

Catch up: Israel rejects ceasefire proposal; a shake-up at OpenAI



Binyamin Netanyahu, **Israel's** prime minister, appeared to reject an American-backed proposal for a ceasefire with **Hizbullah**, saying that rumours of a truce were “not true”. The country’s foreign minister, Israel Katz, also vowed that the Israel Defence Forces would continue its [operations against the Lebanese militia](#) “until victory and the safe return of the residents of the north to their homes”. Strikes across the border in recent days have been the most intense since Israel invaded southern Lebanon in 2006. Earlier Herzi Halevi, the IDF’s chief of staff, told [troops](#) that air strikes targeting Hizbullah were intended “to prepare the area for the possibility of your entry”.

Three top employees quit **OpenAI**, including Mira Murati, the chief technology officer. Ms Murati was named interim chief executive in 2023 after the artificial-intelligence firm’s board briefly ousted Sam Altman, its boss. Several other executives have left [OpenAI](#) this year. Reuters reported that the board in charge of the non-profit entity that controls OpenAI may be sidelined to allow the firm to become a normal profit-making enterprise.

President Joe Biden announced more than \$8bn in military aid for **Ukraine**, ahead of a meeting with Volodymyr Zelensky, Ukraine's president. The funds will go towards supplying the country with air-defence systems, drones and ammunition. Mr Zelenksy said the aid would help secure a "just and lasting peace". America has provided more than \$50bn in military assistance to [Ukraine](#) since the beginning of Russia's invasion.

The **Sudanese Armed Forces** began a big offensive to [recapture territory](#) in and around Khartoum, the country's capital. The SAF lost control of most of the city to the Rapid Support Forces, a paramilitary group, shortly after [Sudan's civil war](#) broke out in April 2023. Around 150,000 people are believed to have been killed and more than 10m displaced since the conflict began.

Federal prosecutors reportedly indicted **Eric Adams**, New York's Democratic mayor. The nature of the indictment was not made public, but [Mr Adams](#) was being [investigated](#) for alleged corruption, possibly including receiving illegal campaign funds from Turkey. It could be a remarkable humbling for the former police captain, who was elected in 2021 on a platform of fighting crime. Mr Adams denied wrongdoing, saying: "If I am charged, I am innocent."

Japan's Maritime Self-Defence Force sent a warship through the **Taiwan Strait** for the first time. The country previously avoided sailing [naval vessels](#) through the strait to avoid angering China, which claims [Taiwan](#) and its surrounding waters. Ships from Australia and New Zealand accompanied the destroyer, which was travelling to the South China Sea to join military exercises with the two countries.

Hurricane Helene gathered force as it approached Florida, where it is expected to make landfall before tearing across a number of states in the American South. The storm will be the [strongest to hit the country](#) in more than a year. Ron DeSantis, Florida's governor,

warned residents living on the coast that they should head to higher ground.

Figure of the day: 3%, the proportion of books sold in Britain last year that were marketed as “self-help”. [Read the full story](#).

Will Biden buy Ukraine's "victory plan"?



After making a passionate speech at the UN General Assembly on Wednesday, on Thursday Volodymyr Zelensky will meet President Joe Biden. Ukraine's president is seeking support for what he calls his "victory plan". His objectives are clear. Mr Zelensky wants [restrictions lifted](#) on the use of Western long-range missile systems to strike inside Russia, the speeding-up of deliveries of weaponry and a commitment to accelerated membership of NATO.

Mr Zelensky will argue that the coming months will be critical for the outcome of the war. Russian attacks on energy infrastructure mean his country is facing a bleak winter of power cuts. His troops are losing territory in the Donbas region. Mr Zelensky hopes that getting the backing he needs will help him negotiate a ceasefire on relatively favourable terms. The territory Ukraine has grabbed in Russia's Kursk region will also provide crucial leverage. Mr Biden's decision will depend on what legacy he wants to leave.

Macron and Trudeau discuss shared woes



Two long-serving liberal G7 leaders beset by domestic troubles get together on Thursday. Justin Trudeau, Canada's prime minister, and Emmanuel Macron, the French president, will hold meetings in Ottawa and Montreal, two Canadian cities. It is the first bilateral visit by a French president to Canada for a decade. While in Quebec, Mr Macron will also meet François Legault, the province's prime minister, and promote French, the mother tongue.

Behind the formal words, both leaders have an unspoken shared agenda. They once embodied youth and novelty, and are seeking to hold the liberal centre. Faced with populism on the right (in [Canada](#)) and on both the left and hard right (in [France](#)), Mr Trudeau and Mr Macron are unpopular leaders in charge of shaky governments. France's failure to ratify a trade deal between Canada and the European Union may still grate in Ottawa, but they will have plenty to share when it comes to their respective political troubles at home.

Russia's energy firms look for new partners



Russian Energy Week, an annual conference, began on Thursday in Moscow. For years the companies attending did business in the West: Gazprom, a state-owned Russian firm, was once the European Union's biggest gas supplier. But since the war in Ukraine began, their focus has shifted to redirecting their exports to countries that are more sympathetic to the Kremlin.

Their success has been mixed so far. Chinese and Indian refiners are [guzzling shipments of crude](#) that Western buyers spurn. But Gazprom is struggling to [turn a profit](#): the pipelines to China that it needs to replace its exports to Europe will take years to build. Novatek, Russia's largest producer of liquefied natural gas, is crippled by sanctions.

Vladimir Putin, Russia's president, has said that energy ministers from the BRICS—a [bloc](#) consisting of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa—will gather on the sidelines of the conference. Energy companies will be hoping that the meetings yield more than just talk.

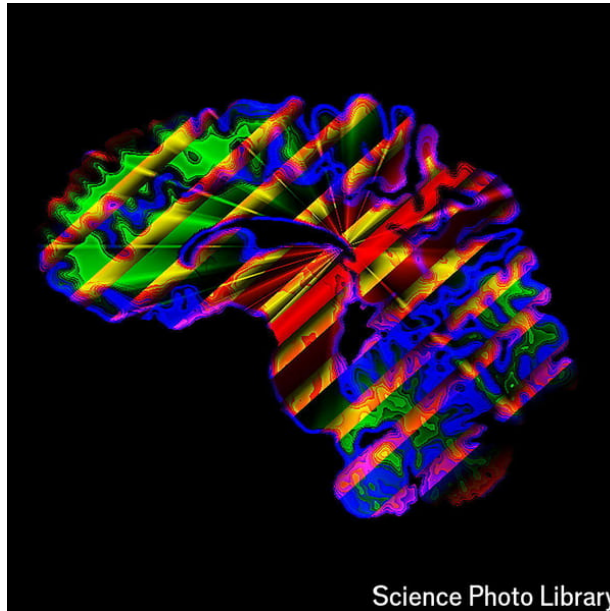
Australia and China renew economic talks



Jim Chalmers, Australia's treasurer (as the country's finance minister is known), meets his Chinese counterpart in Beijing on Thursday. Mr Chalmers is the first treasurer to visit China since 2017, when relations started to sour. A deal promoting bilateral economic co-operation was suspended in 2021. But its renewal in June was the latest sign of what Australia's centre-left Labor government calls a "stabilisation" of the relationship.

China has lifted almost all the [trading restrictions](#) it imposed on Australian goods in a diplomatic quarrel in 2020. Mr Chalmers will campaign for the only remaining ban, on lobster, to be removed. China, meanwhile, may raise concerns about Australia's increasingly strict rules on foreign investment. The Labor government has blocked Chinese investments in critical-mineral companies and is overhauling foreign-investment laws to bolster "economic security", as Mr Chalmers puts it. Trade between the two countries has boomed despite the tensions, but on security the pair remain deeply divided.

A new hope for schizophrenia



On Thursday America's Food and Drug Administration will evaluate KarXT, a novel antipsychotic treatment for schizophrenia developed by Karuna Therapeutics, a lab owned by Bristol Myers Squibb. If approved, it would be the first new drug for schizophrenia in decades. The distressing disorder afflicts about 24m people globally and reduces life expectancy by up to 15 years

KarXT works by targeting "muscarinic" receptors in the brain, altering the release of dopamine. This approach offers relief to patients without the severe side effects of existing treatments, which often leave them listless and prone to rapid weight gain. That would allow patients to live more independent lives. It would also help health services deal with some of the challenges associated with schizophrenia. Strained budgets have left many countries, including [America](#), with a severe shortage of psychiatric beds. The hope is that this novel drug will reduce the need for psychiatric care and mental health professionals.

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.

Thursday: Which cricket trophy is the subject of a regular battle between England and Australia?

Wednesday: Which Australian comedy star has appeared in films such as “Pitch Perfect” and “JoJo Rabbit”?

3%

the proportion of books sold in Britain last year that were marketed as “self-help” books.

Read the full story

**It is easier to make a saint out of a
libertine than out of a prig.**

George Santayana