have spent the past fortnight in [turmoil](#). America's tech-heavy NASDAQ 100 share index has plunged by more than 10% and Japan's Topix index by even more. Other stockmarkets were battered less, but panic swept pretty much all of them. The assets that have performed better are the ones investors dash for when terrified: gold, the Japanese yen and American Treasury bonds. But even the gold price cratered on August 2nd, in an ominous sign that some investors may have been forced to liquidate positions they would rather have held on to.

The ructions were caused by evaporating euphoria over artificial intelligence, an unexpectedly weak American jobs report and the rapid unwinding of trades dependent on ultra-loose monetary policy from the Bank of Japan, which is now coming to an end. As ever after a turbulent week, the question now is whether the coming one will be better or worse. That is up to investors' collective mood. It doesn't seem good.

Dengue fever in Paris



As the Olympic Games in Paris enter their final week, many continue to worry about an outbreak of dengue fever. The threat is real but not yet urgent. Tiger mosquitoes, which can carry dengue, are thriving in Europe's increasingly hot summers. Travellers from South and Latin America, where [cases are soaring](#), could bring dengue with them too. But while France has had a record 3,100 imported cases this year, it has reported only one locally transmitted case so far.

Finding a [scalable solution](#) to dengue is urgent. One promising approach is the release of tiger mosquitoes infected with wolbachia bacteria, which prevent their offspring from transmitting the virus. It is highly effective and may soon become easier: this week new research showed that drones can successfully release infected mosquitoes automatically. Such technology could prove critical against a foe that cannot be allowed to win, in Paris or anywhere else.

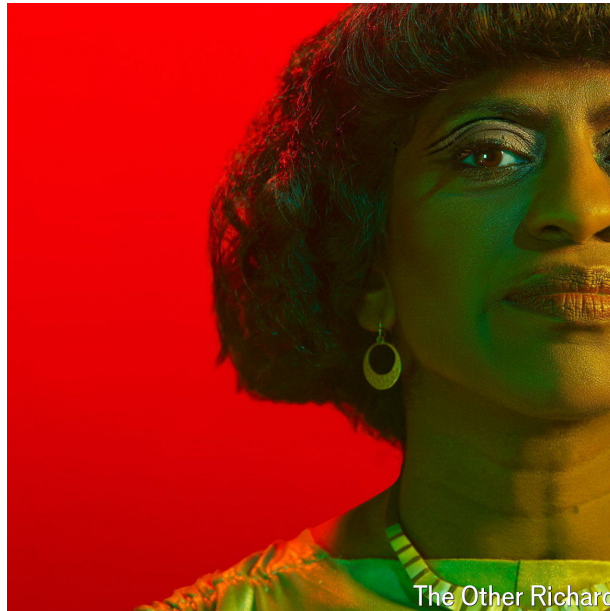
The Fringe takes over Edinburgh



Some 3m revellers—around six times Edinburgh’s population—are expected to descend on the Scottish capital for the world’s biggest performing-arts festival. Carnavalesque creativity will sweep all parts of the city; past venues have included buses and toilets. [The Fringe](#) was conceived in 1947 as an alternative to the snootier Edinburgh International Festival of music and theatre. With 51,446 individual performances, the Fringe now dwarfs the EIF, and adds well over £200m to Scotland’s economy every year.

But the festival’s sprawl brings challenges. One is securing venues—this year’s tally of 262 locations represents about a 20% drop from 2019, as many arts spaces closed after covid. The cost of attending is also becoming prohibitive for budding artists; last year the *Guardian* estimated it cost between £7,000 and £22,000 to perform. The Fringe will continue to attract spectators like moths to a stage light. But it needs to ensure that performers on the fringe can continue to go, too.

Shakespeare in sign language



Shakespeare's Globe theatre in London was embroiled in a [casting war](#) earlier this year. An adaptation of "Richard III" cast Michelle Terry, an able-bodied woman, as the titular villain. The ignoble king is typically portrayed as disabled. The Disabled Artists Alliance protested: "This role belongs to us."

The ruckus overshadowed the Globe's efforts to champion diversity. On Sunday its sign-language adaptation of "Antony & Cleopatra" opens, with Nadia Nadarajah, a deaf actress, starring as the Egyptian queen. The play has been reimaged by Blanche McIntyre, a seasoned Globe director, and Charlotte Arrowsmith, a deaf actor and director. Marc Antony (John Hollingworth) will speak in English, while Cleopatra will communicate using British Sign Language. The Globe says it is committed to "anti-literalism" in casting Shakespeare's canon. Yet the bilingual casting is also an artistic choice, as Ms McIntyre has pointed out, to elevate a play about the clash of two cultures.

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:

Vincas Smalenskas, Krosna, Lithuania

Sharon Valentino, Elverson, Pennsylvania, America

Peter Nicklin, Naivasha, Kenya

They all gave the correct answers of Usain Bolt, Key West, Georg Friedrich Handel, Janet Frame and a lock. The theme is doors: bolt, key, handle, frame and lock.

The questions were:

Monday: Who is the only man to win 100m and 200m gold medals at three consecutive Olympics?

Tuesday: In which Florida resort did Ernest Hemingway own a house, which is now a museum to his memory?

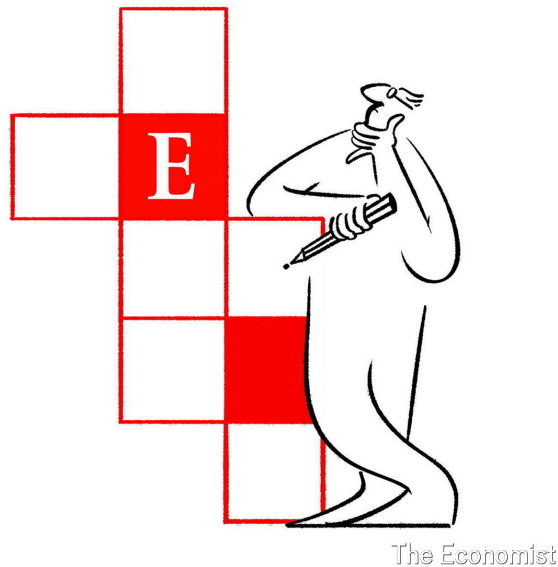
Wednesday: Zadok the Priest, an anthem performed at British coronations, is the work of which composer?

Thursday: "An Angel at my Table", a 1990 film directed by Jane

Campion, is based on the autobiographies of which New Zealand author?

Friday: What is the name for a chamber used for raising and lowering boats, often found on canals?

Crossword



Our crossword is designed for experienced cruciverbalists and newcomers alike. Both sets of clues give the same answers, all of which feature in articles in this week's edition of *The Economist*.

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

Cryptic clues

1 down Creaking band, surprisingly, leads to energetic style of movement (12)

1 across We're told estuary next to foundation for city (6)

2 across Not even dork urges rum and coke, for example (5)

3 across The instruction manual for all living things found in item one gave back (6)

Factual clues

1 down The only new sport at this year's Olympics (12)

1 across Somewhere hit by an Israeli airstrike this week (6)

2 across How Mexico's Sinaloa Cartel made much of its money (5)

3 across What a growing class of medicines can edit (6)

Actas

*A Spanish word that refers to the voting receipts which Venezuela's opposition says show that it won last week's election.
Read the full story.*

**The battleline between good and evil runs
through the heart of every man.**

Alexander Solzhenitsyn