

Catch up: Israel confirms death of likely new Hizbullah boss; arrests would-be assassins



The **Israel Defence Forces** confirmed they had killed the likely new leader of **Hizbullah** in an airstrike earlier this month. **Hashem Safieddine**, the head of the group's executive council, was a cousin of **Hassan Nasrallah**, the boss of Iran-backed militant group whom [Israel assassinated](#) in September. Hizbullah has not commented on Mr Safieddine's death.

Israel said it arrested seven people suspected of planning to assassinate a senior scientist and a mayor "under **Iranian** direction". On Monday seven Israelis were arrested on suspicion of spying for Iran. Meanwhile the FBI confirmed it was investigating a leak of highly classified intelligence documents. They show America's examination of Israel's possible preparations to [retaliate against Iran's](#) recent [ballistic-missile strikes](#).

Profits at **General Motors** rose by 15.5% year on year during the third quarter, exceeding analysts' expectations. Sales of [electric](#)

[vehicles](#) rose by 60%. The strong results prompted the carmaker to lift its profit forecast for 2024. Investors had worried that high interest rates would hurt demand, but spending appears to be holding up.

Andriy Kostin, Ukraine's prosecutor-general, resigned over a scandal involving prosecutors and other officials obtaining fake disability status [to avoid military service](#). His resignation came after **Ukraine's** president, Volodymyr Zelensky, convened a national-security meeting to discuss how to crack down on corruption. Mr Zelensky demanded "political responsibility" from Mr Kostin. In 2024 the country's security service found over 4,000 fake disability-status certificates.

Austria's president asked Karl Nehammer, the centre-right chancellor, to form a government, despite his party coming second in September's [parliamentary election](#). Alexander Van der Bellen said that all parties had refused to form a coalition with the hard-right **Freedom Party**, who came first. He urged the People's Party to enter talks with the Social Democrats, the third-placed party.

Mike Jeffries, the [former CEO](#) of **Abercrombie & Fitch**, a fashion retailer, was arrested in Florida and charged with running a sex-trafficking operation. Prosecutors accuse Mr Jeffries of having coerced "dozens" of male models into attending sex parties and having sex with him and his partner, who was also indicted. Mr Jeffries' lawyer said he would respond in court. The eighty-year-old could face life in prison.

The son of **Lee Kuan Yew**, Singapore's founding father, was granted asylum in Britain. Lee Hsien Yang and his wife claim that they face political persecution in **Singapore**. Mr Lee and his sister, who passed away earlier this month, [fell out](#) with their brother, a former prime minister, over a dispute concerning the future of their family home after their father's death in 2015.

Figure of the day: \$700m, the amount of direct support that Iran provides to Hizbullah per year. [Read the full story.](#)

America's latest push for peace in Gaza



Antony Blinken is on his 11th trip to the Middle East since the war between Israel and Hamas began on October 7th 2023. America's secretary of state does not seem to have brought many new ideas. Some diplomats were hopeful that the recent death of Hamas's leader, [Yahya Sinwar](#), might lead to a resumption of talks over a Gaza ceasefire. But Binyamin Netanyahu, Israel's prime minister, insists the war will go on. And, after losing two leaders in three months, Hamas has no clear decision-maker, complicating any negotiations.

American and Egyptian officials have discussed a mini-deal under which Hamas would release some of the 101 hostages in its custody in exchange for a brief ceasefire. But it is not clear why the group would agree: Hamas would lose some of its little remaining leverage. Nor are Mr Netanyahu's far-right coalition partners willing to accept even a temporary halt in the fighting. Mr Blinken's trip is unlikely to achieve much.

All eyes on Tesla



Third-quarter results, due on Wednesday, might deliver a glimmer of good news for Tesla. The maker of electric vehicles has already released production numbers for the quarter. It made 470,000 vehicles—an increase of 6% compared with a year ago, after two quarters of declines. But overall Elon Musk’s car firm is still not growing as rapidly as it has in previous years.

Investors, who had been hoping for an announcement about a smaller “Model 2” that would cost around \$25,000 and presumably prove popular, were instead treated to the [launch of a robotaxi](#) at a glitzy event in Hollywood on October 10th. Details of how this business might operate, or when testing on public roads might begin, were scant. The prospect of future profits looks uncertain. And Mr Musk’s grandiose plans for selling humanoid robots seem not to have convinced investors. Tesla’s shares plunged after the event.

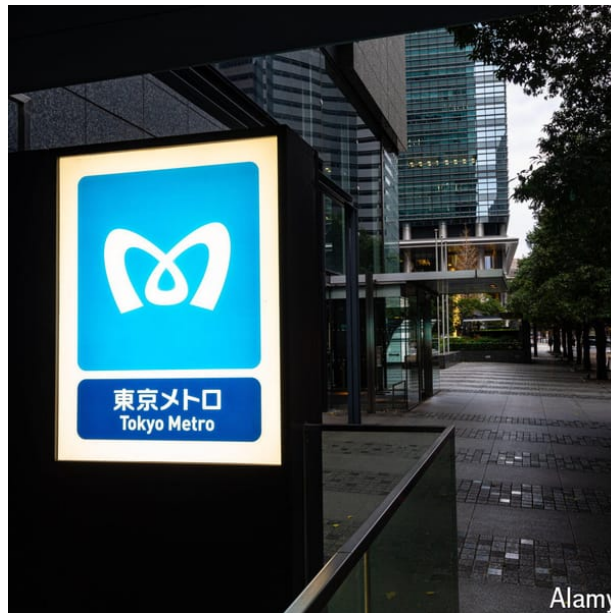
Wagner's African stronghold



On Wednesday the United Nations Security Council will discuss the Central African Republic, home to one of the world's most neglected crises. The main topic will be the fate of the UN's 14,000-strong peacekeeping force. It arrived in the country a decade ago to quell violence that had nearly descended into genocide. By some measures the mission has been a success: CAR today is more stable, and the national army holds much more territory.

But a large elephant lurks in the room: [the Wagner Group](#). The Russian mercenary outfit arrived in CAR in 2018, ostensibly to train the army. Six years later, it controls lucrative gold and diamond mines and provides round-the-clock protection for the president. A good deal for the regime, no doubt—and for Russia, which has replaced France, the former colonial power, as CAR's most influential foreign ally. But the risk for the UN is that its peacekeepers find themselves fighting alongside a group accused of war crimes.

Tokyo Metro's trading debut



Japan's capital city is famous for its efficient public train system. Now investors are thrilled about Tokyo Metro, which makes its trading debut on Wednesday. Last week the subway operator priced its shares at ¥1,200 a piece for a total of ¥348.6bn (\$2.3bn), the largest offering in Japan for six years. It was 15-times oversubscribed, according to underwriters, thanks to the metro's reputation for safety and the promise of healthy dividends. Perks such as free train tickets for investors have helped, too.

Japan's government is keen to boost the stock market. It has introduced tax-exemption schemes for [retail investors](#) and pushed [corporate-governance](#) reform. Some expect Tokyo Metro's listing to boost Japanese stocks, which have been sluggish ahead of an unpredictable general election on Sunday. But whether the stock offers long-term returns is still in doubt. Despite the railway operator's stable revenue, critics have pointed out it lacks a convincing growth strategy.

Exciting prospects in the NBA



It has been seven years since a team won consecutive [National Basketball Association](#) championships. But the current champions, Boston Celtics, go into the new season, which starts this week, as the clear favourites to break this run. In a survey of NBA managers, 83% picked the Celtics to win this year's trophy. The team is impressive in both attack and defence.

Their fiercest competition is the Oklahoma City Thunder. Last season they were beaten in the playoffs, a knock-out tournament at the end of the regular league season that determines the champions. This time around the big question is whether their talented but young squad can go any further. Particularly exciting is Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, a point guard, who many consider a probable most valuable player of the season. Intrigue abounds elsewhere, too. [LeBron James](#), at 39 years old, will play alongside his 20-year-old son, Bronny, for the Los Angeles Lakers.

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 is the name of the TV series that is a prequel to Game of Thrones?

Tuesday: Which Carthaginian general won a fabulous victory over the Romans at Cannae?

\$700m

The amount of direct support that Iran provides to Hizbullah per year.

Read the full story.

Real elegance is everywhere, especially in the things that don't show.

Christian Dior