

Catch up: An Israeli trade union calls for a general strike; polio vaccinations start in Gaza



Histadrut, an **Israeli** trade union, called for a general strike on Monday to try and compel the government to negotiate a ceasefire that would secure the release of hostages captured by Hamas on October 7th. 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.

Kamala Harris said her rival, **Donald Trump**, had “disrespected sacred ground” by using tape of his trip to **Arlington National Cemetery** in a campaign video. Mr Trump visited the military burial ground on Monday, spending time in Section 60, where federal law bans political activities. His team pushed aside a cemetery employee who tried to stop them filming and then used the video to campaign.

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.

Word of the week: Digital twin, a virtual representation of something, capable of modelling its behaviour in real time. [Read the full story.](#)

Germany's fraught state elections



Between them Saxony and Thuringia, two states in eastern Germany, account for just 7% of the country's population. Yet their [elections on Sunday](#) will be the most closely watched state polls in the country for years. In Thuringia, and possibly Saxony, the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) is likely to chalk up its first-ever state-election win. Also set to do well is the Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance (BSW), a new outfit that blends AfD-like scepticism on both immigration and [support for Ukraine](#) with leftist economics.

Every other party shuns the AfD, so it will remain in opposition. But the centre-right Christian Democrats (CDU), the only mainstream party not in free fall in the east, may be forced into unholy alliances with the BSW. Watch out for national implications, too: all three parties in Germany's "traffic-light" coalition could fall below the 5% threshold to enter parliament in both states. That will revive questions on whether it can last its full term.

AMLO's last blast



In his last month as Mexico's president [Andrés Manuel López Obrador](#) should be a lame duck. Not so. When the newly elected congress regroups on Sunday, his ruling coalition will have the numbers to push through damaging constitutional reforms. The big one is an overhaul of the judiciary, which would see federal judges fired and replaced by ones elected by popular vote, including to the Supreme Court.

Mexico's justice system is wanting. But the changes proposed by Morena, Mr López Obrador's party, do not help. They lower the required qualifications for judges, giving politicians more sway. Other amendments will do further damage to Mexico's democracy and economy, notably ones to eliminate autonomous bodies and put the National Guard, a federal police force, under military control. Claudia Sheinbaum, who will become president on October 1st, has been far too acquiescent to her mentor's plans. She will inherit the fallout. Yet, recently wed, she will go on honeymoon in the first days of September.

Azerbaijan's regime turns on its critics



On Sunday nearly 1,000 candidates will compete for 125 parliamentary seats in Azerbaijan. The country's president, Ilham Aliyev, brought the elections forward by two months, so as not to coincide with COP29, a United Nations climate-change summit, which Azerbaijan hosts in November.

No one in Azerbaijan is holding their breath. The parliament is toothless, with most powers concentrated in the hands of the president. Elections are skewed in the regime's favour; the largest opposition party is boycotting the poll. Mr Aliyev's own New Azerbaijan Party and its allies are almost certain to receive another overwhelming majority.

Hopes that the country would open up to democracy after its war with Armenia ended are quickly fading. If anything, taking back land has [empowered the autocratic Mr Aliyev](#) to go after his enemies at home even more vigorously. Several journalists and activists have been arrested on trumped-up charges in past months. Azerbaijan's ruler of two decades can sleep easy.

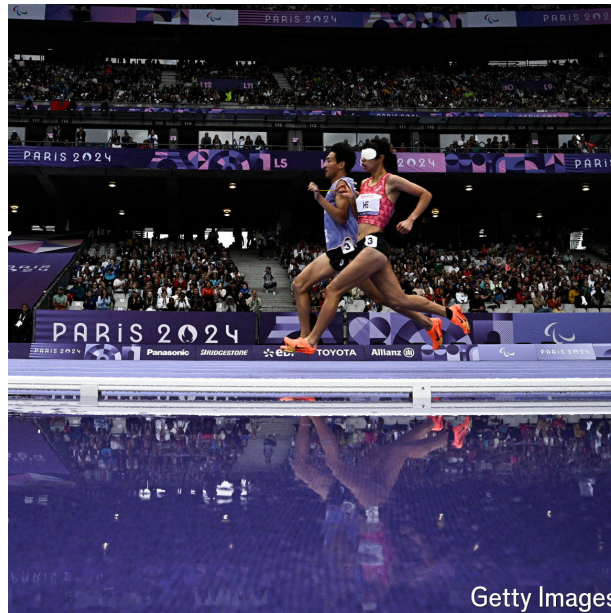
Monkeys also name their mates



Time and again humans will interpret their species' behaviour as a sign of unique intelligence, only to be proven wrong. For instance, it was long thought that humans were the sole animal to call others by name. In 2006 dolphins were discovered to do it, too. In June, [elephants](#) were added to that list. And this week scientists at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem reported that marmosets—small monkeys with walnut-sized brains—name each other too.

Marmosets frequently engage in “dialogue” consisting of back-and-forth whistle-like calls. When the researchers separated familiar marmosets by a barrier so they could not see each other, the monkeys instantly started chatting across it. The researchers recorded them and, using machine learning, were able to pick out calls that seemed to function as names. Indeed it may be handy for many social animals to label friends and family. More may yet be named.

The evolution of the Paralympics



The modern Olympic Games are unrecognisable from their first edition. In 1896, 241 men from 14 countries met in Athens for nine days of competition. But the Paralympics have changed even more. Although some athletes with disabilities had competed in the Olympics, it was not until 1948 that a German-Jewish doctor in Britain, Ludwig Guttman, organised a tournament for [war veterans](#) with spinal injuries.

Four years later veterans from the Netherlands also participated and by 1960 the first official Paralympic Games were held in Rome. Since 1988 the Olympics and Paralympics have been held in the same city, one after the other, and using the same venues.

The next step for the Paralympics is to follow the Olympics in eliminating its gender gap. The [Paris games](#) will set a new mark of 45% female participation; the number of female athletes will be almost twice that of the Sydney event in 2000. In every respect, the games are moving quickly.

Weekly crossword



Our crossword has two sets of clues, one for seasoned cruciverbalists and the other for less experienced solvers. Both give the same answers, all of which feature in articles in this week's edition of *The Economist*:

Cryptic clues

1 down Exile affected tainted poor (11)

1 across Give fellow tea, stirred (6)

2 across Guttled fugitive makes airstrip (6)

3 across Element tops nitrogen, iridium, carbon, krypton, even lithium! (6)

Factual clues

1 down Donald Trump's solution to irregular immigrants (11)

1 across What Americans can do with their blood to earn \$40 (6)

2 across Some think Heathrow needs another of these (6)

3 across Australian mines are suffering from faltering demand for this metal (6)

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

QUIZ WINNERS



The Economist

The winners of this week's quiz

Thank you to everyone who took part in this week's quiz. The winners, chosen at random, were:

John Kivlichan, Toronto, Canada

Teresa Stewart, Nashville, Tennessee, America

Tetsuyuki Maruyama, Ito, Japan

They all gave the correct answers of Patty Hearst, cheese, a lettuce, pickleball and a bun. The theme is ingredients of a Big Mac: beef patties, cheese, lettuce, pickles and a bun.

The questions were:

Monday: Which heiress was kidnapped by the Symbionese Liberation Army in 1974?

Tuesday: Cheshire, Cornish Yarg and Stracciatella are all types of what?

Wednesday: In October 2022, an *Economist* leader said that Liz Truss, Britain's then prime minister, had the shelf life of which vegetable?

Thursday: Which sport, similar to tennis but with a plastic ball and an underarm serve, is the official sport of Washington state, where it was invented?

Friday: What term is used for a hairstyle, where hair is wrapped in a ball at the top or back of the head?

Digital twin

a virtual representation of something, capable of modelling its behaviour in real time.

[Read the full story](#)

TK

**The child gives us a beautiful lesson—that
in order to form and maintain our
intelligence, we must use our hands**

Maria Montessori