

Catch up: Israeli strikes kill hundreds in Lebanon; California sues ExxonMobil



Israeli strikes on **Lebanon** killed at least 492 people, including women and children, and wounded 1,645 more, according to Lebanon's health ministry. The **Israel Defence Forces** said the attacks have hit over 1,300 Hizbullah targets over the past day. The Pentagon said it would send "a small number" of additional forces to the region; earlier America issued a fresh warning to Israel against launching an [all-out war](#) against the Lebanon-based militant group. Israel said it would continue its attacks until it was safe for Israelis to return to their homes near the northern border with Lebanon.

California sued **ExxonMobil**, an oil major, for allegedly running a "decades-long campaign of deception" by falsely advertising the recyclability of plastic. ExxonMobil is one of the world's largest producers of plastic products. In 2022 [California's Democratic attorney-general](#) opened an investigation into fossil-fuel firms and plastic pollution. He accused ExxonMobil, which has not yet publicly responded, of lying to "further its record-breaking profits".

Northvolt, a Swedish [battery-maker](#), announced it would cut about 20% of its workforce. It also suspended a planned expansion of its main plant. The manufacturer has struggled to attract capital from investors in recent months, due to concerns about a slowdown in electric-vehicle sales in Europe. Slowing demand and stiff competition from Chinese rivals is squeezing the sector.

Rachel Reeves, Britain's chancellor, vowed to increase [public spending](#) in a speech at the **Labour Party's** annual conference in Liverpool. She said that "investment is the solution" to Britain's growth challenge. Ms Reeves defended a controversial decision to cut winter fuel payments for pensioners. She also promised to appoint a corruption commissioner to address misconduct by the Conservative party during the pandemic.

Tanzanian police arrested three leaders of the main opposition party before an [anti-government](#) protest. Members of the Chadema party were planning a demonstration against the killing of several of its members in recent months. Civil-rights campaigners accuse Samia Suluhu Hassan, the president, of quashing dissent ahead of regional elections in December and a national vote in 2025.

America proposed a new rule banning vehicles that use **Chinese** software and hardware from its roads, citing national-security concerns. The measure is one of several recent crackdowns by the Biden administration on Chinese technology; in April it told the owners of TikTok to [sell to a non-Chinese owner](#) or cease operating in America, and in May it slapped a [100% duty](#) on Chinese electric vehicles.

Ryan Routh, the man accused of plotting to assassinate **Donald Trump** in Florida earlier this month, had been planning the attack for months, according to a federal court filing. Prosecutors said they found a handwritten letter by [Mr Routh](#), where he described the assassination attempt. They also allege that the would-be

assassin stalked the former president for a month before the incident.

Correction: In Monday's edition of the World in Brief, we used the wrong image to represent France's new government. Sorry.

Figure of the day: 2.5bn, the number of people worldwide who tune in to YouTube monthly. [Read the full story.](#)

The UN's nervous talkfest



World leaders gather on Tuesday for the annual summit of the UN General Assembly. As fighting escalates between [Israel](#) and [Hizbullah](#), a Lebanese militia, several of the central characters will attend UNGA. They include Joe Biden; Binyamin Netanyahu, Israel's prime minister; Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president; and Masoud Pezeshkian, Iran's president. None seems able to halt the spiral into a regional war.

Mr Biden will be making his final appearance at the UN at a time when America's standing has been [weakened](#) by the wars in the Middle East. He can expect appreciation for his work to repair America's relations with the UN, but disappointment at his inability to secure a ceasefire in Gaza. Many leaders worry about what Donald Trump could bring if he wins in November.

The Middle East crisis has also overshadowed the war in Ukraine. Volodymyr Zelensky, the Ukrainian president, will try to rally support for his "plan for victory". But Russia is benefiting from a surge of the anti-Western feeling.

A slow start for COP29 negotiators



On Tuesday the Azerbaijani team in charge of COP29, which will be held in Baku in November, and the International Energy Agency, a global forecaster, will convene an “energy-transition dialogue” in New York. The meeting is the third in a series aimed at “building international consensus” on how to reach net zero. It is meant to help countries work towards commitments they made at COP28 last year, including the pledge to “transition away” from fossil fuels.

But even the dialogue’s hosts do not agree with each other. The IEA says that new coal or long-term oil and gas projects will prevent countries from meeting the goals of the [Paris agreement](#), signed in 2015. Azerbaijan argues otherwise. Fossil fuels are more than 90% of the country’s exports; it plans to expand gas production by a third in the next decade. In July Elnur Soltanov, the COP29 chief executive, claimed that this could still be compatible with climate goals.

Novo Nordisk under pressure over high drug prices



On Tuesday an American Senate committee will grill Lars Jorgensen, the boss of [Novo Nordisk](#), a Danish pharmaceutical firm, over the high prices of the company's diabetes and obesity medications. The drugs, called GLP-1, are extremely popular. But according to KFF, a health think-tank, Americans pay around \$1,350 a month for Novo's slimming jabs, more than four times as much as Germans. Bernie Sanders, the senator from Vermont who leads the committee, believes that alternatives could be sold for as little as \$100 per month. But they will not be available any time soon owing to patent protections.

Another solution to lowering prices is through insurance. Medicare, America's public-health insurer for the elderly, is barred from covering anti-obesity medicines. But evidence is growing that GLP-1 drugs can help with diseases of the heart, kidney and liver. Mr Jorgensen will try to convince lawmakers (and insurers) that the drugs' wider uses justify their hefty prices.

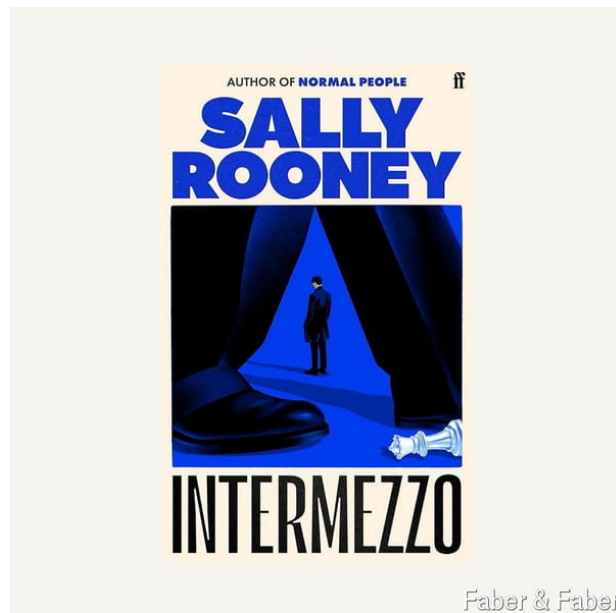
A lengthy inflation battle down under



Australia's Reserve Bank announces its latest monetary-policy decision on Tuesday, less than a week after [America's Federal Reserve](#) cut interest rates by half a percentage point. Central banks in Canada, Britain, Europe and New Zealand have also started easing. But Australia is not likely to follow them yet.

Australia started raising interest rates in May 2022, a couple of months after the Fed. Its rates have peaked at 4.35%, more than a percentage point below America's. Australia's central bankers fear that inflation has not yet fallen close enough to their target of 2-3%. Prices rose at an annual rate of 3.5% in the year to July; core inflation—which strips out volatile energy and food prices—is higher at 3.7%. Australian unemployment, meanwhile, is still near record lows. In August Michelle Bullock, the Reserve Bank's governor, warned that a rate cut would not happen anytime soon. Only one of Australia's big four banks expects easing to start this year.

The literary event of the year



Sally Rooney has become the premier novelist of her generation by writing about “normal people”, to borrow the title of her second novel, which was published in 2018. But nothing about her career is normal. With her quiet stories of millennials stumbling through their personal lives, she has conquered both critics and consumers. Ms Rooney has sold more than 3m books in Britain and Ireland alone. Two of her novels have been adapted for television.

Her fourth, “[Intermezzo](#)”, comes out on Tuesday. The beautifully observed tale centres on two brothers in the period after their father’s death. Peter is a successful Dublin lawyer in a love triangle, and Ivan is a chess whizz who falls for an older woman. Ms Rooney’s characters are maturing as she does, focusing more on love than on their beliefs. But as with the author’s earlier creations, they often cause pain when they mean to be kind.

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.

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

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

2.5bn

*The number of people worldwide who tune in to YouTube monthly.
Read the full story.*

**Show me a hero, and I'll write you a
tragedy.**

F. Scott Fitzgerald