

Catch up: Israel hits Iranian bases



Israel launched air strikes against military targets in **Iran** in its long-anticipated retaliation for an Iranian missile attack on [October 1st](#). The Israeli Defence Forces said they had completed “precise and targeted strikes”. Iran confirmed “limited damage” in Tehran, the capital, and said that two of its soldiers had been killed. The country’s foreign ministry said it was “entitled and obligated to defend itself”.

The White House said that it had been informed in advance of Israel’s plans, but that [America](#) was not involved in the strikes. **Britain’s** prime minister, Sir Keir Starmer, urged restraint to avoid “further regional escalation”. **Saudi Arabia** and **Oman** condemned the attack as a breach of Iranian sovereignty and international law.

Chinese hackers attempted to [access the phones](#) of **Donald Trump**, J.D. Vance and possibly those of **Kamala Harris’s** campaign staff, the *New York Times* reported. It is not clear what, if any, data has been compromised. The FBI did not name the hackers’ targets but said that America’s government was investigating “unauthorised access to commercial

telecommunications infrastructure” by actors linked to China’s government.

The **Democrats’** chances of winning the **House** fell from 61% to 54% in the past three days, according to *The Economist’s* [prediction model](#), following a shift in recent polling. The average “generic ballot” of nationwide voting intent in America was tied for the first time since August. Meanwhile, Beyoncé was the latest celebrity to endorse Kamala Harris at a rally in Houston, Texas—she urged Americans to “sing a new song”.

Mike Jeffries, the former boss of [Abercrombie & Fitch](#), pleaded not guilty to sex-trafficking charges in a New York court. Mr Jeffries, who led the fashion brand between 1992 and 2014, is accused, among other things, of offering non-existent modelling jobs to men in return for sex. Mr Jeffries, and his partner Matthew Smith, are expected to appear in court at a later date.

BHP and **Vale**, two mining giants, agreed to pay 170bn reais (\$29.9bn) in reparations to Brazil for their role in one of the country’s [worst environmental disasters](#). In 2015 a dam jointly owned by the companies collapsed, killing 19 people and unleashing toxic waste into a nearby river. This week London’s High Court began hearing a separate lawsuit filed on behalf of 620,000 alleged victims.

For the first time in decades the *Washington Post* said it would not endorse either [presidential candidate](#) in **America’s election** next month—nor in any future presidential elections. “We are returning to our roots,” wrote William Lewis, its publisher. Marty Baron, a former executive editor, called the decision “cowardice”. This week the *Los Angeles Times* also decided against endorsing a presidential candidate.

Word of the week: Demure, once a term for Victorian modesty, it is now used by youngsters in TikTok to describe everything from

sunsets to Saturn. [Read the full story.](#)

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Georgia's bitter election



Georgians began voting in a parliamentary election on Saturday. The mood is tense. The ruling party, Georgian Dream, has pushed through a host of illiberal laws, including a [Russian-style bill](#) targeting foreign-funded civil-society groups. If it wins again, GD will further tighten its grip on Georgia's politics. Bidzina Ivanishvili, the party's founder, has said that the election "must become the Nuremberg Trials" for the [United National Movement](#), which formed a pro-Western government in Georgia between 2004 and 2012. He has suggested banning a number of opposition groups.

Polls in Georgia are unreliable: some put GD's support at 60%; others put it at half that. The opposition—a hodgepodge of squabbling groups—is hoping that high turnout, especially among young voters, could deny the ruling party a majority. But many fear that a close election could be stolen by GD. That would probably reignite the anti-government protests that [engulfed the country](#) during the spring—and lead to yet another violent crackdown.

Michigan heads to the polls



Early voting officially begins across America’s Wolverine State on Saturday. After Pennsylvania, Michigan is the state most likely to determine the next president. It is all to play for. *The Economist’s* [presidential forecast model](#) gives Kamala Harris a very narrow lead there over Donald Trump.

But some Democrats are nervous. Michigan, which has a relatively large [Arab-American population](#), gave birth to the movement that encouraged Democrats to cast “uncommitted” ballots during the primaries to protest against Joe Biden’s handling of the war in Gaza. The conflict’s expansion to Lebanon has heightened dissatisfaction. Amir Ghalab, the mayor of Hamtramck, an enclave of Detroit and America’s only city with an all-Muslim council, has endorsed Mr Trump (despite the former president recently telling Israel to “finish the problem” in Gaza). Even if Mr Trump does not win their votes, a third party candidate is sure to. Democrats hope to get out enough other voters to compensate.

Football's most glamorous rivalry



Few games in club football are more enticing than “El Clásico”, as matches between Barcelona and [Real Madrid](#) are known. This season’s first league meeting between the Spanish rivals takes place on Saturday. Real are in greater need of the win. They are current Spanish champions and holders of the Champions League, Europe’s premier club competition. Over the summer Real also added Kylian Mbappé, a French superstar, to their squad. But they have started the season inconsistently. Mr Mbappé has struggled to fit into a team already full of world-class talent.

Barcelona, meanwhile, are in fine spirits. Their new coach, Hansi Flick, has led the side to nine wins from ten league matches so far. Lamine Yamal, a Spanish wonder-kid, has continued his ascent to stardom. The club’s financial crisis, caused by overspending and resulting in a tighter transfer budget, is also beginning to ease. Still, Real have an uncanny ability to pull off a winning result when it matters.

Baseball's biggest stars face off



If at the start of this season you had asked the boss of [Major League Baseball](#), Rob Manfred, which two teams he would like to see compete in the World Series, he may well have picked the Los Angeles Dodgers and the New York Yankees. Baseball's two most valuable franchises have not squared off for the title since 1981. Television ratings will be high for this year's best-of-seven showdown, which began on Friday, as will advertising revenue.

The series boasts the sport's top stars. [Ohtani Shohei's](#) (pictured) \$700m, ten-year contract with the Dodgers was the largest in the league's history. On the Yankees side, Aaron Judge became the fastest player to hit 300 career home runs earlier this season. Outfielder Juan Soto, whose deal with the Yankees is about to expire, will probably command the second-most expensive contract ever. If the series goes the seven-game distance, the biggest winners will probably be Mr Manfred and the MLB.

Weekend profile: Susie Wiles, the unassuming operative powering Donald Trump's campaign



Susie Wiles cannot control everything. Take [Donald Trump](#), her boss: his rants on the campaign trail, his unvetted social-media posts, his questionable guests at Mar-a-Lago. The Democrats, too, are beyond her reach—their decision to replace Joe Biden, around whom Ms Wiles had designed a campaign, scrambled her plans.

But Ms Wiles, a 67-year-old grandmother, works hard to control what she can. She is level-headed, highly organised and a problem-solver. She has developed a powerful network of politicians, policy types, lobbyists and reporters. Her loyal staffers on the Trump campaign are known as the “Florida mafia”. The low-key Ms Wiles has already achieved a lot. Mr Trump left the White House in 2021 a political pariah. He may be [on the verge](#) of a triumphant return.

Ms Wiles grew up prosperous in New Jersey. She got her start in politics by working for Jack Kemp, a Republican congressman from New York. She worked for Ronald Reagan, on his presidential

campaign and in the White House, and in 1985 moved to Florida with her then husband.

Ms Wiles started a political-consulting firm in Jacksonville and raised two daughters. She worked for three Republican mayors and developed a reputation as a smart, pragmatic and well-connected operative. She seems to be motivated more by the challenge of winning a campaign than by ideology.

Florida was a swing state in 2016 and Mr Trump cold-called her to head up his operation there. Many fellow Republicans thought her “full-throated endorsement of the Trump candidacy” crazy, Ms Wiles told the *New York Times*. She helped Mr Trump win Florida again in the 2020 election, though he lost the presidency. After the Capitol riot on January 6th 2021, it was far from certain that he would run again. But she soon agreed to join the board of a fund-raising committee he was setting up to channel money to midterm races. Within weeks she had taken control of a chaotic post-White House operation.

Ms Wiles and Chris LaCivita, her campaign co-manager (though in practice not her equal), developed a strategy that played to their candidate’s strengths. They pushed for a bare-bones party platform, resulting in a 16-page document bearing Mr Trump’s signature policy proposals, rendered in his style (“We are a Nation in SERIOUS DECLINE”).

His message still resonates and many Republicans are [ready to vote for him](#). If enough do, Ms Wiles might be heading for an even harder Trump-management job. He may well offer her the job of White House chief of staff.

Weekly crossword



Our crossword is designed for experienced cruciverbalists and newcomers alike. Both sets of clues give the same answers, all of which feature in articles in this week's edition of *The Economist*:

Cryptic clues

1 down Captain may muddle up capital (6,4)

1 across Device hidden in paragraph on escapism (5)

2 across Make every missive obvious initially to get the message (4)

3 across Unknown direction reveals active agent (5)

Factual clues

1 down Central American capital city (6,4)

1 across Ubiquitous gadget that may have a harmful effect on education (5)

2 across Brief report used especially in business (4)

3 across Tiny fungus that gives us cakes and ale (5)

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.

The winners of this week's quiz



The Economist

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

Teresa Weiler, Bogotá, Colombia

Ayako Fukui, Okinawa, Japan

Matthew Utting, London, Britain

They all have the correct answers of: Who Wants to be a Millionaire?, Hannibal, House of the Dragon, Crane fly and Thomas Watson. The theme is fictional doctors: Dr Who, Hannibal Lecter (from the novels of Thomas Harris), Dr House (from the American TV series, starring Hugh Laurie), Dr Crane (from Frasier) and Dr Watson (from Sherlock Holmes)

The questions were:

Monday: Which quiz show was originally hosted by Chris Tarrant in Britain and Regis Philbin in America?

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

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

Thursday: What insect is also known as a “daddy longlegs” or “mosquito hawk”?

Friday: Who was the founder of IBM?

Demure

*Once a term for Victorian modesty, it is now used by youngsters in TikTok to describe everything from sunsets to Saturn.
Read the full story.*

Nature never repeats herself, and the possibilities of one human soul will never be found in another.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton