

Catch up: Israel and Hizbullah exchange fire; China cuts short-term rate



America issued a fresh warning to **Israel** against launching an all-out war with **Hizbullah**. Israeli forces exchanged heavy fire with the Iran-backed Lebanese militia over the weekend. Israel said it would continue its attacks until it was safe for Israelis to return to their homes near the northern border with Lebanon. John Kirby, America's national security spokesman, said there were "better ways" to make that happen. Earlier, Naim Qassem, Hizbullah's deputy chief, declared an "open-ended battle of reckoning" against Israel during a funeral for a Hizbullah commander killed by [Israeli air strikes](#) on Friday.

China's central bank cut an important short-term policy rate and injected more liquidity into its banking system. The decisions followed an announcement that Pan Gongsheng, the bank's governor, would hold a press conference on Tuesday. The moves fueled speculation that officials are planning to ramp up efforts to revive China's [moribund economy](#).

Britain's governing **Labour Party** opened its annual conference in Liverpool. The party has squandered much of the goodwill it enjoyed after coming to power with a landslide victory in July. A scandal about freebies accepted by Sir Keir Starmer, the prime minister, cuts to pensioners' winter fuel allowance and [inchoate plans](#) to rescue public services mean the event now feels more like a hasty reset than a victory parade.

The centre-left Social Democrats narrowly won state elections in Brandenburg, in eastern **Germany**, defeating the hard-right Alternative for Germany (AfD). Polls prior to the vote had suggested the AfD might win, as they [did in Thuringia](#) earlier this month. Even had they won, there was little chance of their taking power, as no other party will work with them.

The **UN General Assembly** adopted the "Pact for the Future", despite Russia's attempt to scupper it. The agreement seeks to revive global co-operation amid "rising catastrophic and existential risks". António Guterres, the UN's secretary-general, said it would "bring multilateralism back from the brink". Russia complained that the pact, which pledges action on things such as security, climate change and technology, was Western-centric. African nations slapped Russia's amendments down.

Anura Kumara Dissanayake vowed to "rewrite **Sri Lankan** history" after his presidential election win. The Marxist MP defeated Sajith Premadasa, the opposition leader, and Ranil Wickremesinghe, the incumbent, after two rounds of voting. It was Sri Lanka's first election since 2022, when mass protests pushed [Gotabaya Rajapaksa](#) out of office.

India secured a double gold in the open and women's competitions at the **Chess Olympiad**, an international team tournament. Earlier, the **International Chess Federation**, [the game's](#) governing body, voted to uphold a ban on the national teams of Russia and Belarus

in competitions. The two countries were punished in 2022 following the invasion of Ukraine.

Figure of the day: 14, the number of laws passed in American states in the past year that aim to curb diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives in academia. [Read the full story.](#)

Europe's recovery remains elusive



The [European economy's](#) prospects are not exactly bright. The European Central Bank recently downgraded its forecasts for growth, to 0.8% in 2024 and 1.3% in 2025. This suggests that a recovery—if any—will be slow. Monday's release of the widely watched purchasing managers' index for the euro zone will reveal how the economy has been doing in September, as well as business sentiment.

Although services will probably continue to grow, manufacturing will decline. In August new orders dropped for the third month in a row because of falling demand for industrial goods, from both Europe and the rest of world. The labour market is stagnating, partly because of a falling workforce in manufacturing and a diminishing backlog of orders in firms. In August sentiment dropped to the lowest level in 2024. Should the outlook darken, the ECB may have to reduce its forecast further—and cut interest rates again in October.

A new face for Japan's opposition



Much of the media spotlight in Japan is on the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's leadership race, which will decide the next prime minister after [Kishida Fumio](#) said in August he would stand down. But another big election is happening. On Monday the Constitutional Democratic Party, the main centre-left opposition, will elect a leader. The CDP has been unable to challenge the LDP's dominance since it last held power in 2012. It will try to rebuild momentum ahead of potential general elections later this year.

Four contenders will vie for the top position. They include the sprightly, 50-year-old incumbent [Izumi Kenta](#). But polls suggest that Noda Yoshihiko, a former prime minister, may make a comeback. Mr Noda is a veteran politician, which distinguishes him in a party seen by voters as naive and lacking experience. But he led the party in 2012, when the conservatives, led by Abe Shinzo, defeated the CDP in a landslide.

France finally gets a new government



After more than two months of caretaker rule, France finally has a new government. It will meet for its first cabinet meeting on Monday. Michel Barnier, the conservative prime minister and former Brexit negotiator, unveiled his new team on September 21st. It is a minority coalition between centrists loyal to President Emmanuel Macron and conservatives from the Republican party and its allies.

The new government marks a distinct shift to the right, even though the left came top (but failed to win a majority) at [parliamentary elections in July](#). Despite best efforts, Mr Barnier only recruited one figure from the left (Didier Migaud, at justice). Diplomacy and security remain in the hands of Macron loyalists. France's public finances are now controlled by an untested 33-year-old centrist finance minister, Antoine Armand. France needs urgently to finalise a budget to solve its stretched public finances. But the new government will be under close scrutiny from both the left and hard right in whose hands its survival now lies.

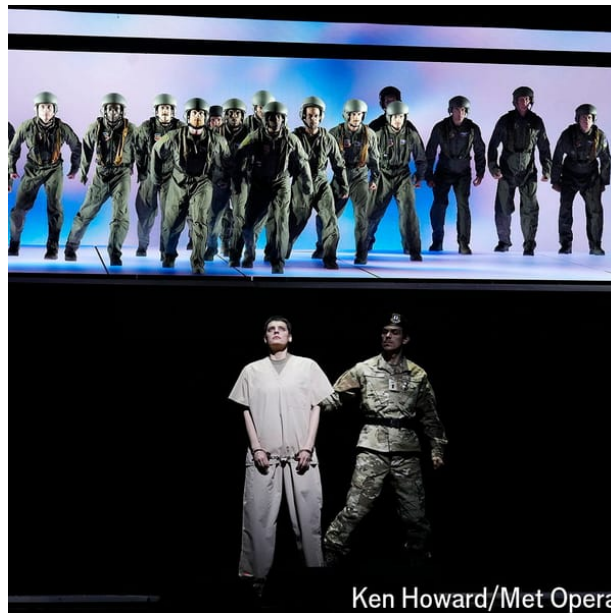
Trump and Harris battle for Pennsylvania



Donald Trump will host a rally in Indiana, [Pennsylvania](#) on Monday, about an hour's drive from Pittsburgh. He will probably hit the same message his ads there do, and paint Ms Harris as an out-of-touch leftist responsible for inflation and migrant crime. Ms Harris' radio spots and YouTube ads, meanwhile, strike a more uplifting tone. Some warn about Mr Trump's effect on the economy, reproductive rights and democracy.

Both campaigns see Pennsylvania as a fulcrum of the election. *The Economist's* prediction [model](#) suggests that the state is the tipping-point in 27% of the model's updated simulations, meaning it decides the election more often than any other. As a result, no state has drawn more money. Of the \$840m that the Harris campaign and allied organisations already have spent or committed to advertising, \$164m has gone to Pennsylvania. The Trump operation has directed \$136m of \$459m. But for all the dollars pouring in, polls suggest the state remains a virtual tie.

A drone drama in New York



Classical music may not always seem relevant or relatable, especially to the young. But the Metropolitan Opera, America's leading company, is trying to reach new audiences with a repertoire exploring contemporary themes. That appears to be working. Last season's attendances approached pre-pandemic levels.

The season opens on Monday with "Grounded", a new opera which is timely, but perhaps not quite relatable. The work by Jeanine Tesori, a Broadway composer, is based on a play by George Brant, another American, which was first performed in 2013. It follows a female fighter pilot who unexpectedly gets pregnant while on leave. She is demoted from flying an F-16 in Iraq to drone duty in Las Vegas. Massive LED screens illuminate the stage as she pilots a Reaper drone and sings of her woes. Previous showings have not been without controversy: the premiere last year in Washington, DC was sponsored by a defence contractor.

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.

Monday: Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst were members of which group, which fought for women's right to vote in Britain?

The number of laws passed in American states in the past year that aim to curb diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives in academia. Read the full story.

Where all think alike, no one thinks very much.

Walter Lippmann