

Catch up: Israel continues Beirut strikes; Russia downs Ukrainian drones



Israel carried out more strikes on Beirut as it continued its campaign to eliminate Hizbullah's leadership. The militant group confirmed that Israel had killed more of its senior officials, including Ali Karaki and Nabil Qaouk. Mr Karaki's death occurred in the same strike that [killed Hassan Nasrallah](#), Hizbullah's leader, on Friday; the assault also killed an Iranian general. **Iran** vowed to avenge the deaths and announced five days of mourning. Binyamin Netanyahu, Israel's prime minister, said Mr Nasrallah's death would change "the balance of power in the region".

Russia's defence ministry said that it had shot down 125 **Ukrainian drones**. The drones had targeted southern Russian regions, including Belgorod, Volgograd and Voronezh. [Ukraine](#) has increased its cross-border attacks in recent months, including a daring ground incursion into Kursk, another border region. On Saturday a Russian strike on a hospital in Sumy, in north-eastern Ukraine, killed ten people.

Donald Trump called **Kamala Harris**, his challenger for [the presidency](#), “mentally impaired” and “mentally disabled” during a speech in Wisconsin, a battleground state. His remarks drew rebuke from disability campaigners. Mr Trump devoted much of his speech to undocumented immigrants, calling those who had committed violent crimes “vile animals”. Border security is a key issue for voters, according to opinion polls.

America’s Central Command said it had conducted air strikes on Syria this month, killing 37 militants from [Islamic State](#) and Hurras al-Din, an affiliate of al-Qaeda. On September 16th an attack on an IS training camp killed 28 fighters. A strike on September 24th killed nine members of Hurras al-Din, including one of its leaders. Officials suggested no civilians were harmed.

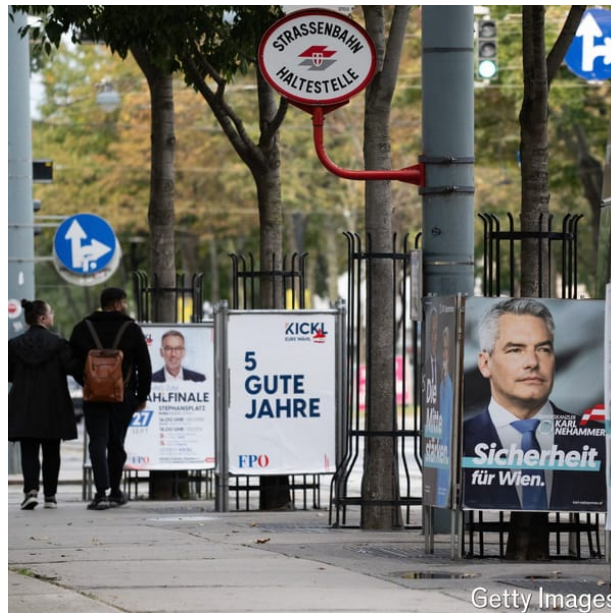
Floods killed at least 151 people in **Nepal**, according to the government, with many more still missing. The damage was severe around Kathmandu, the capital; water engulfed thousands of buildings and landslides blocked several motorways. Officials said that more than 3,000 people had been rescued. Rain is forecast to continue until Tuesday.

Sky sued **Warner Bros Discovery**, a streaming service, accusing it of violating a deal that gives it the right to co-produce shows. The broadcaster wants to co-produce a television adaptation of J.K. Rowling’s [Harry Potter series](#), expected to air in 2026. It estimated revenue lost from not being involved would reach hundreds of millions of dollars.

Three parties at last formed a government in **Flanders**, in northern [Belgium](#), nearly four months after voters went to the polls. The centre-left Vooruit, the Christian Democrats and the right-wing N-VA had struggled to agree on matters including the budget, mandatory voting and restrictions on wearing headscarves. One senior N-VA politician congratulated the parties on finding “a creative way” of putting aside their differences.

Word of the week: R-star, the term that economists use to describe the “neutral real rate” of interest, which applies when the economy is growing at its exact potential. . [Read the full story.](#)

Braced for a hard-right victory in Austria



Austria was the first western European country to elect a hard-right party into government since the second world war; it may do it again in this Sunday's [parliamentary elections](#). The Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) is leading in the latest polls with around 27% of the votes. The centre-right Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) is forecast to come second with around 25%.

Even if the FPÖ wins, its leader, Herbert Kickl, might not become the next chancellor of Austria. Without an outright majority the FPÖ will need to form a coalition with the ÖVP. Its leader and Austria's chancellor, Karl Nehammer, has ruled out working with Mr Kickl. But he might form a government with the FPÖ that does not include the party leader. Mr Nehammer could also go for a three-party coalition with the Social Democratic Party and either the liberal NEOS or the Greens, though the German example of such a combination is not encouraging.

Britain's defeated Conservatives convene



Britain's Conservative Party meets for its annual conference in Birmingham on Sunday. It is its first gathering since the shattering [election defeat](#) of July 4th, when the party received its lowest share of both the popular vote and parliamentary seats since 1832. The conference will be dominated by the contest to elect a new leader. The four candidates—James Cleverly, Tom Tugendhat, Kemi Badenoch and Robert Jenrick—will give speeches and take part in hustings to win the support of party members, who have the final vote on the winner.

Delegates will no doubt trash the record of the defeated government; many fringe meetings will focus on how the Tories failed to deliver in 14 years in power. Rishi Sunak, the former prime minister, will be present but won't give a speech to defend himself. Contrast that with Sir John Major, the last Tory prime minister to lose a general election, who gave a graceful conference speech after his defeat in 1997.

Kamala Harris adds to her war chest



Kamala Harris is back in her home state of California this weekend, hosting back-to-back fundraisers in San Francisco and Los Angeles. The cheapest seats cost \$500; the price of a table can exceed \$900,000. The Democratic presidential nominee is not short of cash. Her campaign has \$235m in hand, far more than that of her opponent, Donald Trump. He has \$135m and raised just \$45m in August, compared with Ms Harris's \$190m that month, according to the latest filings.

But Mr Trump, who was outspent in 2016, won then, and [our forecast model](#) says this year's contest is a toss-up. Does [money matter](#)? Because the election will come down to a few battleground states, candidates are searching for whatever advantage they can get—and money can't hurt. The campaigns and allied groups have spent nearly \$1.4bn on advertising so far. Around \$1.1bn of that has gone on seven swing states.

The spectacular Silk Roads

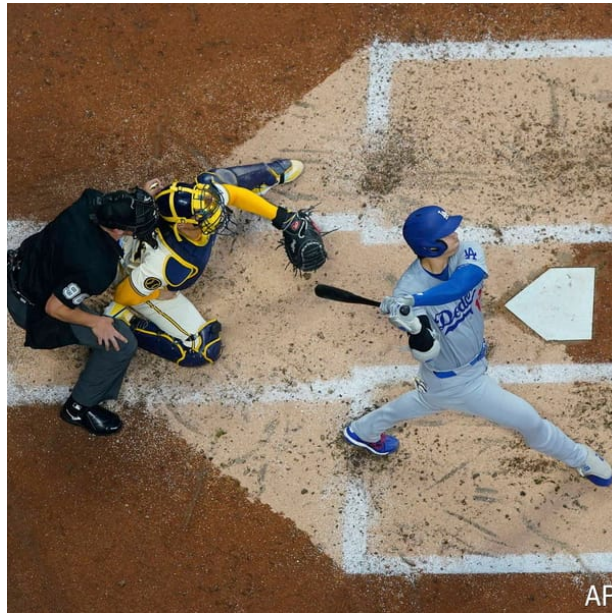


ACDF of
Uzbekistan, Samarkand State Museum Reserve

Not one “Silk Road”, but many trade routes stretched from east to west in antiquity. Spices and silks travelled from Asia to Africa and Europe, crossing mountains, oases and oceans. Wool, cotton and cakes went the other way. For millennia such roads linked communities from Japan to Madagascar, helping to spread ideas and religious beliefs.

A magnificent new exhibition at the British Museum tells the story of the [silk roads](#) between 500AD and 1000AD. The show displays more than 300 treasures, from Byzantine drinking horns to Indian garnets, alongside videos of the landscapes they traversed. There are sketches of Chinese envoys with camels and horses, and a 1,300-year-old English casket made from whalebone carved with scenes from Christian, Jewish and Roman history. “What comes to mind when you hear the term Silk Road?” the curators ask. After this exhibition, far more than silk.

Baseball heads to the World Series



A final round of matches this weekend will determine which Major League Baseball teams qualify for post-season play-offs, and the chance to win the World Series, the sport's top prize. Some have already qualified; the Houston Astros have had a remarkable season. In mid-June they lagged ten wins behind the Seattle Mariners in their division. But a late resurgence saw them clinch the regional title with points to spare.

Four play-off spots remain open. Romantics will favour the Detroit Tigers, who have been out of the running for a decade. The National League, one of two that makes up MLB, looks particularly tight. Only two teams from the New York Mets (last year's World Series runners-up), the Arizona Diamondbacks and the Atlanta Braves will make it through. Their win-loss records, on which they are judged, are almost identical.

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*:

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Cryptic clues

- 1 down Infection? Pin, pad, ice, it's cured! (12)
- 1 across Sadly, Kamala loses centreground here (6)
- 2 across Name a big central city (5)
- 3 across Instrument on unknown state (6)

Factual clues

- 1 down Painful inflammation in the abdomen (12)
- 1 across Russia and China have flown patrols near this state (6)
- 2 across Home of the world's tallest building (5)
- 3 across German region that held state elections this month (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.

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:

Catherine Mullin, Boston, MA, America

Nigel Watson, Edinburgh, Britain

Klaus Hereth, Munich, Germany

They all gave the correct answers of: suffragettes, Mars, Rebel Wilson, The Ashes and bone china. The theme is David Bowie songs: Suffragette City, Life on Mars?, Rebel Rebel, Ashes to Ashes and China Girl.

The questions were:

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

Tuesday: Which food group, named after its founding family, produces brands such as "Milky Way" and "Bounty"?

Wednesday: Which Australian comedy star has appeared in films such as “Pitch Perfect” and “JoJo Rabbit”?

Thursday: Which cricket trophy is the subject of a regular battle between England and Australia?

Friday: Bone ash, feldspar and kaolin play are used to make what upmarket household product?

R-star

The term that economists use to describe the neutral real rate of interest, which applies when the economy is growing at its exact potential.

Read the full story.

There are two possible outcomes: if the result confirms the hypothesis, then you've made a measurement. If the result is contrary to the hypothesis, then you've made a discovery.

Enrico Fermi