

## Catch up: the Oct 7th anniversary; Rio Tinto offers to buy Arcadium Lithium



Rockets fired by **Hizbullah**, Iran-backed militants, landed in Haifa and Tiberias, **Israeli** cities, damaging buildings and wounding ten. Meanwhile Israel continued to bomb Lebanon and the Gaza Strip ahead of the anniversary of the October 7th attacks. Over the weekend it conducted its fiercest bombardment of Beirut, Lebanon's capital, since it [ramped up attacks](#) against Hizbullah last month. Large pro-Palestinian demonstrations were held in cities worldwide on Sunday, the eve of the anniversary.

**Rio Tinto**, an Anglo-Australian mining giant, said it had made an offer to buy **Arcadium Lithium**, an American competitor with a market capitalisation of over \$3bn. The firms said the approach was “non-binding” and that there was “no certainty” of success. Rio is already among the world's biggest miners of lithium, a key component in many batteries. The bid is the latest in a wave of proposed [mining mega-mergers](#).

Ruben Brekelmans, the Dutch defence minister, pledged €400m (\$440m) towards the development of **Ukraine's** drone programme while visiting Kyiv. He also promised more F-16 fighter jets in the coming months. The commitment comes at a crucial time—efforts to repel the Russian invasion have stalled and the war has become one of attrition, causing [fatigue among Ukrainians and their allies](#).

An explosion outside Karachi airport, **Pakistan's** biggest, killed two Chinese nationals and injured at least eight. The Baloch Liberation Army, a separatist militant group, said it had “targeted a high-level convoy of Chinese engineers and investors” working on a coal-power project. The BLA—which claims the ethnic Baloch people have not been compensated fairly by foreigners for local resources—has conducted several such attacks in recent years.

Less than 28% of **Tunisians** bothered to go to the polls for Sunday's presidential election. That is hardly surprising. Kais Saied, the incumbent, ran virtually unopposed. Only two other contenders made it onto the ballot, and one was then locked up for 12 years. Since his election in 2019 Mr Saied has become [increasingly autocratic](#), consolidating power in the presidency while allowing the economy to atrophy.

Italian prosecutors accused two companies and seven people of supplying unsafe parts to Leonardo, an Italian manufacturing firm. The prosecutors said that the companies used cheaper materials to manufacture certain components of **Boeing's** 787 Dreamliner plane, with repercussions for “aviation safety”. They added that [Boeing](#) and Leonardo were victims of the alleged crimes.

**Sue Gray** quit as chief of staff to **Keir Starmer**, Britain's prime minister. The former civil servant, who had been criticised for being ineffective, will be succeeded by Morgan McSweeney, one of the architects of the Labour Party's election victory in July. The two reportedly had a fraught relationship. [Sir Keir](#) also announced a number of other changes to his staff.

**Figure of the day:** 140,000, the number of neurons in a fruit fly's brain. [Read the full story.](#)

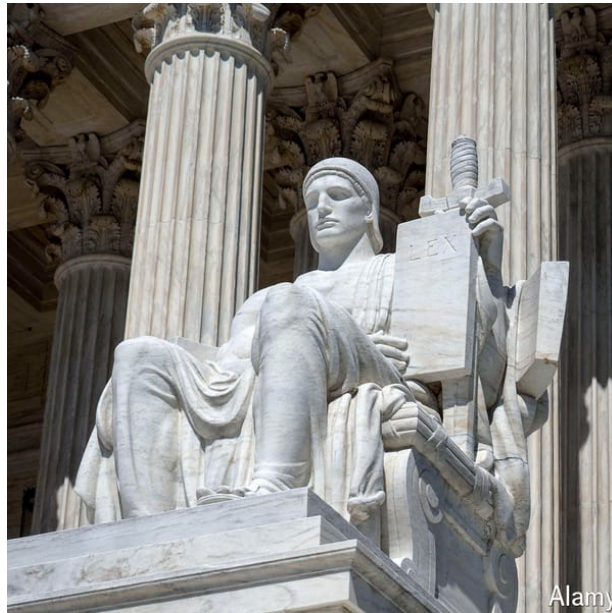
# What's next for the war in Gaza?



Monday is the first anniversary of the October 7th attack, in which Hamas militants crossed over from Gaza into Israel and killed over 1,100 people, taking a further 251 hostage. Israel will mark the occasion with sombre memorial events—and high-level meetings to determine how the war with Iran will proceed.

On October 6th two Israeli brigades encircled Jabalia, just to the north of devastated Gaza City, where Hamas has re-established a presence after being driven out by the Israel Defence Forces. To the north, troops destroyed tunnels in Lebanon used by Hizbullah, an Iran-backed militia, to fire on Israeli border communities. But foremost on the mind of Israel's leaders is retaliation against Iran for the 181 ballistic missiles launched towards Israel on October 1st. Potential targets include Iranian nuclear sites and oil infrastructure. The war has already become a regional conflict. The scale of Israel's vengeance will determine how much further it will escalate.

## SCOTUS's new session starts



America's Supreme Court justices return from their summer holiday on Monday. The new term brings a slate of contentious cases, even as ethics scandals, internal leaks and weak public support have led to mounting calls for reform.

Regulations of ghost guns—untraceable weapons assembled from kits—are on deck for October 8th. The next day brings the question of whether Oklahoma must put Richard Glossip to death despite no longer wanting to because, as officials acknowledge, prosecutors withheld critical evidence during his trial. Rules policing water pollution face a challenge—from left-wing San Francisco, of all places—the following week.

Vape flavours that appeal to children, proof-of-age laws to gain access to online pornography and bans on medical care for transgender children are on the docket, too. And in the coming weeks, the justices could also be embroiled in election disputes—particularly if Donald Trump seeks to overturn another loss at the ballot box. That would put them under greater scrutiny than ever.

# The Maldives mends ties with India



Mohammed Muizzu, the president of the Maldives, met Narendra Modi, India's prime minister, for talks in Delhi on Monday. Mr Muizzu was elected in November on a promise to reorient the archipelago away from India and strengthen ties with China. He kept his word to begin with. After the election Mr Muizzu travelled to China before India, breaking a long-standing custom, and has signed a defence co-operation deal with China. Indian soldiers stationed in the Maldives have withdrawn.

But Mr Muizzu appears to have changed tack. This is his second visit to India since taking office, having attended Mr Modi's swearing-in ceremony in June. His government is again courting Indian tourists, many of whom have opted to holiday elsewhere amid rising diplomatic tensions. During his trip, Mr Muizzu is expected to seek a bailout from India in order to avoid a default. He seems to have realised, belatedly, that two big friends are better than one.



# The Gulf's tourism-infrastructure boom



Gulf economies want to move away from fossil fuels. Their sheikhs and princes have ploughed billions into infrastructure, hoping to attract travellers and their appetite for swanky restaurants and hotels. When Abu Dhabi National Hotels, an operator of high-end global hotel chains, lists its catering arm on the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange on Monday, oil-rich rulers will get some idea of whether their strategy is working. The IPO could potentially raise \$300-400m.

Global firms certainly see an opportunity. IHG, another hotel operator, announced it will open the “tallest all-hotel tower in the world” in Dubai next year. Marriott International, an American hotelier, plans to open 40 hotels in Saudi Arabia. Fitch Ratings, a rating agency, expects the tourism sector’s contribution to the GDP of the Gulf Cooperation Council, a group of six countries, to increase from \$130bn to more than \$340bn. That would be equivalent to more than 10% of regional GDP.

# Fighting tooth and nail over fluoride



Since 1945 governments have added fluoride to drinking water to improve dental health. The immediate effect was impressive: children had, on average, two fewer decayed teeth than before. But a new meta-study says that water-fluoridation schemes may be getting long in the tooth.

The review analysed 157 different studies and found that the fluoride in toothpaste in high-income countries was now doing most of the work fluoridated water used to. Its benefit has been chipped away to just a quarter of a tooth.

That will give critics of fluoridation reason to smile. They argue that too much of the chemical can be poisonous and that it is best applied topically. Proponents counter that fluoridation is cheap and that the water reaches parts of the tooth that brushing does not. The study may give policymakers considering the cost and feasibility of new fluoridation schemes something to chew on as the partisans gnash their teeth.

# 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](mailto:QuizEspresso@economist.com). We'll pick randomly from those with the right answers and crown three winners on Saturday.

**Monday:** Which 1991 film featured Patrick Swayze as the leader of a group of surfers who were also bank robbers?



**140,000**

*The number of neurons in a fruit fly's brain.  
Read the full story.*

**Everything suggests a beyond.**

*Isabella Bird*