

Catch up: Israeli protesters demand a ceasefire; polio shots in Gaza

Tens of thousands of **Israelis** took to the streets to urge the government to negotiate a ceasefire that would secure the release of hostages captured by Hamas on October 7th. Histadrut, a trade union, called for a general strike on Monday. The mayor of Tel Aviv said that city workers would join in. Earlier Israel recovered the bodies of six hostages from an underground tunnel in Rafah, a city in southern Gaza. Binyamin Netanyahu, Israel's prime minister, said the deaths prove that Hamas does not want a deal.

Health workers in **Gaza** began vaccinating children against **polio** in the first of three planned humanitarian pauses. They hope to inoculate 640,000 people against the extremely contagious disease in the next few weeks. Only one confirmed case of polio has been confirmed within the territory so far, but the World Health Organisation worries that more may have gone undiagnosed.

A **Russian** strike on Kharkiv, **Ukraine's** second largest city, injured 41 people, according to local officials. Volodymyr Zelensky, **Ukraine's** president, accused the Russians of targeting civilian infrastructure. Russia said that it shot down 158 Ukrainian drones in 15 regions across the country, including two over Moscow. It claimed that the UAVs had struck a power plant and an oil refinery.

Exit polls suggested that the **Alternative for Germany** came top in an election in Thuringia, in the east. It would be the first time that the hard-right party came top in a state election. The AFD was also projected to draw roughly even with the conservative Christian Democrats in neighbouring Saxony. The **Sahra Wagenknecht** Alliance, an anti-immigrant party that embraces left-wing economic policy, performed well in both states.

In Azerbaijan's parliamentary election, Ilham Aliyev's party was projected to lose six seats, leaving it with a one-seat majority. The autocratic president need not worry—many other seats will go to parties that back him. Mr Aliyev, who has been in power since 2003, has been [cracking down on dissenting voices](#); the main opposition party has boycotted the poll.

Masoud Pezeshkian, **Iran's** president, said that the country needs \$250bn in investment to meet its target of 8%, with some \$100bn of that coming from abroad. International sanctions put in place to curb Iran's nuclear programme have crippled the economy. Many hope that Mr Pezeshkian, a [reform-minded heart surgeon](#) elected in July, may lead his country in a new direction, but the odds are against him.

Figure of the day: Around 10,000, the number of rear-end collisions in America every day. [Read the full story.](#)

Little respite in Sudan



More than 500 days have passed since Sudan's civil war began. Perhaps 150,000 people have died in the fighting and more than 10m have fled their homes. Aid agencies have been unable to deliver the food needed to prevent mass starvation. Some experts predict that hunger and related diseases could kill more than 2m people by the end of the year.

Ceasefire talks in Switzerland last month achieved little. The Sudanese national army, one of the two main belligerents, refused to even attend. On August 15th it reluctantly allowed aid agencies to resume shipments via a crucial border post between Chad and Darfur, in the west of the country, despite the fact that the crossing is controlled by the Rapid Support Forces, a paramilitary group it is fighting for control of the state. But an extra aid route will not be enough to prevent what may become the world's deadliest famine in 40 years.

New boss, old problems at HSBC



Europe's biggest bank has a new boss. Georges Elhedery takes over HSBC on Monday, replacing Noel Quinn, whose surprise exit was announced in April. And it is not just the top job changing hands. Last week HSBC said the head of its wealth and personal banking unit, chief operating officer and human-resources boss would all step down.

The shake up is sorely needed. HSBC's share price has languished since Mr Quinn [took over in 2019](#). Profits during this year's second quarter were better than analysts predicted, but still flat year on year. HSBC's large footprint in Hong Kong leaves the bank uniquely vulnerable to shifting geopolitical winds. The bank has resisted attempts by its largest shareholder, Chinese insurer Ping An, to force it to spin-off its Asian operations. At the same time falling interest rates will crimp HSBC's profit margins. Mr Elhedery's first task will be to reassure investors he won't be blown over.

The Pope on tour



Despite being 87 and not in the best of health, Pope Francis will start the longest trip of his papacy on Monday. He will go to Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste and Singapore, flying some 30,000km. Plagued by back and knee problems and rarely seen out of a wheelchair, the pope will spend more than 40 hours aboard planes over 12 days.

What is the point? A central theme of Francis's papacy has been care for the marginalised. That includes isolated communities of the faithful in places like Timor-Leste, where the 1.4m population is almost entirely Roman Catholic. And visiting Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim-majority state, will give him the opportunity to develop another: inter-faith dialogue. Clearly, despite his age, Francis has not given up on long-distance travel. In December he even said a visit to his native Argentina was also on the cards.

Turkey's economy slows down



The Turkish economy managed to grow at a respectable 4.5% last year despite the worst inflation crisis in over two decades. But data released on Monday are expected to show the trend beginning to taper off. Economists polled by Reuters estimate that GDP growth has slowed to anywhere between 1.6% and 4.2% in the three months to July, compared with the same period last year.

Growth has been weighted down by a dramatic monetary tightening cycle, in which interest rates have reached 50%, and by the government's decision not to increase the minimum wage. But there may be better news in store on Tuesday, when consumer-prices data are published. Analysts expect that inflation may have cooled to under 53% in annual terms in August, down from almost 62% in July. That is still painfully high—but the fall will be welcome to consumers whose [purchasing power has cratered](#) over the past few years.

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早上好

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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: Gene Cernan and Harrison Schmitt were the last two people to do what?

Around 10,000

The number of rear-end collisions in America every day.

Read the full story

**There are conditions of blindness so
voluntary that they become complicity.**

Paul Bourget