



## Employment

# Real living wage to surge for second year

Voluntary minimum level to reach £12 per hour as households face hardship

DELPHINE STRAUSS

Employers paying the voluntary "real living wage" will be asked to deliver a double-digit pay increase for the second year running, helping to repair living standards as inflation starts to ease.

The Living Wage Foundation, a charity that campaigns for fair pay, said today it was increasing its national living wage rate from £10.90 to £12 an

hour in 2024, after a similar increase in 2022. Its London rate, which reflects the higher costs of living in the capital, will rise from £11.95 to £13.15 an hour.

The change will directly benefit about 460,000 people working for 14,000 employers accredited by the charity. But it could benefit many more indirectly as some large companies, including supermarkets, use the living wage as a benchmark for their own pay rates.

"There is a competition for labour in certain parts of the labour market," said Katherine Chapman, the foundation's director. She added that this pressure, combined with the need to convince

investors of their social credentials, had led growing numbers of listed companies and smaller businesses to sign up despite the pressures they faced from rising costs over the past two years.

The foundation sets the voluntary rate annually based on what a range of families need to get by – including rent, childcare and travel costs with other basic needs. A full-time worker on the new voluntary rate would earn £3,801 a year more than if they were paid the current statutory minimum, it said.

The gap between the voluntary and statutory rates has narrowed in recent years, as the government pursues a tar-

get for the wage floor to rise to two-thirds of median earnings by 2024.

Even as inflation eroded the value of average earnings last year, minimum-wage workers were better protected than others, with the statutory minimum up almost 10 per cent to £10.42.

The chancellor confirmed last month the statutory hourly minimum would rise next April to at least £11. In practice, the government is likely to adopt the recommendation of the independent Low Wage Commission, which is expected to be closer to £11.20.

The rapid rise in the wage floor has not been enough to insulate low-income

households from cost of living pressures.

Nye Cominetti, senior economist at the Resolution Foundation think-tank, which helps calculate the foundation's rate, said low-wage workers' pay had roughly kept pace with inflation, but only just enough to offset cuts in the value of housing and other benefits.

The foundation said 60 per cent of workers below the voluntary wage had gone to food banks over the past year.

Research released today by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation found 3.8m people had suffered destitution in 2022, up 61 per cent on the pre-Covid period.

## Housing

# Tenants in London pay 35% of income on renting

VALENTINA ROMEI

London remains the UK black spot for housing affordability, even after a five-year period of improvement in which earnings caught up with rent, according to official data.

Housing costs accounted for 35 per cent of tenants' income in the capital in the year to March 2022, the Office for National Statistics said yesterday. This made it the only region in the UK with a rent-to-income ratio above 30 per cent, the threshold at which the ONS considers an area unaffordable.

Its finding is alarming because London rental prices, already the highest in the country at an average £1,450 per month, have been rising at a record rate this year after largely stagnating for the past four years, creating new affordability pressures.

The previous peak in London's rental problem was in 2017, when the ratio of rental prices to wages reached 50.3 per cent. But the latest data shows that the ratio remains as high as 46 per cent in the capital for poorer households.

In contrast, private tenants in England spent an average of 26 per cent of their income on rent, based on median household income and median rental costs, in the 12 months to the end of March last year. In Wales, the figure was 23 per cent, while in Northern Ireland it was 25 per cent.

The ONS said that separate data has

## Good causes. Giving

# Wealthy trusts scrimp on charitable donations

Awards of 0.5% of assets in 2020-21 strengthen calls for mandatory requirements

LAURA HUGHES, PETER FOSTER AND JANINA CONBOY

Charitable foundations with collective assets of more than £12bn are giving away only a small fraction to good causes each year, according to a think-tank analysis.

Hundreds of grant-making trusts and foundations (GMTFs), including the Erania Rothschild and Mikhail Khodorkovsky foundations, were identified in the research by Pro Bono Economics shared with the Financial Times.

The analysis showed that if GMTFs distributed 3 per cent of their assets or more, this would generate at least an additional £300mn a year for good causes.

"A huge amount of money lies unused and the mechanisms do not exist to encourage foundations hoarding cash to deliver it to the causes that need it," said Nicole Sykes, director of policy at PBE, co-founded by Andy Haldane, former Bank of England economist.

The government and the Charities Commission, the sector regulator, have long faced pressure to introduce a minimum annual distribution rate for charitable foundations.

Countries such as the US, Canada and Australia require charities to donate 5 per cent of their assets a year whereas the UK has no mandatory target.

The analysis looked at the income and assets of the largest 300 foundations in the UK according to the Association of Charitable Foundations, a membership group for foundations and independent grant-makers.

It estimated that collectively this group held investments worth more than £87bn in 2020-21. The foundations that gave away least collectively had assets of £10.2bn in 2020 yet spent just £95mn, PBE said.

Between 2018 and 2020, the "least generous" foundations held an average of £12.2bn in assets and distributed just £131mn.

The research comes as the cost of living crisis forces households to turn to charities to fill the gaps in local services, from food banks to mental health and counselling services.

The Charity Commission said: "Many of the country's wealthiest individuals give through foundations, and we have



Penny pinching: the foundations that gave away least collectively had assets of £10.2bn in 2020 yet spent just £95mn. Below, Paddington Bear taking part in a British Library event — FT montage/ Getty Creative



called on those with the deepest pockets to do more as households face their own financial pressures and increasing numbers are turning to charities for support."

The charitable sector has so far resisted calls for reform of rules around distribution. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport said there were "no plans to introduce capital spending requirements" on foundations.

The research included high-profile trusts including the Erania Rothschild Foundation, which focuses on expanding opportunities in education and arts.

In 2021-22, it held assets worth £144mn and awarded grants worth £738,000 – 0.5 per cent of its assets. The foundation was set up in 1967 by Sir Evelyn de Rothschild, who died last November.

"In the years immediately preceding his sad passing given the global pandemic and his age there were understandably fewer trustee meetings than usual," the foundation said. "This resulted in less grantmaking than the

historic average. The trustees expect the level of grants to rise."

The report also highlighted the Khodorkovsky Foundation, which was established in 2003 by its trustees at the instigation of Mikhail Khodorkovsky, a Russian oil tycoon and one of Vladimir Putin's most prominent opponents. The charity awarded £15mn of grant funding in 2022 while it held assets worth £564mn.

Alastair Tulloch, a Khodorkovsky trustee, said its grant-giving activities had been impaired by the Russian government's designation of the foundation as an "undesirable organisation" in July 2021.

He said this had resulted in the project's activities in Russia being halted "for an indefinite period" and the trustees "having to refocus the foundation's grant giving activities outside of Russia until the foundation's activities in Russia can be resumed".

In 2016, Lord Jeff Rooker, a Labour peer and former member of the House of Lords committee on charities, sug-

gested charitable trusts should be mandated to give at least 1.5 per cent to good causes each year. But the proposal was rejected by the Association of Charitable Foundations. The body argued: "Such an attack on the independence of trustees to decide how best to use their resources neglects the importance of individual charitable mission, attitude to longevity and market context."

Charles Keidan, executive editor of Alliance Magazine, which covers the philanthropy sector, estimated that an annual spending requirement of 5 per cent of a charity's assets would unlock £1.3bn for good causes in the UK. "There's a natural conservatism in the UK towards compelling foundations to give, but in the absence of compulsion it's very unlikely that incentives or encouragement will significantly shift the level of giving," he said.

Wellcome Trust, Britain's largest biomedical charity, was not included in the analysis due to its size which would distort the data set.

The Becht Family Charitable Trust, which supports marine biodiversity and climate change projects, is the 25th largest foundation in the UK. It had assets worth \$536mn in 2021. In the same year, the trust gave grants of just \$8.8mn.

According to the analysis, it spent \$1mn a year on managing its investments, which generated \$3.8mn in income and capital appreciation of \$75mn.

The Becht Family Charitable Trust said the foundation had net asset values of \$440mn and total grants of \$9.4mn in 2022. Grants had increased to 2.1 per cent of net assets, compared with 1.6 per cent in the previous year.

It added that the foundation had conducted an in-depth review in 2019 which resulted in it moving towards the "marine biodiversity and climate change communications space".

As more opportunities to support organisations become available, "we have and will steadily expand our donations to back them", it said.

The research found that more than 100 charitable foundations that have existed for five years or more failed to distribute more than 2 per cent of their assets between 2016 to 2021.

The Kusuma Trust UK, which allocates grants to organisations and people "making a positive difference to society", had assets worth £510mn in 2021. It spent £5mn in the same year.

It donated £5,000 to the British Library to run a Paddington Family Day. The trust declined to comment.

shown a clear pattern of house prices increasing faster than incomes and UK inflation since 2013, but added that across the UK "no such clear pattern can be shown for private rents and the income of private renting households".

London rental prices have contracted for most of 2018 and 2021 and stagnated in 2019, but they have grown at an accelerating pace since the middle of 2022.

Separate ONS figures released last week showed that on average UK rents increased at an annual rate of 5.7 per cent, with London registering an increase of 6.2 per cent, the highest since the data series for the capital began in January 2006.

"The UK is facing an accommodation affordability crisis, particularly in London," said Victoria Scholar, head of investment at Interactive Investor, an online investment service.

A regular ONS survey published on Friday found that 43 per cent of respondents found it difficult to afford rent or mortgage payments, up from 30 per cent in October last year.

Martin Beck, chief economic adviser to the EY Item Club, said that nominal wage growth had supported incomes over the past year but added that "younger people, whose wages have grown relatively slowly in recent years and who are more likely to rent, have experienced a fall in affordability".

Rents are rising in part because of an increase in demand as a sharp jump in mortgage costs has made buying a property unaffordable for many. Landlords in turn have passed on their higher borrowing costs to tenants.

## Net zero

# Big groups reap free carbon allowances despite idle factories

RACHEL MILLARD, DAVID SHEPPARD, SYLVIA PFEIFFER AND SUSANNAH SAVAGE

Three big manufacturers won free carbon emission allowances worth millions of pounds for sites that were mothballed or where production was slashed, highlighting loopholes in the net zero regime.

Almost £46mn of surplus free carbon credits were granted to CF Fertilisers, the agricultural group, and Sir Jim Ratcliffe's Ineos for sites the companies then closed permanently. Sanjeev Gupta's Liberty Steel was also given surplus emissions allowances for a steel mill in Wales that was idled this year.

The findings, based on government data, raise questions about management of the carbon market, where companies can sell surplus credits for profit.

"The rules as they stand give economic rewards for plants which are shutting down, where jobs are lost," said Sam Van den plas, policy director at Carbon Market Watch, which scrutinises carbon pricing schemes. "This undermines climate goals and doesn't serve any economic benefit other than creating a windfall for the companies."

Big manufacturers are awarded carbon credits to offset their emissions on a per-site basis. The awards are measured against production over the previous two years, meaning idled factories can win surplus allowances.

The Emissions Trading System is intended to give companies flexibility to adjust production levels but surplus awards are not clawed back if a site is inactive or closed permanently.

The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero said: "We are reviewing free allocation rules to make the system as robust as it can." The system puts a price on CO<sub>2</sub> for energy companies and large manufacturers to cut pollution.

Some free credits are awarded to limit the risk of businesses moving to places with lighter environmental penalties.

High levels of free allowances under the scheme helped push the UK's carbon price to a record low this year. The allowances are adjusted annually and assessed on a two-year trailing basis, meaning there can be a lag between production changes and allowances.

"This is an absurd loophole that the government can and should close," said Doug Parr, policy director at Greenpeace UK, whose Unearthed unit published research on the topic yesterday.

CF Fertilisers won 488,602 allowances in 2022 for a site in Ince, Cheshire, it had idled in 2021 as gas prices soared.

In June 2022, CF announced plans to "close" Ince with the loss of about 350 jobs. CF recorded 481,848 surplus allowances in 2022 for Ince, worth £37.6mn at 2022's average price of £78.

CF received a £12.3mn state bailout in September 2021 for its Billingham plant to help with rising gas prices. Its most recent UK accounts show it has earned more than £32mn selling UK emissions credits so far in 2023.

Ineos started decommissioning its



Liberty Steel idled its rolling mill in Newport, Wales, in January this year

nitriles plant in Seal Sands, Teesside, in 2021, after announcing plans to close it in 2019. The site received 148,622 surplus allowances in 2021 worth £8.3mn at average prices that year.

The company did not comment on whether the allowances had been kept or sold. Ineos in 2022 did not receive any allowances or report any emissions for the now fully closed site.

In its accounts for the year ending December 31 2021, Ineos Nitriles said it sold carbon credits worth £14.9mn during the year, helping it post a £25.8mn operating profit.

Liberty Steel cut output at its rolling mill in Newport, South Wales, in 2022 and in January this year idled the plant. It laid off about 140 of the site's 170 workers, union officials confirmed.

Newport received 11,028 surplus allowances in 2022, amounting to a net surplus of 6,242 over 2021-22 once emissions are taken into account. These were worth almost £500,000 at 2022's average price.

CF did not respond to requests for comment. Ineos said it "fully complied with the rules". Liberty's parent, GFG Alliance, declined to comment.

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## NATIONAL

# Sunak 'the problem solver' still faces intractable difficulties after first year

Following the chaos of his predecessors, the PM has run a steadier ship but a fifth Tory victory looks out of reach

GEORGE PARKER AND LUCY FISHER

Rishi Sunak emerged as Conservative leader from the wreckage of the Liz Truss premiership exactly a year ago, vowing to "fix" things. But 12 months later, some of the problems facing him and his party are as intractable as ever.

The prime minister, dubbed by supporters as "Rishi the problem solver", has so far failed to answer the biggest conundrum of all: how can the Conservatives win a fifth consecutive election?

Sunak's party trails Labour by an average of 17-18 points, while his personal approval ratings have been falling since the spring and are at record lows. Two by-election humiliations last week confirmed the scale of the problem. A former cabinet minister said: "We are absolutely devoid of vision and hope. There's no way of turning it around – we are heading for a huge defeat."

Sunak became Tory leader on October 24 last year and entered Downing Street a day later. The third prime minister in two months, he promised "economic stability and confidence" after the chaos of Truss and Boris Johnson.

Markets were quickly reassured and the technocratic Sunak in early 2023 set himself five tests: cutting inflation, cutting debt, delivering growth, cutting hospital waiting lists and tackling migration in small boats.

He resolved the bitter post-Brexit row with the EU over Northern Ireland, restored relations with Emmanuel Macron, French president, and signed a defence pact with the US and Australia.

But the polls refused to budge and his advisers decided a new approach was needed. "Fixing things wasn't enough," said one Sunak strategist. "The next election is going to be about 'change' and Rishi can be that change." Convincing the country he represents "change" after 13 years of Conservative government is a tall order and Sunak's first efforts appear largely ineffective.

Paul Goodman, editor of the ConservativeHome party activists' website, said Sunak's Tory conference speech this month – in which he scrapped the HS2 rail line and promised reforms to A-level examinations and a phasing out of smoking – had left voters cold.

"He seems to have decided to do things that interest him," Goodman said, noting Sunak had always "hated HS2". But he added: "There's no sign that the voters are expressing engagement with these issues or that his speech made any positive difference."

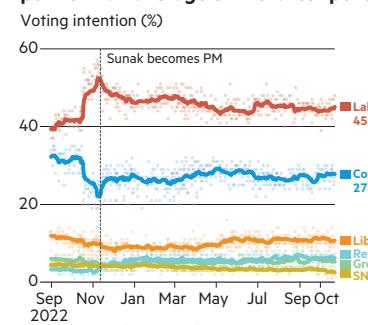
The Tory by-election defeats this month in the formerly safe seats of Mid-Bedfordshire and Tamworth have fuelled a sense of fatalism among many Conservatives, who feel the party is sliding out of power. "In January, the view in the party was that there was a route through," said one Tory supporter of Sunak. "We had a sensible, pragmatic, properly Conservative prime minister and maybe we could be back in contention. The mood now is depressed."

Sunak's chief of staff, Liam Booth-Smith, has told any colleagues who think that the next election is unwinnable to quit their jobs now and in the prime minister's team there is still a belief that things can be turned around.

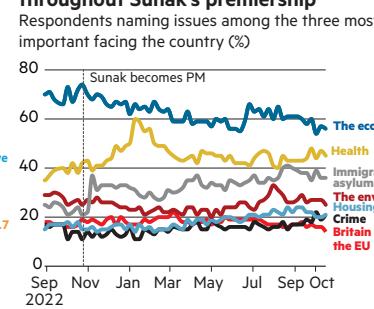


Happier times: Rishi Sunak celebrates winning the Conservative party leadership contest this time last year — Daniel Leal/AFP via Getty Images

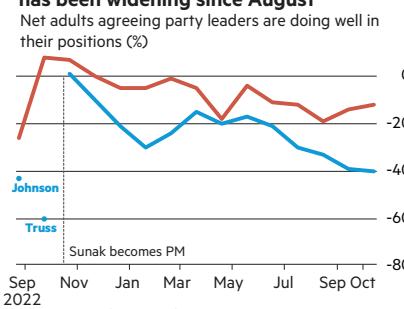
## Labour leads the Conservatives by 17 points in an average of the latest polls



## The economy, health as well as immigration and asylum have been the most salient issues throughout Sunak's premiership



## Sunak's approval ratings are at their lowest point and the gap with Starmer's has been widening since August



The King's Speech on November 7, setting out Sunak's final legislative package of the parliament, is the next big event, followed by Chancellor Jeremy Hunt's Autumn Statement on November 22.

If Hunt were replaced by a "fresher face" before next year's Budget, some Tory MPs believe Sunak could promote the neophyte energy security minister Claire Coutinho, a former Merrill Lynch and KPMG executive. "She's Rishi's kind of person," said one Tory MP.

Other names touted by Sunak's allies for promotion in a reshuffle include relative Westminster newcomers Laura Trott, pensions minister, and Richard Holden, transport minister.

Few Tory MPs give credence to the idea that rebels might try to oust the prime minister. Sunak, therefore, has some political space and Sir Robert Buckland, a former justice secretary, urged him to use it.

Sunak should embrace "more political risk" and demonstrate a "sense of purpose and future vision", particularly on housebuilding, aspiration and the tax burden, said Buckland. "He might be halfway through his premiership. He hasn't got time on his side."

Stephen Bush Page 21

**'We are devoid of vision and hope. There's no way of turning it around – we are heading for defeat'**

benefit cuts, to try to create space for tax cuts in a pre-election Budget next year.

Among the potential tax cuts are a reduction in stamp duty, inheritance tax or a raising of the threshold for the 40 per cent income tax band. But they will not disguise the fact that since Johnson's 2019 poll victory, taxes have risen by an average of £3,500 per household.

Many on the Tory right are hoping Hunt will be among those moved in a cabinet reshuffle, although Downing

Street has made it clear this will not happen imminently. "The prime minister and chancellor are working very closely on the Autumn Statement," Sunak's spokesperson said.

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## Public-private partnership

### New forum to focus on economic security

LUCY FISHER

Britain's deputy prime minister will today announce the creation of a new UK public-private forum on economic security challenges, as he warns of the risk that the "world's next shock will be a tech shock".

Oliver Dowden will speak at the Saudi-hosted Future Investment Initiative, known as "Davos in the desert", to highlight the threats as well as the opportunities that technological advances present to the UK and its allies.

His speech, which comes ahead of the British government holding its own summit on AI safety at Bletchley Park next week, will outline the need for greater economic security to prevent hostile state actors exploiting sensitive technologies and safeguard investor confidence.

The battles facing business from AI and other digital advances coming down the track are likely to make the cyber attacks, ransomware, bots and deep-fakes witnessed to date seem like "relative skirmishes", Dowden is expected to say.

He will warn it is imperative to "build a policy environment that provides the private sector with the confidence to innovate", adding that "economic secu-

rity should never be seen as a constraint to growth".

Dowden, who has been given the job of building resilience against potential shocks by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, will announce the creation of a new forum between government and business, which will meet for the first time later this year.

Chaired by Dowden and Kemi Badenoch, business secretary, the forum will involve companies in strategically

wiping millions off companies' share prices. Deepfakes have duped consumers, bots have interfered in elections, and intellectual property has been stolen from businesses and academic institutions.

"So far, these have been relative skirmishes, wrought by an unholy alliance between hostile states and non-state actors."

He will also reaffirm the UK-Saudi defence and security partnership as an "important collaboration between our nation states" and signal that the two countries must "work together to build economic security".

Saudi Arabia is pressing the UK, Japan and Italy for full membership of an alliance to build a next-generation fighter jet, a move first reported by the Financial Times in August.

At the summit on October 24-26, Dowden is expected to attend a dinner with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and meet Saudi business and economy ministers, along with international chief executives.

The UK's AI summit, scheduled for November 1-2, will focus on so-called "frontier AI", a sophisticated form of the technology that includes large language models that can process and generate vast amounts of data.



important sectors that are likely to be affected by government economic security policies.

It builds on the establishment of the National Protective Security Authority, set up as part of MI5, the domestic intelligence agency, to support businesses to better understand and identify future threats.

Speaking in Riyadh today, Dowden will warn: "We've had a glimpse into this future, with cyber attacks bringing public services to a halt and ransomware

## England

### MPs call for rethink on rail ticket office closures

PHILIP GEORGIADIS

Plans for the mass closure of railway ticket offices in England have gone "too fast" and should be reconsidered, MPs have told ministers.

In a letter published yesterday, the Commons transport committee said the proposals risked "excluding some passengers", including disabled travellers and "those with access needs". It also raised concerns over the public consultation process launched by the industry.

Operators in July outlined government-backed plans to close nearly every ticket office in England to save money, triggering a backlash from unions, passenger groups and disability charities.

"The proposals as put forward by train operating companies in this consultation go too far, too fast," Iain Stewart, the committee chair, wrote to Huw Merriman, transport minister. "The cross-party panel pointed to a 'lack of information and analysis' from industry and government on the proposals. It was 'perplexing' they were put forward before the ticketing system had been simplified as promised.

Rail companies have been tasked with finding significant savings by the government following the collapse in passenger revenue during the pandemic and the subsequent fall in commuting.

The industry was in effect fully renationalised during the pandemic as part of a government bailout, leaving ministers in full control of its finances.

Adoption of digital ticketing has left ticket offices selling just 12 per cent of fares, and the industry has proposed transferring sales staff to platforms and concourses. But unions say this would lead to job losses and leave smaller stations unstaffed at certain times.

The Rail Delivery Group, which represents the industry, pledged to work with customer and accessibility groups to "ensure all passengers [were] supported".

# Is your organization having an energy crisis?



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## INTERNATIONAL

# Azerbaijan's victory over Armenian enclave raises fears of further conflict

Rhetoric from oil-rich state emboldened by takeover of Nagorno-Karabakh worries its neighbour

POLINA IVANOVA  
NAGORNO-KARABAKH AND BAKU

Hundreds of Kalashnikov rifles were lined up neatly on the ground while a dog snoozed next to grenade launchers. Tanks, some battered, stood against a horizon of dark mountains. "Our trophies," said a major with a smile.

This was Azerbaijan's victory lap.

Last month, the oil-rich Caucasus country dealt a crushing blow to its longtime enemy, a breakaway ethnic Armenian statelet in the region of Nagorno-Karabakh, seizing the enclave's weapons and leading to an exodus of almost its entire population.

In just 24 hours, Azerbaijan took over control of the region in a stunning victory and a legacy moment for Ilham Aliyev, its president. But instead of heralding a new era of peace, Baku's tone has neighbouring Armenia fearful that its ambitions may be bigger, and the conflict not yet over.

"We have been saying over and over to Azerbaijan: you are the victor, you can afford to be magnanimous," one western diplomat said. But no "rhetorical ceasefire" has followed Baku's military triumph, observers say, and no meaningful steps have been taken to reconcile two societies.

Azerbaijan's leader was filmed last week walking through the empty streets of Stepanakert, the region's capital, and trampling its flag. His victory speech focused on the past and mocked Karabakh leaders now jailed in Baku.

"We have returned to our lands, we have restored our territorial integrity . . . we have restored our dignity," Aliyev said.

In its blitz offensive, Azerbaijan took control over lands within its internationally recognised borders, but which had been de facto independent since the ethnic Armenian population fought and won a secession war in the 1990s.

Now, silence hangs over the villages and valleys of mountainous Nagorno-Karabakh, deserted within days by more than 100,000 Armenians. Inside one farmer's home, food lies half-cooked on a kitchen table, abandoned in haste, a card game unfinished on the side.

Azerbaijanis feel justice has been restored. "We were waiting for this moment for 30 years," said Major Anar Kazimov as he explored a hilltop bunker his soldiers had seized just two weeks earlier. He showed a text message sent by his government to local numbers during the offensive, calling on Armenians to stay.

But few trusted that message. A handful of Armenians are now left, Kazimov said. He had visited the city, which Armenians call Stepanakert, and Azerbaijanis call Khankendi; the Financial Times, able to travel to Karabakh only on a trip co-ordinated by the Azerbaijani government, was not Azeri.

The refugees who fled took a winding route out of Karabakh. A week later, it was dotted with prams, broken cars, even a bathtub – while burnt patches showed where people started fires to keep warm.

The road along the Lachin corridor leads to southern Armenia, which is a narrow strip squeezed on two sides by Azerbaijan. Residents there fear they could be next, pointing to incidents in



**Old animosity:**  
Günay, an Azerbaijani who was forced from the enclave during the 1990s, remains bitter with Karabakh Armenians

Aziz Karimov/FT

recent years where Baku has used force, inching into sovereign Armenian land.

Azerbaijani officials deny having such plans. "We don't have any military goals on the territory of Armenia," said Hikmet Hajiyev, a top adviser. With Karabakh returned, he said, "Azerbaijan is complete. It's full and whole."

But such promises to respect Armenia's territorial integrity have been made in the past, only to be undermined – most recently by Aliyev's decision to skip peace talks mediated by the EU.

"We want to take them at their word, but then there's the 'but,'" the western diplomat said. If there are no further military aims, "why are we having such difficulties getting the leaders together? . . . If you're saying you're committed to peace, please sign on the dotted line."

Russia still has peacekeepers stationed in Karabakh to prevent a war, but their future in the region is now unclear.

Two diplomats said they had received assurances up to the start of the one-day war that no military action would be taken in Karabakh. "We felt betrayed and bitter," one of the people said. When it comes to the risk of further hostilities, "the prudent attitude is to trust, but verify," the second person said.

Even if Aliyev snubbed the Europeans, he will eventually come back to the negotiating table, including under Russian mediation, analysts said. While Armenia's traditionally close relations with Russia have soured, Baku seeks to keep a balanced approach, involving both Russia and the west.

Russia still has peacekeepers stationed in Karabakh to prevent a war, but their future in the region is now unclear. Some of their outposts have been shut

**'We don't have any military goals on the territory of Armenia. Azerbaijan is complete. It's full and whole'**

down while others still stand, bearing the "Z" marking associated with Russia's military in Ukraine. There, soldiers appeared to be packing up, dismantling billboards advertising their presence, with the slogan: "Wherever we are, there is peace!"

In Baku, celebrations have been a far cry from the nationalistic fervour that gripped the country after a previous victory in 2020, which clawed back some of Karabakh's territory. Some analysts said this was out of respect for the refugees, with officials insisting that Karabakh Armenians were welcome to return.

But reconciliation is a distant prospect. More than 700,000 Azerbaijanis were forced to flee Karabakh during the 1990s war. Many people have friends and relatives killed in battle.

At a cemetery in Baku, Aysu Shapazova, a 19-year-old student, prayed with an imam by the grave of a friend who died during his deployment in the blitz offensive. "He had one dream," Shapazova said. "Every day he heard about people who were killed, and he wanted to go and fight himself."

"My friend died in the army. We hate Armenians," the young student said.

Günay, a 46-year-old mother of two, said she ran with joy when she heard of the victory. "You can't believe how much I was shouting, here in the corridors, that we have our lands back," she said.

She had fled with her family in the 1990s after pogroms in their village. For three decades, she was unable to return home or visit her mother's grave, she said. "I cannot forgive these people, I wanted to kill them," she said. "Now they say we have to live together. I don't want to buy my bread and water in the same place."



Source: Centre for European Policy Studies

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## Venezuela

### Machado claims opposition candidacy despite poll ban

JOE DANIELS — BOGOTÁ  
MICHAEL STOTT — LONDON

María Corina Machado, an economic liberal who favours widespread privatisation, has claimed victory in an opposition primary to pick a candidate for next year's Venezuelan presidential election despite being banned from running for office by President Nicolás Maduro's government.

Sunday's primary took place days after the US eased sanctions on Venezuela's oil, gas and mining sectors in a major policy shift intended to help promote a political opening in the country after 24 years of unbroken revolutionary socialist rule. With 26 per cent of the ballots counted late on Sunday, Machado had won 93 per cent of the vote in a contest against eight mostly little-known rivals.

Although she has in the past advocated foreign military intervention to solve Venezuela's political crisis and praised the conservative former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher, the former industrial engineer now describes her

self as a centrist. "Today a very powerful force has been unleashed," Machado, 56, said as she claimed victory on Sunday night in Caracas, before lambasting Maduro's government as a "tyranny".

The primary was organised by opposition parties and conducted without state support. More than 2mn voters turned out to cast ballots despite heat, torrential rain and the government blocking the website showing where to vote, Bloomberg reported.

The count was proceeding slowly after the server being used to centralise the vote count was blocked, the head of the vote Jesús María Casal said.

Machado was in June banned from holding public office for 15 years because of her support for US-led sanctions. She has said she will press electoral authorities and the government to allow her to run in next year's poll.

Analysts are sceptical that Maduro will allow Machado to run because of the threat she could pose to his re-election. Additional reporting by Vanessa Silva in Caracas

## Germany

### Leftwing anti-immigration party to vie with far-right AfD

GUY CHAZAN — BERLIN

One of Germany's most prominent leftwing politicians said she was setting up a party with an anti-immigration message that will compete with – and potentially steal support from – the far-right Alternative for Germany.

Sahra Wagenknecht announced the movement yesterday, saying her aim was to offer a voice to people frustrated with the traditional parties and put off by the AfD's strident nationalism.

Her new Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance, for Reason and Justice (BSW), launched yesterday and will be the basis of a party to be formed in January, which will take part in the European parliamentary elections next June.

It would, she said, be a "serious address" for people thinking of voting AfD "out of fury and desperation, but not because they're rightwing". A fixture of TV talk shows, a talented orator and best-selling author, Wagenknecht has a huge following among voters disillusioned with mainstream politics. A

poll by Insa on Sunday said 27 per cent of Germans could imagine voting for a party led by her.

Like Wagenknecht herself, who is half-Iranian, BSW will be difficult to pigeonhole, a movement combining traditional leftwing ideas such as a tax on wealth, massive public investments in education and opposition to Nato with a rightwing rejection of irregular immigration – an issue that has risen to the top of the German political agenda as refugee numbers rise.

"Our country is completely overburdened," she said, adding Germany lacked 700,000 flats, and tens of thousands of teachers and day care places. "To allow massive immigration in such a situation is just irresponsible."

In recent months, she has emerged as a vocal opponent of western support for Ukraine and sanctions against Russia, calling for more efforts to find a diplomatic solution while defending herself against accusations she is pro-Russian. During the pandemic, she backed anti-vaxxers and rejected mask mandates.

## Turkey

### Erdogan puts Sweden's Nato accession bid before parliament

ADAM SAMSON — ANKARA  
RICHARD MILNE — OSLO

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has submitted Sweden's Nato accession bid for ratification by Turkey's parliament, bringing the Scandinavian country one step closer to joining the western military alliance.

Erdogan's decision was announced by Turkey's communications directorate yesterday, kicking off the process for the country's parliament to debate and ratify Sweden's Nato membership.

The Turkish president vowed in July to remove his objections to Sweden joining the bloc, but the process has been held up by parliament's summer recess and persistent concerns in Ankara that Stockholm has not done enough to counter terrorism and Islamophobia within its borders.

Ulf Kristersson, Sweden's prime minister, welcomed Erdogan's move to advance the country's Nato bid to parliament. He said: "We are looking forward to becoming a member of Nato."

Sweden is facing the toughest security situation since the second world war, according to Kristersson, as it comes under pressure from Russia, Muslim countries and, internally, from a spiral in gang violence.

Stockholm ended its policy of neutrality after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine last year

The Scandinavian country was shaken last week when two Swedish football supporters were killed and one injured in a terrorist attack in Belgium. That followed a series of violent protests in the Islamic world, including Turkey, after a wave of Koran burnings in the Nordic country. The backlash included the sacking of Sweden's embassy in Iraq.

Stockholm passed a new anti-terrorism law this year in an attempt to assuage Turkish demands, and in July a Swedish court sentenced a Turkish man to jail for funding the Kurdistan Workers' party, a separatist group that has fought a violent insurgency in Turkey for decades. This month, a Swedish man for the first time was convicted on hate speech charges for setting a copy of the Koran on fire.

Turkey's parliament is controlled by a coalition that is led by Erdogan's Justice and Development party, and analysts said the president's approval is crucial in finalising the ratification process.

Turkey and Hungary are the only two Nato members that have not so far approved Sweden's accession to the bloc and Budapest is broadly expected to follow Ankara's lead on the ratification decision. The Hungarian parliament reconvenes today.

A spokesperson for the Hungarian government did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Stockholm ended its long-time policy of neutrality following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine last year with its request to join the Nato alliance that counts the US and Europe's biggest military powers as its members. Neighbouring Finland, which shares a 1,340km border with Russia, joined Nato in April.

## ISRAEL-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

# Leading EU diplomat urges 'humanitarian pause' in war

Borrell calls for timeout to allow Gaza aid deliveries and talks to free hostages

HENRY FOY AND JAVIER ESPINOZA  
BRUSSELS  
JAMES SHOTTER — JERUSALEM  
NERI ZILBER — TEL AVIV

The EU's top diplomat called yesterday for a pause in hostilities between Israel and the Palestinian militant group Hamas in order to allow aid deliveries into the Gaza Strip and hostages held there to be released.

Israeli forces have been bombarding Gaza for 17 days and have cut off electricity and severely restricted supplies of food and water since Hamas launched the deadliest-ever attack on Israel earlier this month.

Although two small convoys of aid have been allowed to enter Gaza in the past two days, aid officials have warned that humanitarian conditions there are catastrophic, and António Guterres, the UN secretary-general, has called for a pause in fighting to allow in far greater quantities of aid.

"Personally, I think a humanitarian pause is needed in order to allow humanitarian support to come in and be distributed," Josep Borrell, the EU's high representative for foreign policy, said yesterday morning, as he arrived for a meeting of foreign ministers in Luxembourg.

Borrell said the pause was also needed "for giving back the hostages" held by Hamas.

Israel has intensified its air strikes against Gaza, hitting 320 targets in the strip in the preceding 24 hours, its military said yesterday. The Hamas-run Gaza health ministry said there had been a sharp increase in the number of people killed, up by 436 on the number recorded on Sunday to more than 5,000.

After the meeting of foreign ministers, Borrell said he believed there was "consensus" among member states around the demand for a humanitarian pause in the fighting. He admitted a "pause" was "a less ambitious objective than a ceasefire" but would allow critical humanitarian aid to enter Gaza and be distributed safely.

EU leaders plan to endorse the calls for a "humanitarian pause", according to draft conclusions of a summit later this week seen by the Financial Times.



Josep Borrell claims a 'consensus' among EU states over pause demand

The text may change before the meeting on Thursday and Friday.

French president Emmanuel Macron is due to visit Israel today.

EU countries bickered publicly in the week after Hamas's October 7 attacks over how much backing to give to Israel's military response, before agreeing on a joint statement that affirmed "Israel's right to defend itself in line with humanitarian and international law".

Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari, a military spokesman, said Israeli armoured and infantry units had been conducting raids inside the Gaza border region in preparation for the next phase of the war and to search for intelligence regarding hostages.

Hagari added that Hamas had captured at least 222 people during its assault. Hamas officials have previously said that they and other factions in Gaza are holding between 200 and 250 people hostage.

As well as taking hostages, Hamas militants killed more than 1,400 people and injured more than 5,400 in the October 7 attacks, according to Israeli officials. Israel's retaliatory bombard-

Borrell admitted a 'pause' was 'a less ambitious objective than a ceasefire' but would allow in aid

ment of Gaza has killed 5,087 people and injured 15,273, according to Palestinian officials.

In addition to the bombardment, Israel has mobilised 360,000 troops ahead of a ground invasion of Gaza. Yoav Gallant, defence minister, told soldiers last week that they would soon see Gaza "from the inside".

Israeli military officials have said they are ready to launch an offensive but are waiting for a green light from Israel's political leadership, amid reports that negotiations over the hostages held in Gaza are delaying Israel's ground assault.

"We're ready to manoeuvre, we [are] increasing our achievements ahead of this operation, and when the government [gives the] order[s], we will execute," Hagari said on Sunday.

The fighting in Gaza has sent tensions spiralling across the Middle East, with Israeli forces trading cross-border fire with Hezbollah militants in southern Lebanon, Houthi militants firing three missiles in the direction of Israel and violence surging in the occupied West Bank.

Israel's military said yesterday that overnight it had hit further targets in Lebanon linked to Hezbollah, the Iran-backed militant group with which it fought a month-long war in 2006.

Hizbullah said five of its fighters had been killed on Saturday, the highest number in a single day since the start of hostilities two weeks ago, bringing the total number to 23. It warned Israel that it would pay a high price if it launched a ground invasion of Gaza, which is home to 2.3mn people.

Gideon Rachman See Opinion



State support: the Israeli government has said it will help businesses cover their costs and workers unable to travel — FT montage/Dreamstime

## Battle with Hamas hits businesses hard

**Owners of once-booming operations see activity dry up and question their future**

JAMES SHOTTER — SDEROT  
IVAN LEVINGTON — LONDON

Before war broke out between Israel and Hamas, Jeremy Welfeld's brewery in the Israeli town of Emek Hefer produced 50,000 litres of beer a month and his 14 restaurants around the country drew thousands of customers a day.

In the two weeks since the conflict began, Welfeld's businesses have ground to a halt. The brewery has produced nothing; 12 of his 14 restaurants are closed. One that stayed open served five people on Thursday lunchtime.

"On a normal day it's between 50 and 150 people. Do you even open a restaurant [in these circumstances]? I can't afford my overheads," he said. "I'm not sure how exactly this is going to play out. It might really be the last straw that might bring down the company."

As the country reels from the attacks of October 7, the deadliest on its territory, trade on half-empty streets has collapsed. The war has hit an economy that prospered in spite of a decades-long conflict with the Palestinians, while the occupied West Bank and hemmed-in Gaza have long been blighted by poverty and unemployment.

The initial shock at Hamas's assault forced the closure of Israel's bars and restaurants and the cancellation of hundreds of flights. A record mobilisation of military reservists — about 360,000 have been called up — has left businesses that are still open short of staff.

Rocket fire from Palestinian militants in Gaza and increasing tensions with Iran-backed Hezbollah militants in Lebanon have prompted the evacuation of large areas on Israel's northern and

southern borders. The war and regional tensions have rippled through Israeli markets, the blue-chip TA-35 index down 9 per cent and the shekel tumbling below four to the dollar as investors bet on a prolonged conflict with big economic costs. The price of insuring Israeli government debt has soared.

Guy Bejt-Or, chief economist at Psagot Investment House, said the fallout could be worse than that from Israel's month-long confrontation with Hizbullah in 2006. "We are ahead of a long operation and it will take a serious toll on the Israeli economy," he said. "People are cancelling holidays, parties, events. People are staying at home. The kids are at home, so lots of people can't work."

Schools have moved to remote learning. The Bank of Israel yesterday kept interest rates on hold and cut its growth forecasts to 2.3 per cent this year and 2.8 per cent in 2024, having previously forecast 3 per cent for each year.

In the services sector, the strains are acute. In a normal week, Nina Mizrahi, a taxi driver from northern Israel, completes 20 to 40 journeys a day. In the past week, she has averaged one. "There is no work," she said.

**Israeli currency down more than 5% since conflict began**

Hourly since Sep 1 (shekels per \$)



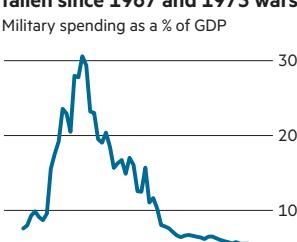
Tourism has also suffered, just as the traditional October-December high season begins. Ganit Peleg, chair of the Israel Tour Guides Association, said some tours up to two years from now had been cancelled, amid fears that a retaliatory invasion of Gaza could spiral into a regional conflagration. "We have been receiving cancellations on a daily basis," she said. "We just recovered from Covid. And here we are again."

In the areas of southern Israel around Gaza that bore the brunt of Hamas's assault, the signs of economic pain are everywhere. Before the war, Sderot was a community of 30,000. Now, it has become a ghost town, more than 90 per cent of its population having left, rows of shops shut and traffic lights at intersections blinking permanently orange.

As the likely scale of the impact has become clearer, demands for government help have grown. On Thursday, Bezalel Smotrich, the finance minister, announced a plan to help businesses cover their fixed costs, as well as financial assistance for workers unable to get to work. The central bank said last week it would sell up to \$50bn of dollar reserves to shore up the shekel.

**Israel's defence spending has fallen since 1967 and 1973 wars**

Military spending as a % of GDP



Smotrich said that as a result of the aid plans, the government's deficit could rise to 3.5 per cent this year, more than the 1.1 per cent it had previously targeted. Economists are predicting a much bigger shortfall next year.

Rafi Gozlan, chief economist at IBI Investment House, said that, with the ratio of debt to national output at a lower level of about 60 per cent and the central bank sitting on about \$200bn of foreign exchange reserves, Israel was going to war on a better footing than in previous conflicts.

"This time is quite different. It allows both the Bank of Israel and the government to finance the necessary budget deficit that's going to increase quite sharply," he said. "We are going to see quite [some] damage to activity, but it has to do with the length and the depth of the military operation."

Although Israel has fought multiple wars in its 75-year history, its economy has always bounced back. Erel Margalit, founder of Jerusalem Venture Partners, a venture capital firm, said investors had been asking lots of questions about the conflict but deals were still being done in the powerhouse tech sector, which was robust enough to cope.

"We built the high-tech industry during security challenges," he said.

Jon Medved, chief executive of OurCrowd, a crowdfunding investment vehicle in Jerusalem, said he expected the economy to bounce back.

"What's bizarre is how normal it's become," he said. "People realise that there is risk everywhere. It's just a matter of mitigating it."

Welfeld, however, is more wary. For now, he is taking things day by day. "I'm hoping that next week we might get back [and open some of our restaurants] with a skeleton crew and see what happens," he said. "But it's complicated... I have a feeling that this little show we're in, it's going to go on for a while."

### Economic support

## Brussels accelerates Egypt aid package over fears of fresh influx of refugees

LAURA DUBOIS AND HENRY FOY  
BRUSSELS

The European Commission is stepping up its efforts to conclude a broad economic support agreement with Egypt, as the EU grows increasingly nervous about the Israel-Hamas war potentially escalating into a regional conflict and a new refugee crisis erupting.

Israel is widely believed to be preparing for a land offensive on Gaza, home to 2.3mn Palestinians, after two weeks of bombardment in retaliation for the October 7 attack by Hamas militants.

Egypt, which borders Gaza and controls the only non-Israeli crossing into the strip, has accused Israel of trying to force Palestinians into its territory.

The situation has sparked a flurry of discussions on a proposed EU-Egypt agreement, officials told the Financial Times, including talks this weekend in Cairo with senior commission representatives.

Egypt is a regional linchpin and already works closely with Brussels on migration management. But it is overburdened with debt and has been in the

grip of a severe foreign currency crunch even before the war erupted on its eastern borders, raising concerns for its medium-term stability and its ability to manage its 100mn population.

The commission's work on the agreement has been given informal approval by member state representatives. It will not specifically link EU cash to Egypt's commitment to prevent any onward migration to Europe or a possible influx of Palestinians, said people involved in the discussions.

Egyptian authorities have been adamant not to open their border to Palestinians fleeing from Gaza and President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi has repeatedly rejected the idea of Israel attempting to displace the strip's 2.3mn inhabitants to the Sinai peninsula. Sisi and Jordan's King Abdullah II on Saturday harshly condemned Israel's bombardments of Gaza, which have killed more than 4,700 people, according to Palestinian health authorities, amid mounting concerns the Israel-Hamas war will trigger a broader regional conflict.

Instead of focusing only on migration, the EU agreement with Egypt will seek

to provide financial support to projects aimed at creating employment and helping the country's energy transition, the people said, to help prop up its economy and indirectly avoid mass migration to Europe. Detailed information on

the agreement, including the overall cost and how it would be funded, has not been made public.

"The issue here is stabilising the country," said one of the people. "[Egypt] is doing a good job with migration but is

This total did not include 4.7mn displaced Ukrainians who were living in OECD countries as of June. There was also a pick-up in temporary migration for work and a record 1.9mn permits issued to international students, with the UK receiving more new students than any other country.

Both humanitarian and labour-related flows of people look set to continue at high levels, the OECD said.

Humanitarian migration to Germany and the US — the top two countries for granting asylum — nearly doubled in 2022, with the largest numbers of applications coming from Venezuela, Cuba, Afghanistan and Nicaragua. The migrant employment rate hit a record of 70 per cent, with less than 8 per cent unemployed. Delphine Strauss

facing economic headwinds. This is about shoring up."

When asked about the agreement, a spokesperson for the commission pointed to a comment by vice-president Margaritis Schinas to reporters last week: "We need to engage actively with Egypt to make sure that Egypt gets all the backing they merit for their very important role in the region as a transit country."

Leaders and senior officials from Europe, the Middle East and Africa met in Cairo this weekend to discuss the Israel-Hamas conflict and the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, which is controlled by the Palestinian militant faction. Schinas represented the commission and the Egypt-EU agreement was discussed on the sidelines, said one person briefed on the matter.

EU ministers for home affairs also discussed co-operation with third countries on migration on Thursday, and encouraged the European Commission to proceed in its talks with Cairo, the people said. Negotiations with Egypt have been going on for months, but the

situation in Gaza has added new urgency to the matter. The EU, which is already grappling with the highest level of arrivals since 2015, is fearful that any jump in migration from the Middle East and Africa could further incite far-right sentiment in countries such as Italy and Germany.

Italy is particularly frustrated at the high number of people crossing the Mediterranean from Tunisia, despite the bloc's recent deal on stemming Europe-bound migrants in exchange for economic support, which has been torpedoed by Tunis's reluctance to accept the money.

Still, officials said the agreement with Tunis could be used as a model for engaging with Cairo, as it not only encompasses funding for border control but also economic support, unlike the EU's 2016 deal with Turkey which focused only on migration. That agreement, struck at the height of a crisis that brought more than 1mn people mostly from war-torn Syria to Europe via Turkey, secured €6bn in total for Ankara in exchange for it clamping down on Europe-bound migration.

## INTERNATIONAL

Court ruling

# Judge dismisses \$11bn Nigeria legal bill

Abuja to avoid record payout after gas group's previous tribunal victory

AANU ADEOYE AND SUZI RING — LONDON

A judge in London has found that the contract at the centre of a long-running dispute involving Nigeria and a little-known energy contractor was fraudulent, after years of legal wrangling that put Africa's largest economy at risk of having to pay \$11bn in compensation.

The ruling comes after a tribunal in 2017 ordered Nigeria to pay \$6.6bn to energy company Process and Industrial Developments following the collapse of a contract between it and Nigeria's petroleum ministry. The award ballooned to \$11bn with interest. Yesterday, the judge overseeing the appeal at

the High Court in London said the awards "were obtained by fraud" and "the way in which they were procured was contrary to public policy".

P&ID won a contract in 2010 to run a natural gas processing plant but the Nigerian government failed to build the pipeline to supply it. The company began arbitration proceedings in 2012 alleging a breach of contract.

Five years later, a panel of three arbitrators in London decided 2-1 to award a \$6.6bn judgment against Nigeria for what P&ID claimed was the full value of losses it incurred on the project. The award was one of the largest publicly known sums against a country.

Nigeria maintained the contract and the subsequent arbitration case were fraudulent schemes designed to cheat the nation of billions.

P&ID can seek permission to appeal

yesterday's ruling. A lawyer for P&ID declined to comment on whether the firm would do so. The court has yet to decide on the consequences of Nigeria's successful challenge. Sir Robin Knowles, the judge, said he wanted to hear more from both parties before deciding whether to dismiss the award entirely or return the dispute to arbitration.

The chances of Nigeria overturning the award were initially considered to be slim and its lawyers repeatedly missed deadlines to file an appeal. But in 2020, Sir Ross Cranston, a London High Court judge, gave it more time to prove its allegations of corruption in the case.

He found there was also a "strong *prima facie* case" that one of the company's founders, Michael Quinn, had given "perjured evidence to the tribunal" to "give the impression that P&ID was a legitimate business and was able

and willing to perform the [contract]."

The size of the award against Nigeria put a spotlight on the role of London's arbitration courts in resolving multibillion dollar disputes. Yesterday's judgment highlighted concerns on the wide use of arbitration, a confidential process, to settle such important disputes.

"The facts and circumstances of this case, which are remarkable but very real, provide an opportunity to consider whether the arbitration process, which is of outstanding importance and value in the world, needs further attention where the value involved is so large and where a state is involved," said Knowles.

A spokesperson for Nigeria described the ruling as a "historic victory".

Nick Marsh, P&ID's lawyer at Quinn Emanuel, said the company was "considering the steps available to it" following the judgment.

Argentina. Presidential election

## Massa's unity plea scores first-round win

Economy minister's moderate message deals unexpected blow to libertarian Milei

CIARA NUGENT — BUENOS AIRES

MICHAEL STOTT — LONDON

Argentina's Peronist economy minister Sergio Massa has cast himself as a national unity candidate to woo centrist voters after pulling off a surprise win over libertarian challenger Javier Milei in the first round of the presidential election, held amid growing economic turmoil.

With 98.5 per cent of votes counted, Massa, from the country's centre-left ruling coalition, had won 36.7 per cent, against 30 per cent for Milei and his upstart La Libertad Avanza party. Massa and Milei will fight a run-off on November 19.

Few had believed that after presiding over triple-digit inflation and growing poverty, Massa could engineer an election victory, with the Peronists coming third in August's nationwide primaries. But the political veteran ran an effective campaign, projecting moderation and stirring fear among voters over Milei's radical plans to shrink the state.

Sunday night's result was at odds with almost all the opinion polls, which had shown a consistent lead for Milei, a mop-haired economist and television personality who finished first in the primary in August.

Shila Vilker, director of Trespuerto, one of only a few pollsters to predict a Massa win, said the Peronist now had a better shot at the presidency than Milei, who faced "serious problems to seduce those who two minutes ago were his enemies, while Massa has been talking about national unity for a while".

Markets reacted badly to Massa's victory, with investors fretting the economy minister would continue to increase public spending regardless of the parlous state of the economy to secure a second-round victory, and that Milei's mandate for austerity would be limited. Argentina's benchmark 2035 dollar bonds fell 12.5 per cent yesterday to 22.87 cents on the dollar before rallying to trade 2.9 per cent lower.

"Massa's win has robbed creditors of



**Seeking consensus:**  
Sergio Massa, addressing supporters in Buenos Aires yesterday, has called for unity but markets fear he will continue to increase public spending  
Franco Dargabetian/dpa

their bull case: the conviction that Mr Milei's programme might be extremely aggressive, but voters had become receptive to it," said Juan Pazos of financial services company TGPC.

Patricia Bullrich, the candidate for the mainstream centre-right opposition bloc Juntos por el Cambio (JxC) preferred by many investors and business leaders, was eliminated after receiving just 23.8 per cent of the vote. Once the favourites, JxC was hurt by a divisive primary and a campaign that targeted law and order rather than the economy.

In his victory speech, Massa reiterated a campaign pledge to form a unity government with different political parties, vowing to end the divide between Peronists and non-Peronists that has dominated Argentine politics for 40 years. "I'm someone who believes in dialogue and consensus," he said.

Milei recognised the election results and called on "everyone who wants a change" in Argentina to defeat Peronism. "I'm ready to have a clean slate... beyond all our differences we

have to understand that we have a criminal enemy against us."

A pragmatic dealmaker, Massa has overseen a rapidly worsening economic climate under outgoing president Alberto Fernández over the past 14 months. Inflation hit 138 per cent a year in September, while Argentina's foreign currency reserves have been drained to support the plunging peso.

Despite the deteriorating economy, Massa increased welfare spending and announced tax breaks during the campaign, contrasting his determination to maintain social safety nets with Milei's pledge to slash spending. The latter's bid for the presidency has been fuelled by widespread frustration in Argentina after several decades of economic woes.

Milei ran a furious campaign against mismanagement and corruption by Argentina's political establishment while promising to cut government expenditure by up to 15 per cent of gross domestic product and to adopt the US currency. He also opposed abortion, denied climate change and attacked the

Argentine-born Pope Francis, a former Buenos Aires archbishop, as a "filthy leftist" and an "imbecile".

Neither of next month's second-round contenders will have a majority in Argentina's Congress. Projections from the congressional vote showed the Peronists will have 108 seats in the lower house, 21 short of a majority, with JxC at 93, Milei's party at 37 and the remainder going to small blocs. In the Senate, where a third of the 72 seats were up for grabs, the Peronists will have 34 seats, JxC 24 and LLA eight.

While markets had been unnerved by Milei's plans to overhaul the economy, Massa's strong performance was unlikely to please investors either, said Martín Rapetti, executive director of economics consultancy Equilibria.

"Massa promises much better governability than Milei but the market consensus has doubts about whether Massa really wants to or is able to do the reforms that Argentina needs," he said. *Additional reporting by Mary McDougall in London*

**Build your own legitimacy. Don't make bold declarations on election night'**

## GLOBAL INSIGHT

## ASIA

Nic Fildes



Left's stumbles in NZ and Australia offer UK's Starmer a lesson

It was a coincidence that the New Zealand election fell on the same night as Australia's "Voice" referendum to recognise its indigenous population. But it is no accident that New Zealand's Labour party and Australia's Labor party, which called the referendum, are reeling at the scale of their defeats.

Chris Hipkins, who stepped in when Jacinda Ardern vacated the New Zealand prime minister's chair in January, led the party to lose half its seats. Meanwhile, the Australian referendum, proposed by a jubilant Anthony Albanese on the night of his 2022 election victory, also fell flat: he lost by a margin of 60.8 per cent to 59.2 per cent.

Both centre-left leaders now stand accused of making the same political miscalculation: in a moment of seeming strength, they lost touch with their core voters. "Both leaders were out of step with the blue-collar people who have been putting Labour in government for 100 years," said John Black, executive chair of Australian Development Studies, a political profiling group.

Black said New Zealanders had clearly had enough of "progressive-style" initiatives at a time of a cost of living crisis and post-pandemic economic stress that rightwing parties had capitalised on in the run-up to the election. Hipkins ditched some of Ardern's grander reform projects, saying they were "too much too fast" at a time of high inflation. But it handed the initiative to the opposition.

A similar trend occurred in Australia, where the Liberal and National parties were able to exploit frustration with the referendum proposal in suburban and rural areas. The referendum to recognise Australia's indigenous popula-

**tion in the constitution and to establish an advisory body to parliament was widely backed after the 2022 election but support receded as its opponents argued it was an elitist plan that would undermine Australia's egalitarian nature.**

Almost 80 per cent of Labor seats voted against the Voice despite the party appealing to its base to support the "once in a generation" proposal to improve the lives of the indigenous population. The highest backing was in inner-city, high-income areas, including "teal" seats held by independent candidates – not in working-class and migrant-heavy areas where Labor tends to find strong support.

Mark Kenny, a politics professor at Australian National University, noted that the vote did not even carry in the seat held by Linda Burney, minister for indigenous Australians. "Labor is completely adrift of its base," he said.

Recriminations over the referendum result have begun, with its supporters blaming online misinformation and hostility from traditional media for the loss. The scale of the defeat has nonetheless diminished the possibility of further contentious policies – such as a vote on Australia becoming a republic – taking place any time soon.

The contrast to June 2022, when Ardern travelled to Sydney to visit Albanese, her friend and newly elected prime minister, was stark. The duo took beaming selfies and swapped vinyl records before holding a joint press conference where Ardern looked delighted at Albanese's commitments to climate policies and Pacific security.

That ebullient, progressive tone has been shattered by this month's votes. Albanese has returned to parliament chastened and tainted by a campaign that highlighted the plight of the indigenous population but also derailed the long journey towards reconciliation. Ardern has left politics for a fellowship at Harvard University, while Hipkins has vowed to stay on as his party's leader despite presiding over Labour's worst election result in almost a century.

Other centre-left leaders, such as Sir Keir Starmer of the UK's opposition Labour party might be wise to take heed as they approach elections. Kenny said it was important to remember, in the moment of victory, that success may be more about the other side being voted out than you being voted in. "You need to build your own legitimacy. Don't make bold declarations on election night," he said.

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South China Sea

## Beijing and Manila argue after shoal collisions

KATHRIN HILLE — TAIPEI  
MERCEDES RUEHL — SINGAPORE

China and the Philippines traded blame after Chinese attempts to block a Philippine supply mission to a military outpost led to two ship collisions on Sunday, escalating the territorial dispute between the countries in the South China Sea.

Both countries accused the other of illegal acts yesterday over the confrontation near Second Thomas Shoal, a sandbank inside the Philippines' exclusive economic zone. Manila has stationed a small group of soldiers on a second world war-era former US warship that was intentionally run aground on the shoal in 1999.

Beijing and Manila have feuded over the outpost for months, with China dispatching a growing number of coastguard ships and maritime militia vessels to disrupt regular Philippine rotations and resupply missions.

China's tactics have also become more assertive. In February, the Philippines accused a Chinese ship of using a laser to temporarily blind a crew near the shoal. In early August, a Chinese coastguard vessel targeted Philippine ships with a water cannon, forcing them to abandon a resupply mission.

The two collisions on Sunday marked a further increase in tensions, raising the spectre of conflict that could drag in the US, the Philippines' treaty ally.

"What happened yesterday was a serious and egregious violation of international law," said Philippine defence

secretary Gilbert Teodoro, calling the incident an escalation of China's "expansionist and aggressive action".

The Chinese embassy in Manila lodged a protest with the Philippine foreign ministry, claiming the shoal was in Chinese territory and accusing Philippine ships of "trespassing". It urged Manila to "tow away the illegally grounded warship as soon as possible" and demanded the Philippines abandon control of the sandbank.

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Washington is growing increasingly concerned about an unmanageable crisis around Second Thomas Shoal," said John Bradford, executive director at the Yokosuka Council on Asia-Pacific Studies. "At the same time, a sizeable chunk of the DC policy elite are directly or indirectly egging the Philippines on as a part of the effort to stand up to China's unlawful aggression."

The US state department denounced China's actions as "dangerous and unlawful" and reaffirmed that its mutual defence treaty with the Philippines extended to armed attacks on the country's forces, including the coastguard anywhere in the South China Sea.

China adopted a law in 2021 authorising its coastguard to take "all necessary measures, including the use of weapons" when fighting "illegal infringement on sovereignty", raising international concerns about open conflict.

But Raymond Powell, director of Sea-Light, an initiative at Stanford University that focuses on maritime grey-zone operations, said: "Were there to be shots fired, this would put things in a completely different place, and I'm not sure China wants to go there."

OLIVER TELLING — LONDON

The US shipping regulator has accelerated a clampdown on the sector as it seeks to fulfil a pledge from Washington to target "foreign-owned carriers" that clashed with US importers during recent supply chain disruptions.

The Federal Maritime Commission imposed penalties and reached settlements totalling almost \$3mn in the 12 months to September, up from barely \$100 three years earlier.

The FMC, which investigates excessive charges and contract breaches by shipowners, resolved 36 cases during the year to September, almost triple the number of two years earlier, according to data shared with the Financial Times.

It has come under pressure following a surge in shipping complaints during the Covid-19 pandemic, officials said.

But its move to hand down more penalties reflects a tougher approach globally to the shipping industry. The sector has historically proved difficult to regulate because of its international nature but has faced fresh scrutiny following a disruptive period for trade.

"Activity has tremendously

increased," said Daniel Maffei, chair of the independent FMC in Washington. He said the regulator was previously criticised for not being "potent", but "that is clearly very different now".

After bottlenecks at ports during the pandemic led to severe delays and increases in the cost of shipping, Con-

**There are always limits to what one can do. It's a small agency. [We would like to] go after more cases'**

gress passed legislation to broaden the FMC's remit last year.

Announcing the passing of the Ocean Shipping Reform Act, President Joe Biden drew attention to the "nine foreign-owned" businesses that dominate shipping and promised to "crack down on ocean carriers whose price hikes have hurt American families".

More than 80 per cent of the world's container shipping capacity is controlled by nine companies, including China's Cosco and Switzerland's Mediterranean Shipping Company, accord-

ing to data provider Alphaliner. The FMC has since opened a fast-track route for businesses to report illegal charges by email. In the 14 months since July last year, companies have submitted 594 such complaints, FMC said.

But the number of cases far exceeds the regulator's staff capacity. The FMC has completed 43 investigations into reports of erroneous charges, while 101 cases have been resolved by the shipping companies involved.

"There are always limits to what one can do. It's a small agency," said Maffei, adding he would like to "go after more cases, more quickly". But he said the FMC now had enough resources "to take on the big guys" and was focusing on closing cases that create a "deterrence".

The \$2.89mn of civil fines this year largely consist of two fines totalling \$2.65mn. These were paid to the US government by Ocean Network Express and Wan Hai after allegations of unreasonable charging over fees levied for the return of empty containers. The World Shipping Council said higher shipping costs were a result of "demand outstripping supply" during pandemic-related disruptions, rather than price gouging.

Crypto woe Crisis deepens for sector reeling from FTX blow as authorities turn attention to alleged terror funding links → PAGE 11

# Companies & Markets

## AstraZeneca hails 'clinically meaningful' cancer trials

- Upbeat reaction to release of full data
- New drugs 'better than chemotherapy'

HANNAH KUCHLER

AstraZeneca sought to reassure investors that its plans to replace traditional chemotherapy with a new generation of targeted drugs are on track, as it announced full trial results at a medical congress yesterday.

David Fredrickson, executive vice-president of oncology business at AstraZeneca, said it was a "massive achievement" in a "really ambitious programme" to be presenting two clinical trials – in lung cancer and breast cancer – that showed their new treatment was better than the chemotherapy that doctors have been dependent on for over a

decade. The Anglo-Swedish drugmaker has partnered with Daiichi Sankyo, the Japanese pharmaceuticals company, on the development of two key "antibody drug conjugates", which use antibodies to deliver a chemotherapy payload to a tumour with fewer side effects.

The first drug, Enhertu, is already transforming the treatment of breast cancer, giving investors high hopes for successful trials of the second, known as Dato-DXd.

But investors were disappointed in July when AstraZeneca did not declare the initial results from a trial in lung cancer "clinically meaningful", sending the stock down 5 per cent. When the summaries of the papers presented at a European cancer conference were released last week, the stock lost a further 5 per cent in a day.

Susan Galbraith, executive vice-president of oncology research and development, said the company consid-

ered the full data from the trial "clinically meaningful", especially in a segment that makes up about 70 per cent of the patients, those with "non-squamous" lung cancer. "There's really clinically meaningful benefit, with better tolerability than standard chemotherapy in that patient population. And I think that's important," she said.

The lung-cancer trial, which studied more than 600 patients, compared the new drug candidate Dato-DXd with docetaxel, a chemo drug first approved in the 1990s but still in use today. It found that the new treatment helped patients live for a median of 4.4 months without their tumour growing, compared with 3.7 months on docetaxel. For the non-squamous subset, the median was 5.6 months, compared with 3.7.

Analysts at Jefferies, commenting on the initial release of the summary lung-cancer data last week, said the overall results may disappoint, but that the result in the subset was "strong".

The breast-cancer trial also showed a "statistically significant and clinically meaningful" improvement in the amount of times patients survived without their tumours growing, according to the scientific paper.

In 2020, AstraZeneca partnered with Daiichi Sankyo on Dato-DXd in a deal worth up to \$6bn, following its agreement on Enhertu, worth up to \$6.9bn, the year before. The companies have invested heavily in trials for both drugs in different types of cancers and combinations with other treatments.

But last week, Daiichi Sankyo announced that it had partnered with US Merck on three new potential antibody drug conjugates in a deal worth up to \$22bn, if the drugs are approved and hit several sales milestones.

Shares in Daiichi soared 14 per cent on Friday after the deal was announced, while Merck, known as MSD outside the US, gained 1.6 per cent.

**Shared orbit** Airbus recruits Northrop in joint bid to build SkyNet satellites for UK military



SkyNet 6's hotly contested £6bn procurement contract will include up to three wideband-capable satellites

SYLVIA PFEIFER — PORTSMOUTH

Airbus has enlisted the US defence group Northrop Grumman to bolster its bid for a share of a £6bn programme to build the next generation of communication satellites for the UK armed forces.

The pan-European group, which builds satellites in the UK, was already among the contenders to build the geostationary military satellites, which will each be about the size of a bus. Airbus will now bid jointly with Northrop after agreeing a wider strategic partnership in military communications for the UK.

They face competition from US defence group Lockheed Martin and the Franco-Italian group Thales Alenia Space for the most lucrative part of the contract: to build up to three wideband-capable satellites that will carry complex data such as video.

The SkyNet 6 programme is

expected to be one of the most hotly contested procurement contracts in the UK in years, underlining the critical role that space will play in the operation of modern militaries.

The war in Ukraine has underlined the importance of data and secure communications, while the next generation of warships and fighter jets will rely on the rapid delivery of large volumes of data via satellites.

The space industry was worth £17.5bn to the UK economy in 2020/21 and employed close to 50,000 people directly, according to the UK Space Agency.

Airbus has operated the existing SkyNet 5 network for the UK's Ministry of Defence for the past 18 years. It was awarded a contract to build the first SkyNet 6A satellite for launch in 2025 three years ago to fill the potential gap in capability before the next group of satellites is procured.

The MoD has been keen to open

elements of the work to wider competition.

The new programme, SkyNet Enduring Capability, is split into two separate contracts: to deliver a constellation of up to three wideband-capable systems for more strategic communication needs, the first of which will be launched in 2028-2030; and a smaller contract to deliver a narrowband service that will be used by soldiers on the battlefield.

The tender for the latter is under way and Airbus, which had already teamed with Northrop Grumman for the contract, has been shortlisted alongside Thales. Airbus will also bid with Northrop for the larger contract after signing a memorandum of understanding with the US company.

Northrop is one of the largest space companies and led the team for Nasa's James Webb telescope. It employs about 1,000 people in the UK.

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**Roche secures \$7.1bn deal for bowel disease drug specialist**

HANNAH KUCHLER

Roche plans to buy immunology company Telavent from Roivant Sciences and Pfizer for \$7.1bn, as the drug-maker's new chief executive seeks to replenish its drug pipeline.

The Swiss company will acquire the rights to develop and manufacture Telavent's potential drug for inflammatory bowel disease, which affects almost 8mn people worldwide. It will acquire the rights to sell it in the US, where there is a \$15bn market for IBD, and in Japan.

Thomas Schinecker, who took over as Roche chief executive in March, said the drug, which is ready to start a late-stage trial, had "transformational potential".

Roche will pay \$7.1bn upfront and a near-term milestone payment of \$150m. Pfizer will keep the commercialisation rights outside the US and Japan. Roivant owns 75 per cent of Telavent while Pfizer owns 25 per cent.

Schinecker said last month that the group was open to making large acquisitions. He was previously chief of the Roche diagnostics unit, and he is focusing on improving the outlook for the pharma arm with internal development and deals, after disappointments including two Alzheimer's drug trials.

This deal comes after Roche announced a partnership with Alnylam worth up to \$2.8bn to work together on a medicine for hypertension.

Large pharma groups are increasingly interested in immunology because of the large number of affected patients. AbbVie's Humira, used for a range of autoimmune diseases, became the best-selling drug but has recently had its market exclusivity expire.

Teresa Graham, chief of Roche's pharma division, said more patients suffered from diseases of the immune system than from cancer, and that current drugs did not serve them well. The science was starting to evolve rapidly. "Despite advances in therapy, there really have been no cures for these diseases. They're incredibly impactful to individuals and to families. They put a lot of strain on healthcare systems."

Roche said Telavent's RVT-3101 had the potential to be applied to conditions beyond IBD because the antibody tackles both inflammation and fibrosis.

In a phase 2b trial of patients with moderate to severe ulcerative colitis, it improved remission 36 per cent in 56 weeks compared with placebo.

Lex page 22

## Big banks' enthusiasm for wealth management ignores setbacks

### INSIDE BUSINESS

#### FINANCE

Patrick Jenkins



Per-capita wealth declined last year for the first time since 2008. In its 2023 global wealth report, UBS also revealed that the number of dollar millionaires fell 6 per cent to 59.4mn. Those with \$50mn or more to their name numbered 243,000, down 8 per cent.

And yet, UBS – bolstered by its take-over-cum-bailout of Swiss rival Credit Suisse – and its big US rivals are crowding into wealth management as eagerly as ever. There are at least three reasons.

First, they have been encouraged by investors and regulators who dislike the volatility of the groups' investment banking operations, historically a far larger share of earnings.

Second, many are convinced they can win market share from rivals even in a tricky near-term environment. And third, they believe that the long-term growth trend will soon resume.

The immediate prospects, though, are undeniably muted. The net declines in UBS's sector analysis were largely owing to asset price deflation as the easy-money wealth accumulation of the past 15 years has gone into reverse.

Global inflationary pressures helped boost nominal wealth, but that was offset by dollar strength. And the downward pressure will continue: central banks' accommodative quantitative

easing programmes in the US and Europe have still to be unwound and the delayed impact of higher interest rates on property prices – the core of much individual wealth – has yet to feed through. With policymakers maintaining a mantra of higher-for-longer interest rates amid continued inflationary pressures, high-end wealth could well fall further over the next year or two.

In addition, China's rapid economic expansion, one of the biggest drivers of global wealth, has slowed dramatically. In 2022, according to the UBS report, more of the top 10 per cent of global wealth resided in China than in any other country. But with the country's GDP growth now down to a run rate of 4.9 per cent, a third of its 2007 peak, it will be a less reliable conveyor belt of wealth clients for global banks.

None of those pressures is deterring the banks. The latest to push the wealth narrative is Citigroup. "Growing the wealth business is a strategic priority," chief executive Jane Fraser wrote on LinkedIn last month, as she welcomed Andy Sieg to Citi after a long career at arch rival Bank of America's Merrill Lynch Wealth Management. Sieg sees some easy wins for Citi: a large (undisclosed) portion of the bank's 500,000 or so wealth customers, with circa \$900bn of "client balances", use it to deposit money, and to borrow, but not to invest.

The big beasts of wealth management – Morgan Stanley (the world leader, with \$4.8tn of assets under management) and UBS (the number two, with \$3.7tn) – are also aiming to grow. The Swiss group must offset the risk that clients who had split their business

There may be opportunities to take a larger slice of the pie from rivals, but the pie will expand too, wealth experts predict

between UBS and Credit Suisse decide to move some assets to a third party.

Chief executive Sergio Ermotti must also overcome the inward-looking distraction of combining the two entities.

But he is clear that in addition to cementing UBS's strong wealth management position in Asia and the Middle East, there is scope for growth in the US, where he is eyeing the 36,000 individuals with liquid assets above \$100mn.

Morgan Stanley, meanwhile, is seeking further expansion as well. The group has a target to boost wealth and investment assets from more than \$6tn today to \$10tn over the next few years. One route to expansion will be to make more of the group's partnership with Mitsubishi UFJ Group, the Japanese bank that became Morgan Stanley's 21 per cent shareholder amid the 2008 financial crisis. Most obviously, it could expand the range and volume of products disseminated to Japanese clients via its partnership with MUFG. There may also be scope for wealth growth through acquisition, especially outside the US.

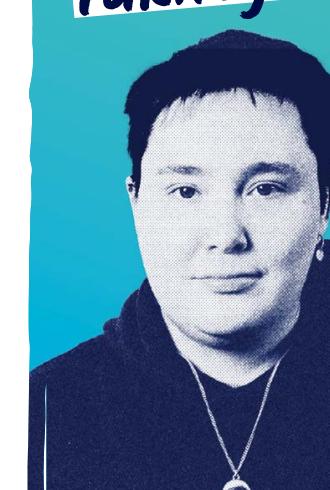
But with any large bank likely to find major deals tricky from a regulatory point of view, wealth managers will be counting principally on organic growth.

There may be opportunities to take a larger slice of the pie from rivals, but the pie will expand too, wealth experts predict. UBS's projections suggest global wealth will rise by 38 per cent between 2022 and 2027, with most growth driven by middle-income countries; Bain & Co reckons nearly \$230tn will be available to global wealth managers by 2030.

The key question in the meantime is whether the wealth management opportunity will match the banks' enthusiasm: herd mentality rarely ends well.

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## Transport

# Aircraft lease rates go into sharp climb

Traffic surge plus makers' order backlog raise costs above pre-pandemic level

SYLVIA PFEIFER AND PHILIP GEORGIADIS

The cost of renting the newest aircraft has surpassed pre-pandemic levels as carriers struggle to balance demand for travel with persistent shortages and manufacturing delays.

More than half of commercial aircraft are owned by leasing groups, which have been able to increase rates for the most in-demand Airbus and Boeing single-aisle aircraft.

Monthly lease rates for the Airbus

A321neo had risen from lows of \$340,000 in 2020 to as much as \$420,000, marginally higher than before Covid brought the sector to a standstill, according to data group Ishka. Rates for Boeing's newest single-aisle jet, the 737 Max 8, have also risen above pre-pandemic levels to \$360,000-\$370,000 a month.

"Air traffic is up and the manufacturers just can't deliver fast enough," said Eddy Pienniezak, head of analytics at Ishka. "Whatever can fly in the narrow-body market at the moment is flying."

Demand is also growing for the more expensive widebody aircraft, which did not recover as quickly coming out of the pandemic.

Pieniezak said leasing rates could climb further. There was "scope for a little bit more on the narrow-body front" but much would depend on what airlines could afford at a time when other costs, notably fuel and labour, were on the rise.

Leasing companies also have costs to balance, especially of debt at a time of rising interest rates.

Both Airbus and Boeing have record order backlogs and their single-aisle aircraft are sold out almost to the end of the decade. Other problems, such as a recall of more than 1,000 jet engines, have added to strains. The manufacturers were "about six months late on everything," said one industry executive.

Many airlines were extending leases on older aircraft, often by four to six years, the executive said. "We will be seeing older aircraft fly for longer."

József Váradí, chief executive of Wizz Air, said: "I never used to worry about the supply chain and contracts, as they sorted themselves out; I only had to worry about finding customers. Now it is the opposite. I have plenty of demand so I spend most of my time on the supply chain."

Steven Udvar-Házy, executive chair of Los Angeles-based Air Lease, said last month that the "production outlook" from manufacturers was a "real problem area. In fact, that's fuelling more demand, it's driving lease rates higher",

he told a Deutsche Bank conference. Leasing rates had increased for "good used aircraft like 737-800s, A320s, younger A330s... as much as 30-40 per cent in the last 12 to 15 months".

Rob Morris, head of Cirium's consultancy business Ascend, said that rates were "still increasing due to the supply and demand imbalance, which is driving that demand from airlines to extend virtually any and all expiring leases today and even as far ahead as 2025."

"Older A320s are potentially able to realise around one-third higher monthly rental today than they were at the peak of the last demand cycle."

SILVIA SCIORILLI BORELLI — MILAN  
ELENI VARVITSIOTI — ATHENS

UniCredit has struck its first deal since veteran banker Andrea Orcel took the helm at the Italian lender in 2021, offering to buy a 9 per cent shareholding in Greece's Alpha Bank and taking a majority stake in its Romanian unit.

The acquisition of the stake in Alpha Bank, which the Greek state must approve, would mark the first investment in a Greek lender by another European bank since the financial crisis plunged the country's banking sector into turmoil.

UniCredit has offered to buy the shares from the Hellenic Financial Stability Fund, the country's bank recapitalisation fund set up during the sovereign debt crisis.

Orcel said on a call with journalists that "for the time being and for the foreseeable future this is the best alliance we could have struck".

UniCredit's and Alpha Bank's merged operations will become the third-largest lender in Romania.

Analysts say the chief executive had been under pressure to announce a deal for some time.

Last month, Orcel told a banking conference that he would look for smaller-scale opportunities to expand UniCredit's presence in key markets where it is already present.

**Athens hailed the move as a milestone reflecting 'regained credibility and growth opportunities'**

UniCredit is one of the largest banking sector participants in central and eastern Europe, with a large presence in Germany, Austria, Croatia and Romania. It still owns a lender in Russia.

UniCredit will pay €300mn in cash for Alpha Bank's Romanian operations and will merge them with its local subsidiary. Alpha Bank will retain close to 10 per cent of the combined entity.

The deal, which is set to close next year, was expected to add €100mn in net profit to UniCredit's balance sheet, the banks said.

The price of the 9 per cent stake in Alpha Bank was not disclosed, but based on Friday's closing price, analysts said it was worth about €270mn.

Orcel declared that the rationale for the investment in the Greek lender was to support product partnerships, "not more".

However, the investment was hailed in Greece as a milestone for the country's banking sector.

Greek finance minister Kostis Hatziadakis said: "The fact that a major European bank is investing in the Greek banking system after many years is proof that both the Greek banking sector and the Greek economy have entered a path of perspective and growth."

It comes days after S&P Global upgraded Greece's credit rating to investment grade for the first time since the 2010 debt crisis, the first of the big three ratings firms to do so.

"It's a great start to the disinvestment process and a reflection of Greece's regained credibility and growth opportunities," said Alex Patelis, chief economic adviser to Greek prime minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis.

UniCredit reports third-quarter earnings today.



An aircraft fuselage for Boeing's 737 Max aboard a railcar at supplier Spirit AeroSystems  
Nick Oxford/Reuters

the Max, Boeing's narrow-bodied cash cow, and fuselage and wing components for the wide-body 787. It also builds aerostuctures for Airbus jets, including the A220, and wings for the A320 and A350.

Boeing is currently making 38 737s a month, with the goal of reaching 50 in the middle of the decade. It was making 52 a month before two fatal crashes of the Max led to the jet's worldwide grounding in 2019, which slowed, then halted, production.

The company also plans to make 10 787s a month between 2025 and 2026, up from the current four.

Production rates are critical to Boeing's calculations of free cash flow, the principle metric investors use to judge the company. It has told investors that it will generate \$10bn in free cash no later than 2026. For this year, it has said it will bring in \$3bn to \$5bn in cash.

But in April, Boeing discovered that Spirit had improperly installed two fittings on the vertical stabiliser on the 737, forcing the jet maker to delay deliveries to customers. Four months later a new problem arose: incorrectly drilled holes in the rear pressure bulkhead for some fuselages. Trade publication *The Air Current* reported this month that Boeing and Spirit were examining a greater number of fuselages for defects than they had originally expected.

The quality problems plus inflation have cost Spirit money on its fixed-price contracts, "and whenever you have a supplier building things at a loss, their incentive to get things done is under pressure", Spingarn said.

Spirit chief executive Tom Gentile departed abruptly this month. The board named Patrick Shanahan, the

'These problems were years in the making. They're going to take quite a while to sort out'



## Energy

## US solar installer points to energy crisis threat

PATRICK TEMPLE-WEST AND AMANDA CHU — NEW YORK

US solar power has become critical to avert a looming energy crisis, the head of a large rooftop solar installer has said, even as shares in renewable energy companies continue to fall.

"I do feel like we are headed to an energy crisis of some sort," either in the oil business or power business, John Berger, chief executive of Sunnova, told the Financial Times.

"Privately, some utilities are realising that, to meet the demands of electric vehicles and electrification, power companies like us are necessary. That they cannot do it all," Berger said.

Sunnova's share price is down nearly 50 per cent this year and closed on Friday at \$8.67, its lowest level since March 2020. Other big solar companies Sunrun and SunPower closed at lows not seen since the initial days of the Covid-19 pandemic. "The share price is bad,"

Berger said. The fall comes as higher interest rates have driven up the cost of renewables financing and threaten to undermine the price cuts from the subsidies in Joe Biden's climate law, the Inflation Reduction Act.

Houston-based Sunnova partners with solar panel companies and then leases equipment to homeowners or sells to homeowners in power purchase agreements. It also securitises solar loans and sells them to investors.

In September, the US energy department finalised a \$3bn partial guarantee for Sunnova's solar loans. Berger said shareholders have not appreciated Sunnova's ability to increase prices as the costs of solar equipment fall.

In the third quarter of 2023, North American solar prices rose 4 per cent from the prior three months and were up 21 per cent year over year, claims a report from pricing provider LevelTen.

Prices for solar components have fallen from their record highs last year.

Polysilicon spot prices fell about 70 per cent from mid-April to mid-July, the energy department said in an August report. And solar module prices also fell amid oversupply and slumping prices for certain commodities, it said.

Lower solar equipment costs helped to offset higher financing costs, Berger said. Simultaneously, the company is able to raise its prices for solar power.

Rooftop solar is expected to grow just 9 per cent this year, down from record annual growth of 40 per cent last year, as the higher cost of financing squeezes homeowners out of the market and incentives in California, the largest market for rooftop solar, are slashed, claims a report from Wood Mackenzie and the Solar Energy Industries Association.

The report said the segment would not recover to the same levels of growth as previous years. "People are reassessing project economics," said Michelle Davis, global head of solar at Wood Mackenzie, an energy consultancy.

## Financials

## Brookfield taps former head of Worldpay

WILL LOUCH

Brookfield has hired Sir Ron Kalifa, former head of Worldpay, to lead its push into financial infrastructure assets as the Canadian investment group expands beyond the property empire it is best known for.

Kalifa, who led London-based Worldpay for 10 years and is a director at the Bank of England, will join Brookfield as a vice-chair and head of its financial infrastructure strategy.

In recent years, Brookfield has invested about \$5bn in businesses that provide financial infrastructure, including the purchase this year of payments company Network International. The Canadian group's decision to push deeper into the sector comes as governments and banks face pressure to upgrade old technologies as the financial economy continues to digitalise.

"The global financial system is at an inflection point, with macroeconomic

trends driving a sector transition that requires scale capital and deep operating expertise," Kalifa said.

Kalifa is one of the payments industry's best-known executives. During his decade leading Worldpay, the business was spun out of Royal Bank of Scotland by private equity firms before going public on the London Stock Exchange five years later.

Currently chair of Network International, Kalifa recently led a government-



Sir Ron Kalifa will lead expansion into financial infrastructure assets

backed review into the UK's financial technology sector that was tasked with finding ways to attract investment and new companies after Brexit.

Brookfield, which manages \$850bn in assets, is known for investing in real estate and infrastructure assets such as ports and toll roads. However, it has been expanding into other areas, including buying credit company Oaktree Capital and raising \$15bn in 2022 for a fund that will invest in the energy transition.

Brookfield will target more financial infrastructure deals through its flagship private equity strategy, which raised \$12bn this year.

As part of its push, the group intended to partner with financial institutions, central banks and governments, according to a person familiar with the matter.

The business had already held discussions with some central banks about the upgrade of archaic financial systems that some still rely on, the person said.

## COMPANIES &amp; MARKETS

# China vainly struggles to dig itself out of gaping property sector hole

Beijing caught between offering enough liquidity support and working to deter further speculation

THOMAS HALE, CHENG LENG, ANDY LIN  
AND HUDSON LOCKETT — HONG KONG

Country Garden, China's biggest private-sector developer, appears to be heading for default after failing to make a payment on an offshore bond — another critical moment in the slow reckoning taking place in the country's property sector.

Two years ago it was the default of another developer, Evergrande, that encapsulated concern over the scale of problems in Chinese property. Evergrande had racked up \$340bn of liabilities and become the world's most indebted property developer.

Country Garden was long thought more stable, but its problems now show both the deterioration in the sector — with sales drying up and thousands of stalled developments across China — and the difficulties for Beijing in getting to grips with a long crisis that has shaken the second-largest economy.

Larry Hu, chief China economist at Macquarie, said: "China is struggling to strike a balance on its property policy over the past two years. They have been caught between providing too much stimulus or not enough."

**'They have been muddling through. But the measures have been not enough to ease perceived credit risk'**

"They have been muddling through. But the measures they have taken so far have been not enough to ease the developer-related credit risk perceived by homebuyers."

The turmoil among developers is significant for China because construction and real estate has been the motor of much of its growth. Property and related industries have often contributed roughly a quarter of gross domestic product.

Country Garden reiterated last week that it would not be able to meet all of its overseas debt repayment obligations. It has not made payment on a bond that was due in mid-September. A final, 30-day grace period for payment expired this week. The group has international debts worth about \$11bn and liabilities of about \$200bn as of the end of June.

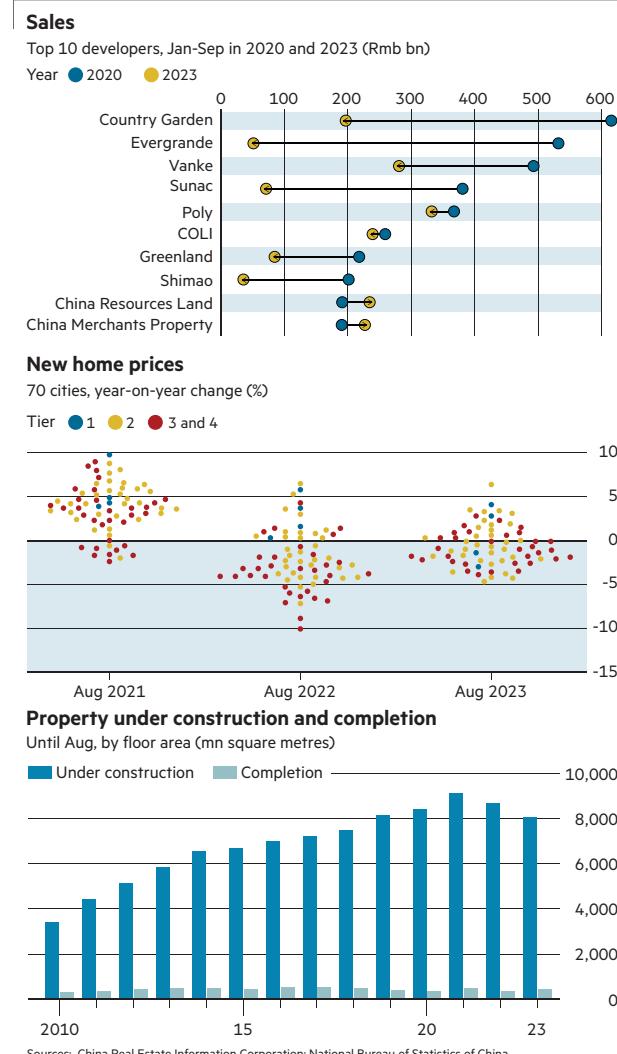
Country Garden's sales fell 44 per cent year on year in the first six months of 2022. The company's shares have fallen around 70 per cent this year, while its bonds are trading at about 5 cents on the dollar.

The group is expected to join dozens of other developers in pursuing an off-shore debt restructuring. But the status of their much larger mainland obligations, which include loans from banks and investment firms, remains shrouded in uncertainty.

Evergrande is struggling to finalise its long-planned restructuring, which was derailed last month when failed to proceed with an offshore debt refinancing due to an unspecified regulatory investigation. Evergrande faces a liquidation hearing in a Hong Kong court on October 30.

The uncertainty over whether regulations have been changed risked "dragging other developers into the quagmire", said Gary Ng, senior economist at Natixis in Hong Kong.

China's real estate developers for years drew on offshore and onshore bond issuance to support their mainland development activity. Developers



often sell flats before they are completed, using the funds to invest in new developments elsewhere.

But when policymakers sought to restrict new borrowing with a "three red lines" policy in 2020, developers' funding model collapsed.

Most of the top 10 developers in 2020 have also faced plummeting sales amid waning consumer confidence, compounding developers' liquidity concerns. There are signs that homebuyers have preferred to buy from state-backed developers, seen as less likely to go bust.

Trying to correct course, policymakers last November unveiled support measures for the sector. Banks opened new credit lines to developers deemed of higher quality, including Country Garden. But they have failed to stop the liquidity crunch.

More than half of the biggest 50 developers in 2020 have gone into default. Bloomberg figures show that Chinese developers have defaulted on about \$115bn of \$175bn in outstanding offshore dollar bonds since 2021. A bigger pile of onshore bank loans also faces restructuring or rollovers.

As developers reel, Beijing and local governments have so far emphasised the need to complete unfinished housing projects. While there are no comprehensive figures on the number of unfinished developments, available data suggests the total has fallen since 2021 but remains higher than in most of the past two decades.

But the developers' defaults raise questions over their ability to complete many of those projects.

The crisis for the real estate sector has yet to feed through into any sharp move for house prices. New home prices, the main gauge of the real estate market in China, have fallen in some big cities but remain buoyant in others.

This year the government has sought to offer more support for buyers. Lend-

A Country Garden project in Heyuan, Guangdong province. China's government is struggling to get a grip on the crisis as sales dry up, with thousands of developments stalled across the country — Bloomberg

ers reduced interest rates that cover half of the country's mortgage loans in September. Some major second and third-tier city authorities lifted all restrictions on housing purchases from July.

Analysts argue that many of Beijing's policy measures towards property have been well-intentioned but ineffective, trying to strike too delicate a balance between offering enough liquidity support and not spurring further speculation in the sector.

"Many policies aim to stabilise the home market and provide just about the right amount of liquidity for developers to finish existing units and deleverage," said Ng. But "when there are too many targets, it is a difficult task to ensure everything falls into place".

Sandra Chow, co-head of Asia-Pacific Research at CreditSights, said: "It's part of a bigger problem that we see as well outside the property sector" — a reference to targeted funding to funnel credits to small and midsized companies.

"The transmission of these policies was always the difficult part."

Rory Green, chief China economist at TS Lombard, said China's policymakers had appeared to have a good grasp of the need to cut leverage in property two years ago. "But what has gone wrong is not having a plan of how they are going to change it and what they are hoping to go towards a new model for the sector."

"It's simply very difficult to suddenly shift growth model and try to reallocate resources away from property ... particularly when it has massive asset linkages to household and to local governments, and to the entire financial system."

## Financials

Europe banks will show boost to profits but rates tailwind unlikely to last

OWEN WALKER  
EUROPEAN BANKING CORRESPONDENT

European banks will reveal a boost to profits from higher interest rates when they report results this week, but face pressure to find new engines of growth as central banks' efforts to tighten monetary policy near an end.

The continent's biggest lenders kick off third-quarter earnings with most expected to show a further increase in net interest income, the difference between what banks pay on deposits and what they earn from loans.

Net interest income has been the driver of profits for banks on both sides of the Atlantic for at least a year, cushioning the blow for some lenders from the still weak volume of mergers and acquisitions.

With the European Central Bank having started lifting rates after the US Federal Reserve and Bank of England, analysts expect European banks to continue to show the benefits from the tightening cycle. The ECB last month raised rates to a record 4 per cent in a bid to bring down inflation.

Barclays analyst Paola Sabbione said she expected Italian banks to report a jump in net interest income for the third quarter.

"This is the third-quarter picture we have in mind for the Italian banks, suggesting capital will continue to build up, paving the way to distribution surprises in the fourth quarter."

UniCredit, Italy's second-biggest bank, reports results on Thursday. Intesa Sanpaolo, the country's largest lender, releases earnings on November 3. Spanish banks, including Santander, which reports tomorrow, are also expected to show further gains in net interest income.

According to analysis by rating agency S&P, Spanish and Italian lenders have also passed on a smaller portion of the benefits of higher rates — known as deposit beta — to depositors other than banks, including those in the UK.

The tailwind enjoyed by European banks has helped send the Stoxx Europe 600 Banks index up 11 per cent this year, outpacing the 3 per cent gain in the broader Europe Stoxx 600.

But with most economists predicting that last month's rise by the ECB will prove its last, European bank executives are likely to be pressed by investors and analysts on how they will drive profits over the longer term. Andrew Coombs, analyst at Citi, expects any "moderate decline in net interest margins", to be manageable because he expects loan losses for the banks to be limited.

UK banks were among the first to benefit from rising rates, given the BoE began tightening policy in December 2021, more than six months earlier than the ECB. But with investors betting that UK rates have peaked and with the mortgage market struggling, analysts expect the country's biggest banks to have endured a harder third quarter. "Q3 could be a tough quarter, with deposit migration, spread compression and low mortgage volumes persisting," said RBC analyst Benjamin Toms.

In contrast with European lenders, shares in UK banks have struggled this year. Shares in Barclays, which reports today, are down 9 per cent, while Lloyds Banking Group stock has fallen 8 per cent. Lloyds reports results tomorrow. Shares in state-backed NatWest, which reports earnings on Friday, have declined 18 per cent this year.

## Property

## Golden era for HK developers declared over

HUDSON LOCKETT AND CHAN HO-HIM  
HONG KONG

The chief executive of a leading Hong Kong property group has declared the end of a "golden era" for the territory's residential developers as the government takes an increasingly active hand in boosting housing supply.

"Hong Kong real estate is no longer a totally free market," said Donald Choi, chief executive at Chinachem, a large unlisted developer and one of the top sellers of new flats in the city. "The government wants to take more initiative in controlling how land and housing is supplied."

Choi said Hong Kong's government had continued to launch tenders for new plots of land for building, despite lacklustre demand after years of strain for the city's economy. Previous administrations have halted land auctions when the city's economy slowed in order to put a floor under prices.

"The golden era of high profit margins

in the housing market is over," he said. "Developers need to get into different property asset classes — not just housing but data centres, factories and other asset classes of the new economy."

That shift comes as China's central government in Beijing has sought to expand affordable housing in Hong Kong, in line with Xi Jinping's "common prosperity" drive. "The wealth gap makes homes very unaffordable for normal citizens," Choi said. "As a result, the [Hong Kong] government has the intention to correct that."

Hong Kong has also introduced conditions for housing projects that require developers to reserve some units for first-time buyers at a capped price.

At one land auction that closed in August, the government required all of the 1,940 homes planned for the site to be sold at below market rates. The resulting lack of interest from developers eventually prompted the government to withdraw the tender.

As a result of such requirements,

Choi said that "private sector developers are turning to other options so that they can have more control over their developments".

Rather than bidding for new plots that come with curbs, some large developers were applying to rezone agricultural land that they already own for residential development, he explained.

The Hong Kong government said its "prime concern is not developers' profit margins" but "whether private housing is affordable to our people".

New land plots would continue being "put to market in an orderly manner to ensure a steady supply", it said, which "should not be affected by short-term market fluctuations".

Hong Kong's property market, among the most expensive, rose in tandem with the explosion of wealth in China. But the sector has been hit by an exodus of residents spurred by Beijing's political crackdown on the city and strict pandemic controls, which were only lifted late last year.

## Energy

## Timeline urged for jettisoning of fossil fuels

ATTRACTA MOONEY

Ikea, Volvo Cars, eBay, Heineken, Godrej Industries and more than 150 other businesses have urged world leaders to agree a timeline to ditch fossil fuels when countries meet for the UN climate summit in Dubai next month.

The companies, which collectively represent nearly \$1tn in global annual revenues, wrote in an open letter published yesterday that heads of states and governments attending COP28 in the United Arab Emirates must address the chief cause of climate change: the burning of fossil fuels.

In the letter, the signatories warned their businesses are "feeling the effects and cost of increasing extreme weather events resulting from climate change".

Signatories to the letter also include AstraZeneca, BT Group, Nestlé, Unilever, Bayer, Ørsted, Iberdrola and Vodafone. "We call on all parties attending COP28 to seek outcomes that will lay

the groundwork to transform the global energy system towards a full phaseout of unabated fossil fuels and halve emissions this decade," said the letter, which was co-ordinated by the We Mean Business Coalition, a non-profit pushing for greater climate action globally.

Jesper Brodin, chief executive of Ingka, the company behind Ikea, told the Financial Times the world was going to have to dump fossil fuels, but the key questions now were how and when.

"We are a huge community of corporate leaders that are asking our [world] leaders to take the political responsibility," he said. "We would like to see an agreement [on phasing out fossil fuels]."

The phaseout of fossil fuels is set to become a key issue at this year's COP, with the EU this week agreeing to push the issue in Dubai. At last year's summit, more than 80 countries backed a plan to gradually eliminate the use of oil and gas but countries such as Saudi Arabia and Russia rallied against the motion.

The UAE is one of the world's biggest

oil and gas producers. COP28 president-designate Sultan al-Jaber, who also leads the country's state-owned oil company, this year said unabated fossil fuels will need to be phased down by "mid-century" if the world is to limit global temperature rises to meet the goals of the 2015 Paris accord.

Under the Paris agreement, countries agreed to limit global temperature rises to well below 2C — and ideally to 1.5C — above pre-industrial levels. A COP28 spokesperson said the UAE was pushing for a tripling of renewable energy capacity: "The phase-down of fossil fuels is inevitable and essential, but it must also be just and orderly, and building a new energy system can only happen at speed and scale with united action."

Since the Paris accord, businesses have set targets to cut their greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, but many have expressed concern at a lack of coherent national and international policies to meet the goals of the 2015 agreement.

See Lex

## UK COMPANIES

# FCA's consumer duty is no box-ticking exercise

Helen Thomas



into separate charges for advice, products and fund management while "realigning" the price of those components.

The shares are down 43 per cent this year. Others trying to figure out how the consumer duty will affect them (or hoping it won't) should take note.

SJP is an early casualty of a new era for everyone in financial services. When first proposed, the consumer duty was seen as a slightly fluffy, kumbaya effort that would replace the existing requirement to treat customers fairly.

Not any more. The FCA has rammed home the message that the duty, which came into force at the end of July and requires companies to show how they are delivering fair value, is a big change in how they regulate. It is principles-based so what that means will only become clear as examples and ultimately enforcement action arise.

SJP offers some early lessons. There is obvious merit in what Fairer Finance's James Daley calls "radical transparency". This means actively highlighting

your shortcomings, as well as your strengths, in plain English. SJP has always maintained that its combined fees represented decent value. But, even if it did have plentiful evidence for that, they were complicated and made it hard for customers to compare services from alternative providers.

In a sector with plenty of disengaged, excluded and unfairly penalised customers, the duty's first high-profile beneficiaries are a relatively wealthy bunch: most of SJP's 1mn clients fit the "mass affluent" category, with investable assets of between £50,000 and £5mn. Its exit fees were hard to stomach; some funds certainly hadn't performed well.

But the company had reasonable evidence of happy customers. Its retention rate is high at 95 per cent. Its funds under management have more than quadrupled over the past decade. About half its new business comes from existing clients, while more than a third comes via referrals.

Customer satisfaction is not necessar-

ily a guide to good customer outcomes, at least as far as the regulator is concerned. This should prompt others to look again at their consumer duty homework. David McCann at Numis expects the duty will put some fund managers and platforms under price pressure, while bigger or more successful companies may find that operating

**Clients shelled out for SJP, in part, because of the fancy Mayfair branding and clubby . . . approach**

margins or returns are in effect capped in the name of fairness.

There is a risk here for the regulator that the duty is tagged as anti-success or anti-innovation – something that ends up herding pricing and products into a homogenised range seen as acceptable. The FCA isn't a price regulator, in the formal sense. But the language in the

duty, about a reasonable relationship between the price and benefits of products and services, pushes it further in that direction.

One question is how the rules can accommodate the softer elements of value. Clients shelled out for SJP, in part, because of the fancy Mayfair branding and clubby, personalised approach.

But people pay over the odds for all sorts of things because the marketing or status makes them feel special (see the entire luxury goods sector). Peace of mind may be another source of value. In insurance, however, the FCA suggested in 2015 that peace of mind was highly subjective, often poorly evidenced and didn't form part of their assessment.

Ultimately, there still has to be space for fully informed consumers to make what others might see as economically irrational decisions. But those still hoping that the duty is a trifle or a box-ticking exercise have been put on notice.

*helen.thomas@ft.com*

## Media

# WPP agency sacks senior manager after China arrest

OLIVER BARNES — LONDON

RYAN MCMORROW — SAN FRANCISCO

WPP-owned media agency GroupM has sacked a senior Shanghai-based executive after Chinese police last week detained the high-ranking employee on suspicion of bribery.

British multinational WPP, the biggest advertising group, said yesterday that it was "terminating the executive's employment with the company, and GroupM is suspending trade with any external organisation we understand to be part of the police inquiries".

The dismissal of the GroupM executive follows an announcement by the Shanghai Public Security Bureau's Economic Crime Investigation Department on Saturday that it had "cracked" a commercial bribery case involving an advertising company.

The statement by Chinese law enforcement did not name the company but said an executive serving at the ad agency and two former employees had been detained. On Friday last week, the Financial Times reported that police had raided GroupM's Shanghai offices.

WPP said yesterday that it was "co-operating with the authorities and conducting our own investigation with an independent third party", noting that it could not comment further on an "active police investigation".

"We are absolutely committed to behaving in accordance with the law and our own code of conduct, and will take all necessary action to ensure this is the case within our business."

GroupM, WPP's media planning and buying arm, accounts for roughly a

**Police authorities had detained the senior Shanghai-based executive on suspicion of bribery**

third of the London-listed ad group's £14bn of annual revenue, employing 42,000 staff and deploying \$60bn worth of advertising investment.

China, WPP's fourth-largest market, is an increasingly important region for ad groups. In the three months to June 30, revenues from China grew 4.8 per cent across WPP, helping offset a fall in US revenues, as ad spending bounced back after China's lockdowns, "albeit at a slower pace than anticipated".

The investigation involving current and former GroupM executives comes amid increasing pressure from the Chinese government on foreign companies, as diplomatic tensions between Washington and Beijing escalate. Earlier this year, Chinese authorities visited the Shanghai offices of management consulting firm Bain & Company, removing computers and phones.

Five Beijing-based employees of US due-diligence firm Mintz Group were also detained earlier this year.

The repeated moves against private companies in China and an opaque judicial system have raised concerns in the foreign-business community, with several surveys by foreign chambers of commerce indicating business confidence was very low.

As part of the GroupM raid last week, Chinese police also spoke to other local executives including Patrick Xu, GroupM's chief executive for China and WPP's China manager, according to people briefed on the situation.



## Home remedy Vistry pivots to affordable sector activity

Vistry is to cut jobs, and downgraded its annual profit forecast, as the housebuilder shifts its strategy to focus on affordable housing amid a slowdown in the private sector.

The group, which employed about 5,200 people at the end of last year, said yesterday it would close five of its 32 regional offices as part of a pivot to affordable housing. The closures will result in 200 redundancies.

Vistry is merging its housebuilding division with its partnerships business, which works with the public sector and housing associations to build affordable homes. The group said last month that the move would allow it to return £1bn to shareholders over the next three years.

But it added that implementing the strategy would cost about £40mn, prompting it to cut its adjusted pre-tax

profit expectations to £410mn from the previous target of "in excess of £450mn".

It also warned investors that it expected £450mn in net debt for the full year, higher than previously expected.

The group said that it was hoping to generate about £25mn in annual savings as a result of its shift to affordable housing.

Vistry's shares dropped 5.8 per cent yesterday.

Aynsley Lammin, an analyst at Investec, said that the £40mn hit to Vistry's margins was "not exceptional" but noted the housebuilder's more cautious tone on its annual profit targets.

The housebuilder said that sales of private homes had not picked up since the summer. *Akila Quinio*

Chris Radburn/PA

## Property

# Domestic unit of Chestertons sold to Europe group

Emeria snaps up business while Mercantile remains owner of overseas division

IVAN LEVINGTON AND AKILA QUINIO

Chestertons, one of the oldest estate agents, has been sold to a European real estate services and technology group, in the latest sign of consolidation in the British property sector.

The more than 200-year-old London agency has been acquired by Emeria, which is owned by Swiss private equity firm Partners Group. Emeria was paying about £100mn, a person familiar with the deal said.

The deal, confirmed by both sides yesterday, follows an almost two-dec-

The acquirer, owned by Swiss private equity firm Partners Group, is said to be paying about £100mn

ade turnaround effort at the company and comes amid intensifying pressure in the UK housing market from rising mortgage costs following successive rate rises by the Bank of England.

The market is on track for its slowest year in more than a decade, according to property portal Zoopla, with house prices falling in recent months from pandemic-era highs.

The sale is the latest sign of dealmaking in the sector, coming on the heels of a bid by CoStar, a US-based real estate company, for UK property portal OnTheMarket.

CoStar said last week it had made an offer of about £100mn for the company, sending rival property site Rightmove's shares down 12 per cent on Thursday.

London-based estate agency Foxtons also flagged this year that it was looking to acquire rival agencies in an attempt to

expand its lettings business amid a slowdown in house sales.

Residential rents climbed 12 per cent in August, their largest annual increase on record, according to data from estate agency Hamptons.

Chestertons was founded in 1805 and bought out of receivership in 2005 by the Mercantile Group, led by Salah Mussa. Mercantile combined Chestertons, which focuses on sales and lettings of upmarket homes in London, with Humberts in 2009. The company split the two brands again in 2014.

Mercantile also owns residential developer Wellingtons and mortgage broker Springtide Capital.

While Emeria is acquiring Chestertons' UK operations, Mercantile will remain the owner of the company's international arm.

"With 2023 set to be a record year for the business, [the deal] demonstrates how we have transformed from a struggling small agency, into a thriving, resilient business," Mussa said. Mercantile declined to comment on the deal terms.

Under Mercantile's ownership, Chestertons has expanded in the UK to 30 branches from nine locations. Its global brand operates in 12 other countries.

In the UK, Chestertons' revenue rose from below £17mn in 2006 to a forecast record of £70mn in 2023. Turnover rose 28 per cent to 58.3mn in 2021 with £13.3mn in earnings, according to its latest accounts.

Chestertons and Emeria said the deal would lead to "substantial investment into expansion of the 200-year-old business".

Emeria has more than €1.5bn in annual revenue and 700 branches with 17,000 employees across eight countries, according to its website.

It has brands including Knight Square Insurance and lettings and management company Campions in the UK. Emeria is also backed by the private equity group TA Associates.

## Financials

# Tougher crypto rules spur advisory boom

NIKOU ASGARI

The UK's increasingly tough regulatory regime for cryptocurrencies has sparked a cottage industry in advice and compliance for the handful of companies that have navigated the system.

Demand for help from crypto companies globally to deal with British rules has risen this month after the financial regulator banned unauthorised firms from marketing to UK customers.

Some of the largest crypto service providers, including exchanges Binance and Huobi, have fallen foul of the tougher standards, which are designed to strengthen consumer protections after last year's crypto market crash and failure of companies such as FTX.

In the first week of the new regime, the Financial Conduct Authority issued more than 150 alerts on unauthorised crypto groups' promotions. Failure to comply with the rules, which apply globally, can lead to fines or imprisonment.

The hardline stance has opened a nascent market for just three companies that are able to sign off the marketing

materials of potentially hundreds of crypto groups, from social media posts to business websites. "It's a smart way of making money as there are very few service providers and many firms that need it," said Charles Kerrigan, partner at law firm CMS.

London-based Archax, one of the three permitted to perform signoffs, has

**'It's a smart way of making money as there are very few service providers and many firms that need it'**

OKX and Coinbase, two of the biggest crypto exchanges, as customers. It has also expanded its compliance team to cover surging demand.

The influx of revenues is set to boost the fortunes of Archax, which is backed by £380bn investment manager Abrdn.

The digital assets exchange made a £12.7mn loss last year, according to accounts filed at Companies House.

Simon Barnby, chief marketing

officer, said its advisory service "is certainly a key revenue stream".

The rules come as many companies struggle to secure a place on the regulator's register for crypto asset services, which monitors standards such as anti-money laundering.

The agency's approach has jarred with politicians' desire to present London as a global crypto hub. The City minister recently urged the regulator to take a softer stance ahead of the marketing rules coming into force, the Financial Times previously reported.

Gateway 21 was started this year to approve crypto marketing ahead of the FCA rules. "Since that [FCA] list has gone up, the queue's gotten longer," said founder Carly Nuzbach Lowery, a former lawyer at Uber, Coinbase and Copper, a crypto custodian.

It is set to be joined by Englebert, a crypto consultancy that is awaiting authorisation from the FCA but which has linked up with Helford Capital Partners, a regulated advisory firm, to meet demand from digital asset groups looking for approval.

**Financials**

# St James's Place halts trading in property funds

SALLY HICKEY

St James's Place has suspended trading in three of its property funds after facing a surge in investors' redemption requests.

The wealth manager has prevented withdrawals from the £829.5mn SJP Property unit trust since Friday and has said redemption requests from the £563mn Property life and £838mn Property pension funds would now take up to six months to be met.

St James's Place said it had faced a drop in investments from clients and an increase in withdrawal requests amid continuing office space vacancies after the Covid pandemic.

The move follows M&G's decision to close its £565mn property fund last week after the asset manager blamed "declining interest" from retail investors. A week before, Canada Life Asset Management suspended withdrawals from its UK property fund, saying that the "overwhelming majority" of its investors wanted an exit.

This decision is "aimed at preventing

the challenge of having to sell properties quickly to generate cash," said Tom Beal, director of investments at St James's Place.

"Selling properties under such pressure may lead to the fund manager selling them for less than their actual market value, potentially resulting in financial losses for the fund and its investors."

The suspensions reflect the liquidity mismatch between the daily dealing offered by open-ended property funds and the time it takes to sell a property.

A number of UK property funds suspended dealing in 2016, after the Brexit



The pandemic continues to show its impact on office space vacancies

vote prompted a slew of withdrawals, and again in 2020 as the pandemic led to uncertainties over property valuation.

Shares in St James's Place rose 1.56 per cent yesterday. They have dropped by more than a fifth in the past month as it announced a change to its fee structure.

SJP said its unit trust, life and pension property funds had seen net withdrawals of £211mn, £131mn and £191mn respectively over the past 12 months. The group said it had temporarily reduced its annual management charge by 0.15 percentage points to 1.89 per cent after the property fund suspensions.

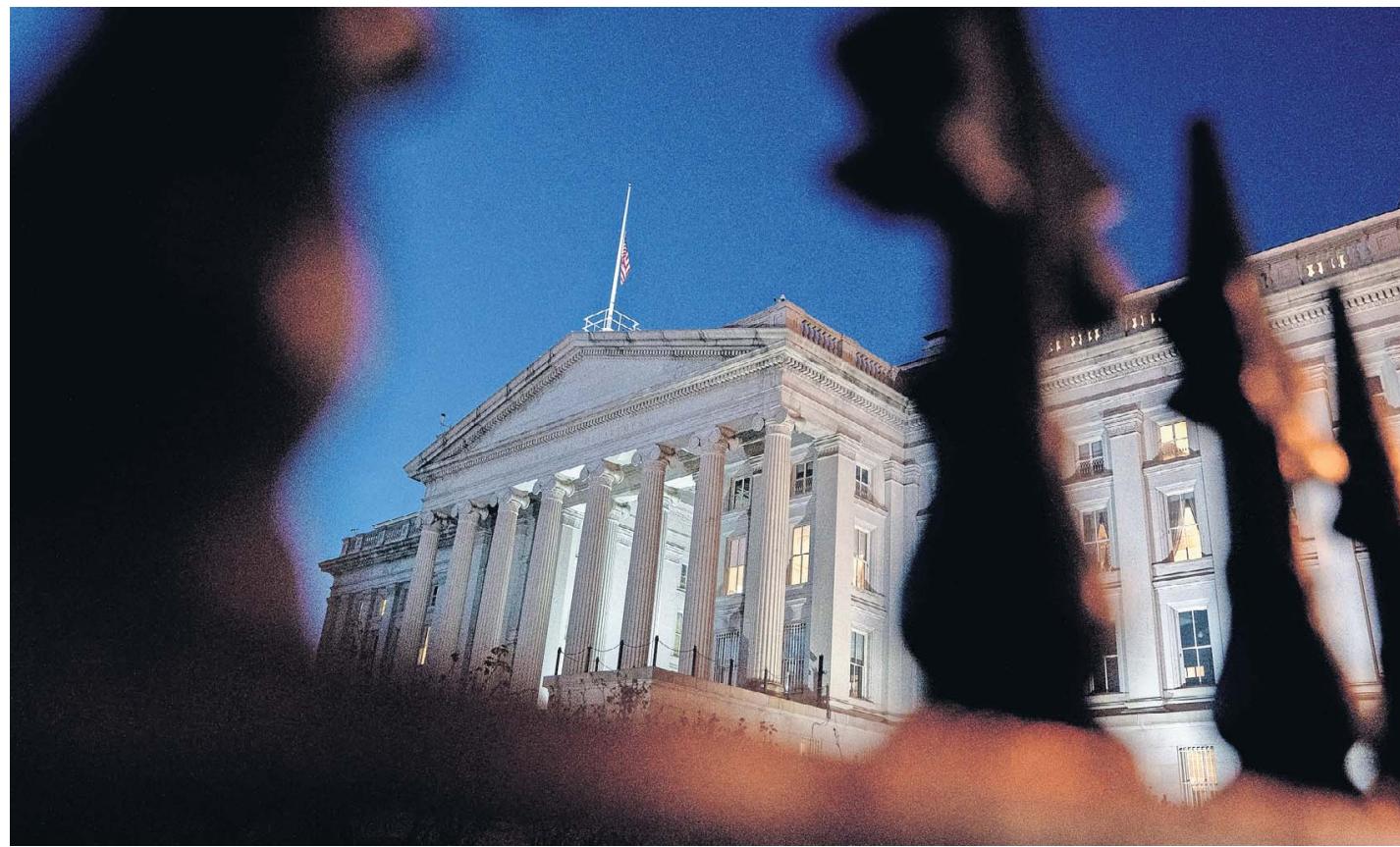
The M&G fund was suspended for trading on October 19 and its assets will be sold and returned to investors, a process that could take 18 months, the firm said. Management fees have been reduced from 0.8 per cent to 0.6 per cent.

In July, global regulators recommended fund managers running funds with illiquid assets charge clients to redeem their investments in order to dampen down an exit rush.

## COMPANIES &amp; MARKETS

Crypto. Backlash

# Digital currencies in renewed focus after Hamas attack



**Watchdogs step up scrutiny of alleged terror funding links in fresh setback for industry**

SCOTT CHIPOLINA

The crypto industry's long quest for legitimacy and mainstream adoption hit another big hurdle this month as US politicians and authorities intensified their focus on alleged links to the financing of terrorism.

High-profile lawsuits, including the criminal trial of Sam Bankman-Fried, founder of the failed FTX crypto platform, have already shed a harsh light on how the industry protects retail investors.

Last week, 105 senators from both main US political parties signed a letter calling on the Biden administration to detail steps it is taking to address the use of cryptocurrency by militant organisations following Hamas's attack on Israel earlier this month.

A few days later, the US Treasury said it would fight "acute money laundering and national security risk" by forcing more transparency on the opaque trades that pass through so-called crypto-mixing services.

Mixers obscure the trail of crypto ownership and payments.

"Crypto is under massive government assault," declared John Reed Stark, former chief of the Securities and Exchange Commission's office of internet enforcement.

"The venture capital money has moved on, and people are beginning to understand and realise that crypto's only proven-use case is financing a devastating array of crimes and terrorism," he said.

Regulators and politicians have warned for years that proscribed groups could use crypto coins and exchanges to raise and transfer funds.

In 2020, the Financial Action Task Force – a global financial crime watchdog – identified red flags that could indicate digital assets' use in terror financing.

Government efforts have sometimes been piecemeal.

In March, the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, the US derivatives regulator, alleged that company executives at Binance, the world's largest cryptocurrency exchange, had received information "regarding Hamas transactions" in 2019. Binance has said it will fight the CFTC lawsuit.

Hamas's October 7 attack on Israel has given greater urgency to efforts to cut off these channels.

In the week after the attack, Israel closed more than 100 accounts on Binance and requested information on up to 200 additional accounts, the majority of which are on Binance.

More than 150 digital currency donation initiatives affiliated with Hamas and other groups have been identified by the Israeli authorities since the attack.

Binance confirmed it had "blocked" a "small number" of accounts since the

summer and added that it "follows internationally recognised sanctions rules". It declined to provide further comment.

"The international community should find a way to police this threat more effectively, because it's growing," said Yair Samban, director at software firm Pegystems who previously served in the Israel Defense Forces.

The US Treasury said this week that "Hamas often relies on small-dollar donations, including through the use of virtual currency" for fundraising.

However, estimates vary over how much money is raised through cryptocurrency gifts.

Calculations are based on tracking the movement of money to suspected accounts, made possible by crypto's use of public ledgers to record trades.

After clashes between Hamas and Israel broke out in May 2021, blockchain analytics company Elliptic estimated that suspected Hamas accounts had received more than \$73,000 in bitcoin in just a few days.

By July, Israel said accounts that it identified as potentially affiliated with Hamas had received more than \$7mn in crypto.

Chainalysis, a company used by the US government to combat crime involving digital assets, said such financing was "a very small portion of the already very small portion of cryptocurrency transaction volume that is illicit".

It added that militant groups were likely to continue to use traditional methods such as financial institutions

**Dark money:**  
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Stefani Reynolds/AFP/Getty

and shell companies as their main vehicles for financing.

Even so, analysts said crypto's use in criminal activity leaves it exposed to political pressure.

"The risk the crypto industry faces is vocal, influential policymakers running with legislation that says 'look, not only can you not trust them because of FTX but now we discover they're even financing terrorism,'" said Tom Keatinge, founding director of the Centre for Financial Crime and Security Studies at UK think-tank Rusi.

That could make it harder for the biggest crypto companies, already fighting a rear-guard action after FTX's failure, to make their voice heard.

Coinbase, the US exchange, has spent \$2mn this year alone lobbying for specialist crypto rules, according to disclosure documents seen by the FT.

"It's going to be harder to get legislation passed in the US and there will now be a colder reception in Congress," said one lobbyist who represents members of the crypto sector in Washington. "But the industry will argue this is all the more reason we need strong laws to govern crypto," the person added.

Coinbase said it adhered to all global sanctions and added that it was a "shame that some lawmakers use world events to further an anti-crypto agenda".

"We believe that government and law enforcement resources would be better spent on addressing the primary means of funding for these groups: fiat-based funding vehicles," the exchange said.

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reception in  
Congress'**

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## Equities

## Shanghai and Shenzhen stocks drop to pre-Covid low as growth fears intensify

HUDSON LOCKETT AND CHENG LENG  
HONG KONG

Chinese shares fell to the lowest level since before the Covid-19 pandemic as Beijing's latest efforts to prop up the country's stock market failed to stem a sell-off driven by slowing economic growth, a liquidity crisis in the property sector and geopolitical tension.

The CSI 300 index of large and liquid Shanghai- and Shenzhen-listed stocks fell as much as 1.3 per cent yesterday to about 3,463, marking the equity benchmark's lowest level since 2019.

The gauge has fallen about 15 per cent so far this year, in dollar terms.

Chinese equities outperformed global markets early in the pandemic and staged a rally at the start of this year on hopes of a rebound from disruptive zero-Covid policies.

However, a subsequent slowdown in growth and high-profile defaults on dollar debt by Chinese developers have prompted investors to dump China stocks.

Meanwhile, a string of support measures launched since July by top officials – to "invigorate capital markets and

land policies to boost investor confidence", according to the politburo – have failed to halt the sell-off.

Global funds have also been unsettled by worsening relations between the US and China with asset managers coming under pressure from Washington over investments in some Chinese companies listed in Shanghai and Shenzhen.

"Global investors need two floors before they get back into China – they need a floor for the geopolitics and a floor for the Chinese economy," said an



Equities on the Shanghai stock exchange have waned during 2023

Asia-based senior capital markets banker at one Wall Street investment bank. "Only then they can start pricing things up."

Offshore investors using Hong Kong's Stock Connect programme to trade onshore Chinese stocks have sold a net Rmb169bn (\$23bn) worth of shares since the start of August, leaving net inflows for the year down more than 70 per cent from their peak at just Rmb66bn.

Downward pressure on prices has persisted despite Chinese authorities rolling out support measures in recent weeks.

Sovereign fund Central Huijin this month invested more than Rmb477mn in four state banks and pledged to buy more stock in the coming six months.

Since last week, dozens of mainland-listed companies, mostly state-owned groups such as China Petroleum & Chemical Corp and China Railway Construction Corp, have announced share buyback plans, adding to a pool of Rmb61.2bn share buybacks conducted so far this year on mainland stock markets, according to figures from data provider Wind.

**HARRY DEMPSEY**

Shares in non-Chinese graphite producers soared yesterday on expectations of stockpiling and a rush to secure alternative supplies after Beijing announced export restrictions on the material critical to electric-car batteries.

Australia's Syrah Resources, a Tesla supplier that operates the Balama graphite mine in Mozambique, jumped 40 per cent, adding to Friday's 16 per cent gain.

Other project developers followed with London-listed Tirupati Graphite soaring 20 per cent and Renacor Resources up 36 per cent.

Shares in Brisbane-based Novonix, which is backed by US energy group Phillips 66 and has operations to produce synthetic graphite in the US and Canada, gained 22 per cent.

Beijing shocked the global battery supply chain on Friday with its latest set of curbs, requiring special licences for exporters of graphite, citing "national security" grounds.

Graphite can be produced either using mined material, known as "natural" graphite, or using hydrocarbon

feedstocks, which is called "synthetic" graphite.

China is the world's largest producer for both production methods, holding a 90 per cent share in global production of the lithium-ion battery's anode, in which graphite is used.

Tirupati Graphite said in a statement yesterday that it expected consumers of graphite outside of China to try and

**'For western investors,  
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confront the challenges  
of investing in graphite'**

secure supply non-Chinese sources to mitigate the geopolitical risks.

Beijing's export restrictions were "positive for Tirupati both in terms of the likely impact on prices, and on the long-term demand for our product", said Shishir Poddar, executive chair of Tirupati Graphite.

Companies seeking to develop alternative sources in places such as Mozambique, Madagascar and Australia have struggled to raise financing from banks

because graphite pricing is opaque and controlled by Beijing, making it hard to guarantee a return.

That issue has been further compounded by the huge amount of overcapacity in China of fossil-fuel-based synthetic graphite production that has formed in the past year, driving prices lower.

Producers have suffered from a 30 per cent drop in graphite prices, according to Argus, with shares in most mining groups dropping by more than half.

"The natural [graphite producers] are screaming with joy because of this China announcement," said Ahmed Mehdi, an adviser specialising in lithium and graphite at Benchmark Mineral Intelligence, a battery metals business intelligence group.

However, many analysts see Beijing's move as political posturing. Mehdi questioned whether the picture would change dramatically for graphite project developers in the longer run – given that China would be likely to continue to export the glut of graphite in its own market. "For western investors, they will still have to confront the challenges of investing in graphite."

## Equities

## Northvolt examines Stockholm for IPO venue

IVAN LEVINGTON — LONDON  
RICHARD MILNE — OSLO

Northvolt is looking to list its shares in Stockholm over other venues for one of the largest flotations for a European company in recent years.

The Swedish battery maker is being advised by Rothschild & Co as it invites investment banks to formally pitch for roles on the deal, which could value the company at roughly \$20bn, according to people familiar with the matter.

The company, which was founded in 2017 by two former Tesla executives to become Europe's largest homegrown battery maker, could go public as soon as next year.

However, its plans are preliminary and could change, especially as market conditions remain volatile, the people said.

Northvolt and Rothschild declined to comment.

"They want to be ready to go, whenever the market conditions are right," said one person familiar with the proposed listing. "They want everything in place."

Andreas Pettersson Rohman, its head of corporate finance, told the Financial Times' sister publication Sifted this year: "We have worked for more than a year to get all processes and internal controls in place and then it will be up to

**'They want to be ready to go, whenever the market conditions are right. They want everything in place'**

the market to judge. Let's see how the market looks in the next year or two."

Northvolt is backed by investors including Goldman Sachs Asset Management and VW. It raised €1.2bn in convertible bonds from investors including the world's largest money manager BlackRock earlier this year.

The company is also planning to unveil more than \$5bn in debt financing in the coming weeks, confirming an FT story from March, as it cements its status as the European start-up that has raised the most capital.

Northvolt, whose investors include German car group BMW, technology group Siemens and US investment manager Blackstone, needs the funding for the four gigafactories it is building or planning as well as several battery recycling facilities and other plants in Europe and North America.

It will start construction of a factory just outside Montreal in Canada later this year and aims to start production in 2026 as part of a \$5bn bet on the North American market as well as an attempt to secure better access to crucial minerals needed for batteries.

European and North American countries are locked in a subsidy battle to attract local battery makers to rival the dominant Asian players.

VW told EU officials this year that US subsidies – which Canada has largely promised to match, according to companies – were worth about €9bn-€10bn per factory.

## COMPANIES &amp; MARKETS

# Big problem looms for bond investors over issuance glut

Tomasz Wieladek

## Markets Insight



**D**oes the supply of bonds affect the level of yields? The answer is a firm no, according to a popular theory of bond valuation.

This argues that long-term interest rates are just the average of future short-term interest rates — which is a good description of the yield curve in normal times. But that is not the state of the world we are in today.

Sovereign debt demand from the public sector and regulated entities has been unprecedented in the past decade.

Quantitative easing programmes of bond buying since the financial crisis to support economies and markets led central banks to raise their share significantly of domestic government debt.

Foreign monetary authorities bought G7 government bonds as part of their foreign exchange reserves. Demand from banks rose as a result of liquidity regulations following the Basel III reforms.

For all these reasons, the private sector had only to absorb a trickle of sovereign debt issued, even during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic when a huge rise in public sector deficits was accompanied by a massive increase in QE.

This has significantly distorted major bond markets. The Bank of Japan owns more than 50 per cent of the Japanese government bond market. Only about 20 to 40 per cent of Germany's Bund market is available for private investors. A sign of such distortions: 10-year Bund yields traded deep into negative yield territory as recently as two years ago.

Since private investors arbitrage yield differentials across G7 bond markets, these distortions have probably pulled yields lower across the world — even in less distorted markets. This large presence of price-insensitive buyers

reduced uncertainty about future yield levels. As a result, so-called term premia collapsed across the world. This is the extra return for investors for taking on interest rate risk over longer periods.

Such distortions also probably affected markets' ability to price and indicate R star — the interest rate level at which monetary policy is just right to keep the economy at an equilibrium level: not too tight or too loose.

But these tailwinds have come to an end. On the demand side, major central banks are now in quantitative tightening mode — government securities are either sold actively or maturing bonds

### Central banks are mostly not in the market. The private sector has to absorb a large amount of new debt

are not reinvested any more. At the same time, governments are issuing large amounts of debt due to large deficits.

But this time around, central banks — the price-insensitive buyers — are mostly not in the market. The private sector now has to absorb a large amount of new sovereign debt.

The theory that describes the curve well in normal times says this should not matter for the level of yields. But yields are determined by the marginal buyer, which will now be the price-sensitive private sector.

In this new world, bond supply can affect the level of yields through term premia. A rise in outstanding bonds will raise the share of private sector ownership as central banks are not in the market any more. But private sector invest-

tors have many other options when it comes to purchasing bonds. So yields have to rise to become more attractive.

For example, primary dealers purchased 18 per cent of the total amount at a recent 30-year US Treasury auction, relative to the average take-up of 11 per cent in the past two years, because other private sector buyers stayed away.

This signal of weak demand led to an immediate rise in US bond yields. These dynamics become even more important when all G7 governments are issuing a glut of debt at the same time.

Then private investors have a much wider choice of what to buy. To attract them, bonds of countries with the same default risk will need to offer higher yields. This is an important reason for the recent rebound in term premia.

Expectations of future large bond supply have similar effects on term premia. In 2022, US government bonds recorded their biggest losses since 1871.

As a result of this and an expectation of a lot of issuance to come, investors will be cautious about holding an excessive amount of government bonds. This uncertainty about the future level of yields as a result of higher expected issuance contributes to higher term premia.

In the UK and the US, term premia have already reached levels last seen before the 2008 financial crisis. However, given the large amount of issuance, QT and investor caution about future yield levels, term premia could easily rise further from the levels we see today.

Governments and investors need to be aware that, in current circumstances, bond issuance is an important determinant of yields.

*Tomasz Wieladek is chief European economist at T Rowe Price*

## The day in the markets

### What you need to know

- Wall Street stocks rise as traders prepare for Big Tech earnings
- China's CSI 300 index retreats to lowest level since 2019
- US Treasury yields fall from historic highs

US stocks gained ground while Treasury yields retreated from their highest level in 16 years yesterday as investors geared up for third-quarter results from some of Wall Street's biggest tech names.

In New York, the benchmark S&P 500 added 0.7 per cent, reversing early losses, as investors snapped up US government debt.

The tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite rose 1.2 per cent ahead of a week in which Alphabet, Microsoft, Meta and Amazon — four of the so-called "magnificent seven" stocks that have propelled US equity markets higher this year — all report quarterly earnings.

Advances for US equities bucked a day of declines in Europe and Asia as

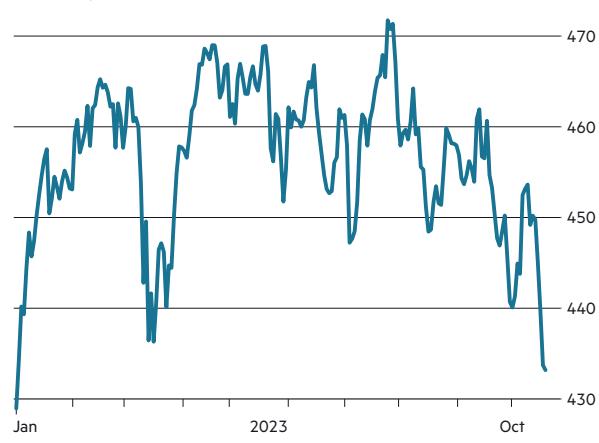
concerns persisted over the impact of higher bond yields and geopolitical uncertainty since the war between Israel and Hamas began this month.

The region-wide Stoxx Europe 600 dropped to its lowest level since early January, LSEG data showed, while China's CSI 300 index of large and liquid Shanghai- and Shenzhen-listed stocks fell to its lowest level since 2019.

The CAC 40 in Paris added 0.5 per cent and Frankfurt's Xetra Dax was steady ahead of a European Central Bank meeting this week in which policymakers are widely expected to leave interest rates unchanged.

### European stocks sink to lowest level since January

Stoxx Europe 600 index



Jan 2023 Oct

Source: LSEG

London's FTSE 100 shed 0.4 per cent.

"Equities have started to adjust to the new regime of greater volatility but don't fully reflect the macro damage we expect," according to analysts at BlackRock.

"Markets expect a pick-up in corporate earnings to start in the [third-quarter] reporting season that gets underway in earnest this week. We are cautious."

Treasury yields fell back from historic highs, with those on 10-year bonds falling 6 basis points to 4.86 per cent, having earlier breached 5 per cent for the first time since 2007.

The rate-sensitive two-year yield was steady at 5.08 per cent.

The jump in Treasury yields since September 20 has been equivalent to around a 0.75 percentage point interest rate rise, according to Morgan Stanley.

Officials at the US Federal Reserve think "the [market] is doing the Fed's job", analysts at the bank said.

In currency markets, a measure of the dollar's strength against a basket of six international peers lost 0.4 per cent.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, slipped 2.4 per cent to \$89.97 a barrel.

**George Steer**

### Markets update

	US	Eurozone	Japan	UK	China	Brazil
Stocks	S&P 500	Eurofirst 300	Nikkei 225	FTSE100	Shanghai Comp	Bovespa
Level	4240.29	172159	30999.55	7374.83	2939.29	113336.74
% change on day	0.38	-0.13	-0.83	-0.37	-1.47	0.16
Currency	\$ index (DXY)	\$ per €	Yen per \$	£ per £	Rmb per \$	Real per \$
Level	106.057	1.063	149.865	1.221	7.316	5.011
% change on day	-0.100	0.378	-0.020	0.494	0.003	-0.746
Govt. bonds	10-year Treasury	10-year Bund	10-year JGB	10-year Gilt	10-year bond	10-year bond
Yield	4.866	2.870	0.869	4.761	2.716	11.390
Basis point change on day	-4.120	-1.800	3.010	-5.400	0.100	-3.400
World index, Commodity	FTSE All-World	Oil - Brent	Oil - WTI	Gold	Silver	Metals (LME)
Level	424.27	90.93	86.71	1988.50	23.22	3559.70
% change on day	0.16	-1.33	-1.56	1.79	1.44	-0.27

Yesterday's close apart from: Currencies = 16:00 GMT; S&P, Bovespa, All World, Oil = 17:00 GMT; Gold, Silver = London pm fix. Bond data supplied by Tullett Prebon.

### Main equity markets



### Biggest movers

%	US	Eurozone	UK
Ups	Walgreens Boots Alliance 5.01	Kerry Grp 2.81	Flutter Entertainment 4.06
Mgm Resorts Int 4.62	Unicredit 2.55	Ocado 3.84	
Airbnb 3.91	A.p. Moller - Maersk B 2.19	Int Consolidated Airlines S.a. 2.83	
Wynn Resorts 3.63	Heidelbergcement 2.15	Informa 2.30	
Carnival 3.54	Inditex 1.76	Rolls-royce Holdings 2.29	
Fmc -12.14	Merck -2.92	Fresnillo -4.68	
Bath & Body Works -3.73	Telecom Italia -2.64	Astrazeneca -3.16	
Occidental Petroleum -3.24	B. Sabadell -2.51	Bt -2.85	
Viatris -2.74	Porsche -2.47	Bp -2.42	
Chevron -2.59	Volkswagen -2.12	Endeavour Mining -2.39	

Prices taken at 17:00 GMT  
Based on the constituents of the FTSE Eurofirst 300 Eurozone

All data provided by Morningstar unless otherwise noted.

### Wall Street

Sinking to the bottom of the S&P 500 index was agricultural sciences company **FMC**, which lowered its third-quarter revenue and earnings outlook.

Several reasons were behind this revision, including drought in Argentina and substantially lower sales volumes in Latin America, particularly in Brazil where destocking was "much greater than we had anticipated", it said.

Container lessor **Textainer** surged after agreeing to be bought by Stonepeak, an investment firm specialising in infrastructure and real estate.

The \$50-per-share offer represented a 46 per cent premium to Friday's closing price and gave Textainer an enterprise value of \$7.4bn.

The deal was expected to close in the first quarter of next year, leading to Textainer being taken private.

Care diagnostics company **LumiraDX** soared on announcing a strategic collaboration with AstraZeneca and an Everton football club charity to set up a community-based heart and lung screening hub in England.

Companies linked to cryptocurrencies tracked bitcoin, which climbed above \$31,000 to a three-month high. **Marathon Digital**, **Coinbase**, **Canaan** and **BlockChain** all advanced sharply. **Ray Douglas**

### Europe

Norway's **Adevinta** fell sharply after a report that its suitors were reconsidering their bid to buy the online ads company.

The group confirmed last month that it had received an indicative takeover proposal from a consortium led by private equity firms Permira and Blackstone. But Bloomberg said the buyout groups were now discussing whether to go ahead.

A regulatory development buoyed **Mithra**, the women-focused healthcare group, which said its Asian partner, Fuji Pharma, had submitted an application for marketing approval of its drug, Estelle, to help combat menstrual cramps.

The filing triggered a €2.5mn milestone payment for the Belgian group, which could also expect a further €10mn in fees on the approval of this application.

Germany's **Varta** rallied after board member Markus Hackstein told the Augsburger Allgemeine newspaper that the battery maker had resumed supplying an important customer.

**Atos** slid after some French lawmakers called for a temporary nationalisation of the indebted tech contractor.

Socialist politician Philippe Brun took to X, formerly Twitter, citing national independence grounds for the move.

The French group recouped most of the day's losses after Reuters quoted a finance ministry source who said this was not an option. **Ray Douglas**

### London

Heading the FTSE 250 index was **Keller**, which issued a bullish trading update, with the geotechnical contractor expecting full-year underlying operating profit to be "materially ahead of current market expectations".

Keller flagged a "more resilient" performance in North America while in Australia its infrastructure sector was particularly strong.

Joining Keller near the top of the mid-cap index was pharma group **Indivior**, which reached an agreement to resolve claims brought by drug wholesalers relating to antitrust litigation around the marketing of Suboxone, an opioid addiction treatment.

Indivior will pay \$385mn as part of the agreement and take a charge of \$228mn in the third quarter.

Housebuilder **Vistry** was at the opposite end of the FTSE 250 after lowering its annual earnings target, forecasting an underlying pre-tax profit of £410mn, down from "in excess of £450mn" stated in July.

This reflected its shift to a "partnerships model" — where Vistry is looking to build more affordable homes.

Jersey-based oil and gas group **Upland Resources** surged after rebuffing an "unsolicited, very preliminary" takeover approach from hedge fund SEC Capital. **Ray Douglas**

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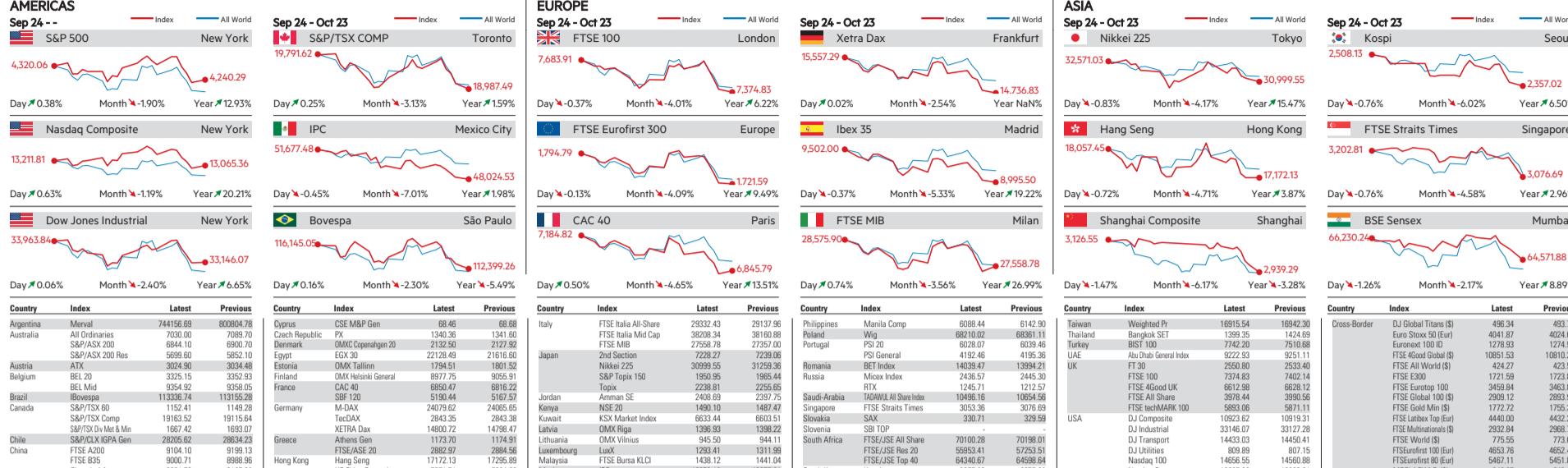
## MARKET DATA

## WORLD MARKETS AT A GLANCE

Change during previous day's trading (%)



Stock Market movements over last 30 days, with the FTSE All-World in the same currency as a comparison



(c) Closed. (u) Unavailable. ↑ Correction. ▲ Subject to official recalculation. For more index coverage please see www.ft.com/worldindices. A fuller version of this table is available on the ft.com research service archive.

## STOCK MARKET: BIGGEST MOVERS

Country	Index	Latest	Previous	Country	Index	Latest	Previous	Country	Index	Latest	Previous	Country	Index	Latest	Previous								
Argentina	Merval	747,165.68	700,947.48	Cyprus	CSE M&P Gen	295,024.43	185,454	Denmark	FTSE Italia All-Share	26,917.95	18,981.93	Denmark	FTSE Italia Mid Cap	30,808.34	26,603.89	Denmark	FTSE Italia Mid Cap	30,808.34	26,603.89				
Australia	All Ordinaries	7,030.00	7,000.00	Czech Republic	CMV Copenhagen 20	1,340,426	1,414,031	Finland	FTSE Italia MIP	2,056.97	2,251.00	Egypt	EGX 30	2,218,49	2,161,60	Egypt	FTSE Italia Topix 150	1,955.95	1,955.44	Egypt	FTSE Italia Topix 150	1,955.95	1,955.44
SGX ASX 200	SGX ASX 200	6,941.10	6,900.00	Estonia	OMX Tallinn	1,794.51	1,801.53	FTSE	FTSE 100	7,683.91	7,683.91	FTSE	Xetra Dax	15,557.29	15,557.29	FTSE	FTSE 100	7,683.91	7,683.91	FTSE	FTSE 100	7,683.91	7,683.91
SGX ASX 200 Res	SGX ASX 200 Res	6,593.60	5,852.10	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE 100	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE 100	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE 100	19,791.62	19,878.49
Austria	ATX	3,024.90	3,034.84	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49
Belgium	BEI 20	3,325.15	3,335.93	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49
Brazil	Ibovespa	113,336.74	113,355.28	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49
Canada	S&P/TSX	115.21	114.41	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49
SGX TSX Div & Min	SGX TSX Div & Min	18,167.42	18,163.07	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49
Chile	S&P/TAI	33,963.84	33,970.00	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49
China	FTSE A200	2,000.00	1,998.13	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49
FTSE B35	FTSE B35	9,001.71	8,998.96	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49
FTSE B35	FTSE B35	9,001.71	8,998.96	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49
FTSE B35	FTSE B35	9,001.71	8,998.96	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49
FTSE B35	FTSE B35	9,001.71	8,998.96	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49
FTSE B35	FTSE B35	9,001.71	8,998.96	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49
FTSE B35	FTSE B35	9,001.71	8,998.96	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49
FTSE B35	FTSE B35	9,001.71	8,998.96	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49
FTSE B35	FTSE B35	9,001.71	8,998.96	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49
FTSE B35	FTSE B35	9,001.71	8,998.96	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300	19,791.62	19,878.49	FTSE	FTSE Eurofirst 300		

## MARKET DATA

## FT500: THE WORLD'S LARGEST COMPANIES

Stock	Price	Day Chg	High	Low	Yld	P/E	MCap m	Stock	Price	Day Chg	High	Low	Yld	P/E	MCap m	Stock	Price	Day Chg	High	Low	Yld	P/E	MCap m	Stock	Price	Day Chg	High	Low	Yld	P/E	MCap m	
<b>Australia (AS)</b>																																
ANZ Bank	25.22	-0.05	26.08	22.39	6.03	10.50	47935.59	Nokia	3.02	-0.01	4.88	2.91	2.94	4.19	18050.33	Denso	229.95	-1.70	2613.75	1597.25	2.01	4.99	48276.19	Richemont	105.80	0.85	161.10	96.50	2.13	16.24	61955.41	
BHP Group	43.36	-1.07	50.05	36.93	9.33	11.21	13900.46	SampoA	37.03	-0.17	45.46	34.55	4.79	26.43	19743.33	EastJpRwy	7645	-9.40	894	6706	1.30	23.11	19279.31	BristolMyers	56.29	-0.17	81.44	55.70	3.84	15.59	117591.22	
CnrvB&Au	97.82	-0.93	111.38	93.05	4.34	16.42	102699.49	FastRetail	33310	-530.0	37550	53986.67	2.28	22.80	17472.54	Faucu	3777	-46.00	24645	11.00	1.76	35.33	70729.3	Broadcom	866.18	12.15	925.11	429.17	1.76	28.09	357503.24	
CSL	236.80	3.71	314.21	230.81	1.47	34.43	72345.92	Airbus Grp	125.90	1.24	138.76	121.34	1.45	25.38	202819.28	Fiji Hwy	208.53	-16.00	3115	2.84	8.33	13899.0	CapOne	91.57	1.34	120.95	83.93	2.52	7.26	34282.59		
NatAustBk	28.58	-0.09	32.28	25.16	0.14	2.04	565.78	Credit Agricole	152.90	0.30	168.48	122.44	1.90	25.56	85132.09	Hitch	8111	-0.10	8011	6255	1.66	12.15	53293.24	CardinalHlth	91.92	-0.46	95.45	68.53	2.08	95.72	22446.86	
Telstra	3.74	-0.01	4.46	3.76	4.27	23.30	36745.05	KuonMtr	161.92	-18.50	1021	1020.22	1.00	2.00	30471.91	JapanTob	3409	-1.00	2900	1100	1.24	2.00	20471.91	Zurich Fin	417.00	-0.20	458.00	339.00	5.49	15.78	68354.54	
Westpac	51.24	-0.03	54.28	43.78	3.71	27.30	36745.05	Alimentar	125.90	1.24	138.76	121.34	1.45	25.38	202819.28	Kodai	4465	-13.00	4767	2404	8.01	13.13	45761.71	Linde	367.05	0.69	393.67	276.64	1.28	33.41	171900.53	
Westpac Bank	20.84	-0.02	24.50	20.03	2.27	11.42	46259.82	Aviva	21.75	-0.09	30.34	24.24	6.15	9.68	63505.37	BNP Parib	50.70	0.57	67.00	46.85	8.11	69.91	86530.37	Broadcom	866.18	12.15	925.11	429.17	1.76	28.09	357503.24	
Woolworths	36.81	0.26	40.35	31.67	2.72	27.53	28439.11	AXA	21.75	-0.09	30.34	24.24	6.15	9.68	63505.37	FastRetail	33310	-530.0	37550	53986.67	2.28	22.80	17472.54	Swiss Re	190.47	-0.03	237.21	176.50	2.12	19.43	109563.24	
<b>Belgium (C)</b>																																
ABN Amro	49.82	-0.06	62.01	45.73	1.51	18.14	91985.87	Keyence	53220	-13.00	71890	48650	3.55	35.25	86530.1	FastRetail	33310	-530.0	37550	53986.67	2.28	22.80	17472.54	Lowe's	190.47	-0.03	237.21	176.50	2.12	19.43	109563.24	
KBC Grp	51.96	-0.02	72.46	51.86	6.28	23040.57	BNP Parib	50.70	0.57	67.00	46.85	8.11	69.91	86530.37	Alimentar	125.90	-18.50	1021	1020.22	1.00	2.00	30471.91	CardinalHlth	91.92	-0.46	95.45	68.53	2.08	95.72	22446.86		
Ambev	12.53	0.04	16.88	12.38	6.07	13.94	39394.04	AXA	21.75	-0.09	30.34	24.24	6.15	9.68	63505.37	BNP Parib	50.70	0.57	67.00	46.85	8.11	69.91	86530.37	CardinalHlth	91.92	-0.46	95.45	68.53	2.08	95.72	22446.86	
Bradesco	12.50	0.05	17.43	11.15	9.31	9.35	12397.03	Denso	125.90	1.24	138.76	121.34	1.45	25.38	202819.28	Keyence	53220	-13.00	71890	48650	3.55	35.25	86530.1	CardinalHlth	91.92	-0.46	95.45	68.53	2.08	95.72	22446.86	
Cielo	3.67	0.04	6.02	3.24	8.11	2.76	1988.95	Alimentar	125.90	-18.50	1021	1020.22	1.00	2.00	30471.91	Keyence	53220	-13.00	71890	48650	3.55	35.25	86530.1	CardinalHlth	91.92	-0.46	95.45	68.53	2.08	95.72	22446.86	
Itau <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Unibanco</li></ul>	23.18	0.08	31.24	19.00	15.34	15.34	12397.03	BNP Parib	50.70	0.57	67.00	46.85	8.11	69.91	86530.37	Denso	125.90	-18.50	1021	1020.22	1.00	2.00	30471.91	CardinalHlth	91.92	-0.46	95.45	68.53	2.08	95.72	22446.86	
Petrobras	38.75	-0.06	42.08	23.61	3.23	3.23	5.47	15754.93	AXA	21.75	-0.09	30.34	24.24	6.15	9.68	63505.37	BNP Parib	50.70	0.57	67.00	46.85	8.11	69.91	86530.37	CardinalHlth	91.92	-0.46	95.45	68.53	2.08	95.72	22446.86
Vale	62.76	-0.05	61.00	61.00	1.52	18.99	69655.73	Denso	125.90	-18.50	1021	1020.22	1.00	2.00	30471.91	Keyence	53220	-13.00	71890	48650	3.55	35.25	86530.1	CardinalHlth	91.92	-0.46	95.45	68.53	2.08	95.72	22446.86	
<b>Canada (CS)</b>																																
Bausch Hlth	9.91	-0.11	13.81	7.56	-	-14.76	26176.17	Nokia	229.95	-1.70	2613.75	1597.25	2.01	4.99	48276.19	Richemont	105.80	0.85	161.10	96.50	2.13	16.24	61955.41	Linde	367.05	0.69	393.67	276.64	1.28	33.41	171900.53	
Bell	51.02	-0.34	65.48	48.97	7.75	20.77	32898.02	SamoaP	37.03	-0.17	45.46	34.55	4.79	26.43	19743.33	EastJpRwy	7645	-9.40	894	6706	1.30	23.11	19279.31	Broadcom	866.18	12.15	925.11	429.17	1.76	28.09	357503.24	
BiM	167.03	0.19	167.84	165.55	2.05	15.21	52.00	SamoaP	37.03	-0.17	45.46	34.55	4.79	26.43	19743.33	FastRetail	33310	-530.0	37550	53986.67	2.28	22.80	17472.54	Swiss Re	190.47	-0.03	237.21	176.50	2.05	12.04	11204.01	
BNBvs+	57.23	-0.55	74.41	7.16	7.07	7.07																										

## FINANCIAL TIMES SHARE SERVICE

## Main Market

Main Market																																										
52 Week																																										
	Price	+/-Chg	High	Low	Yld	P/E	Vol	000s	Price	+/-Chg	High	Low	Yld	P/E	Vol	000s	Price	+/-Chg	High	Low	Yld	P/E	Vol	000s	Price	+/-Chg	High	Low	Yld	P/E	Vol	000s										
<b>Aerospace &amp; Defence</b>																																										
Avon Protection	845.00	<b>5.00</b>	1260	562.00	3.47	-14.26	96.4		abrdn	154.50	<b>3.60</b>	238.00	146.80	9.45	3.36	6345.5		Headlam	180.00	<b>0.50</b>	350.00	176.00	9.16	7.92	19.0		Experian	2807	<b>45.00</b>	3126	2559	1.20	34.47	1467.1								
<b>BAE Sys</b>	1068	<b>6.50</b>	1094	702.20	2.27	19.52	3562.9		CtyOnlty Pfc	17.75	<b>6.50</b>	263.40	164.80	11.09	1314.8		McBride	39.65	<b>0.55</b>	46.00	19.00	-	7.08	4.0	Ferguson	12556	<b>80.00</b>	14030	8852	1.43	38.60	66.0										
Chemring	285.90	<b>5.50</b>	332.50	253.95	1.47	19.63	425.2		CloseBr	760.00	<b>-13.00</b>	1130	749.70	7.89	5.68	163.2		Philippe €	17.75	<b>0.35</b>	29.14	12.13	4.62	27.47	3888.1	Hayes	94.65	<b>0.90</b>	130.95	92.10	1.29	13.66	4273.3									
<b>Automobiles &amp; Parts</b>									CSiCars	42.00	<b>0.80</b>	56.10	19.00	-	-0.07	21.6		PTCusns	135.00	-	223.00	130.80	4.51	15.47	246.4	HowdenJny	639.00	<b>5.40</b>	766.60	478.90	2.10	12.06	1387.0									
FordMtr \$e	11.61	<b>-0.03</b>	15.42	10.90	4.96	11.73	2023.3		<b>Harg Lans</b>	695.20	<b>-4.80</b>	1023.5	682.00	5.54	12.39	2549.3		Redrow	466.40	<b>3.20</b>	558.50	394.20	5.22	5.74	311.3	Intertek	4039	<b>41.00</b>	4546	3570	2.62	22.70	170.9									
<b>Banks</b>									Indvardh Sk	276.60	<b>-1.10</b>	305.70	239.20	2.48	9.49	358.7		Vistry Group	633.00	<b>-0.85</b>	164.80	36.30	-	-1.94	123.3	Pearson	64.56	<b>0.68</b>	96.62	62.78	-	6.94	5598.3	Ritvik	98.70	<b>2.50</b>	107.00	65.00	-	49.35	37.2	
ANZ AS\$	25.22	<b>-0.05</b>	26.08	22.39	6.03	10.50	2767.3		Bridgton Grp Pfc	17.75	<b>6.50</b>	263.40	164.80	11.09	1314.8		Headlam	180.00	<b>0.50</b>	350.00	176.00	9.16	7.92	19.0	Dmitri	286.00	<b>0.70</b>	522.29	290.80	5.04	49.45	2410.0										
BosSant	296.00	<b>-7.50</b>	343.50	218.65	2.17	7.06	200.8		CtyOnlty	321.00	<b>-7.00</b>	475.00	302.80	10.28	7.54	69.9		Philippe €	17.75	<b>0.35</b>	29.14	12.13	4.62	27.47	3888.1	Great Portland	384.80	<b>0.60</b>	605.50	373.80	3.27	4.82	274.4									
BnkGeorgia	3330	<b>75.00</b>	3762	2000	6.91	3.17	51.0		Goodwin	510.00	<b>50.00</b>	5700	295.80	2.09	24.95	2.0		McBride	39.65	<b>0.55</b>	46.00	19.00	-	-7.08	4.3	Harward Grp	604.40	<b>7.20</b>	663.80	478.90	2.82	18.64	2572.0									
Bankrie Grp €	8.96	<b>-0.13</b>	11.03	6.93	-	10.19	461.7		CloseBr	760.00	<b>-13.00</b>	1130	749.70	7.89	5.68	163.2		Philippe €	17.75	<b>0.35</b>	29.14	12.13	4.62	27.47	3888.1	LondonMts	270.00	<b>-1.20</b>	204.20	157.50	4.21	34.3	2651.7									
BkNvAs S\$e	57.23	<b>0.55</b>	74.41	56.33	7.16	9.07	1156.5		CSiCars	1498	<b>28.00</b>	883.00	102.31	4.94	11.59	165.7		Indvardh Sk	180.00	<b>0.50</b>	350.00	176.00	9.16	7.92	19.0	Intertek	4039	<b>41.00</b>	4546	3570	2.62	22.70	170.9									
<b>Barclays</b>	144.04	<b>-0.80</b>	198.86	128.12	5.06	4.16	39921.4		<b>Harg Lans</b>	695.20	<b>-4.80</b>	1023.5	682.00	5.54	12.39	2549.3		Redrow	466.40	<b>3.20</b>	558.50	394.20	5.22	5.74	311.3	Intertek	4039	<b>41.00</b>	4546	3570	2.62	22.70	170.9									
Carling C\$e	48.00	<b>-0.30</b>	68.00	49.44	4.26	4.46	4861.6		Indvardh Sk	276.60	<b>-1.10</b>	305.70	239.20	2.48	9.49	358.7		Vistry Group	633.00	<b>-0.85</b>	164.80	36.30	-	-1.94	123.3	Intertek	4039	<b>41.00</b>	4546	3570	2.62	22.70	170.9									
<b>HSBC</b>	41.24	<b>-0.17</b>	54.33	40.71	5.67	24	756.8		Indvardh Sk	276.60	<b>-1.10</b>	305.70	239.20	2.48	9.49	358.7		Philippe €	17.75	<b>0.35</b>	29.14	12.13	4.62	27.47	3888.1	Intertek	4039	<b>41.00</b>	4546	3570	2.62	22.70	170.9									
Lloyds	41.42	<b>-0.17</b>	54.33	40.71	5.67	24	756.8		Indvardh Sk	276.60	<b>-1.10</b>	305.70	239.20	2.48	9.49	358.7		Philippe €	17.75	<b>0.35</b>	29.14	12.13	4.62	27.47	3888.1	Intertek	4039	<b>41.00</b>	4546	3570	2.62	22.70	170.9									
<b>NWGrp</b>	215.30	<b>-3.20</b>	310.00	214.60	6.40	4.62	1957.6		Indvardh Sk	276.60	<b>-1.10</b>	305.70	239.20	2.48	9.49	358.7		Philippe €	17.75	<b>0.35</b>	29.14	12.13	4.62	27.47	3888.1	Intertek	4039	<b>41.00</b>	4546	3570	2.62	22.70	170.9									
PermTSB €	2.35	<b>-0.04</b>	2.81	1.18	-	1.08	106.7		Indvardh Sk	276.60	<b>-1.10</b>	305.70	239.20	2.48	9.49	358.7		Philippe €	17.75	<b>0.35</b>	29.14	12.13	4.62	27.47	3888.1	Intertek	4039	<b>41.00</b>	4546	3570	2.62	22.70	170.9									
Stanch	717.40	<b>-4.80</b>	799.40	515.60	1.97	9.36	3672.4		Indvardh Sk	276.60	<b>-1.10</b>	305.70	239.20	2.48	9.49	358.7		Philippe €	17.75	<b>0.35</b>	29.14	12.13	4.62	27.47	3888.1	Intertek	4039	<b>41.00</b>	4546	3570	2.62	22.70	170.9									
Trans	99.25	<b>-1.10</b>	105.75	94.50	7.22	6.07	1078.3		Indvardh Sk	276.60	<b>-1.10</b>	305.70	239.20	2.48	9.49	358.7		Philippe €	17.75	<b>0.35</b>	29.14	12.13	4.62	27.47	3888.1	Intertek	4039	<b>41.00</b>	4546	3570	2.62	22.70	170.9									
Westpac A\$e	20.84	<b>-0.02</b>	24.50	10.00	9.91	5.40	93.7		Indvardh Sk	276.60	<b>-1.10</b>	305.70	239.20																													

## MANAGED FUNDS SERVICE

## SUMMARY

## FT.COM/FUNDS

Winners - US Fund Large Value							Losers - US Fund Large Value							Morningstar Star Ratings							Global Broad Category Group - Miscellaneous						
Fund Name	1yr Return GBP	3yr Return GBP	5yr Return GBP	3yr Sharpe Ratio	3yr Std Dev	Fund Name	1yr Return GBP	3yr Return GBP	5yr Return GBP	3yr Sharpe Ratio	3yr Std Dev	Fund Name	Base Currency	Morningstar Rating 3 Yr	Morningstar Rating 5 Yr	Morningstar Rating 10 Yr	Morningstar Category	Base Currency	Total Ret 1Yr GBP	Total Ret 3Yr GBP	Total Ret 5Yr GBP						
Hutchins & Wiley Value Opportunities Fund	12.99	15.37	7.65	0.86	23.56	WP Large Cap Income Plus Fund	8.09	-0.08	-2.89	0.11	27.73	Pound Sterling	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	Guaranteed Funds Equities	Mexican Peso	-4.87	6.66	-							
Hutchins & Wiley Diversified Value Fund	11.49	14.56	6.64	0.82	24.02	Boyar Fund	5.70	1.46	1.24	0.16	18.27	Pound Sterling	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	Capital Protected Funds	Mexican Peso	8.63	4.68	5.46							
BNY Mellon Dynamic Value Fund	11.83	14.50	8.70	1.00	17.62	City National Rockdale Equity Income Fund	-4.36	2.05	1.75	0.19	15.41	Global Bond Inc	★★★	★★★	★★★	Capital Protected	Baht	0.06	-0.18	-0.05							
BNY Mellon Income Stock Fund	10.28	14.38	7.92	0.98	17.57	CoHo Relative Value ESG Fund	-0.67	2.53	-	0.21	16.01	Jane Henderson Non-Manager Income & Growth Fund A Inc	★★★	★★★	★★★	Other	Mexican Peso	3.52	-0.19	1.21							
Invesco Constant Select Fund	10.24	14.16	7.71	0.94	19.74	The MP 63 Fund	3.57	3.15	5.23	0.31	16.34	Pound Sterling	★	*	★★★	ELF/DLF	US Dollar	-0.60	-4.38	-							

Advertising Feature							Performance							Weighings - As of							Top 10 Holdings - As of						
Oct 2020 - Oct 2023 New Capital China Equity Fund							Fund							Category							Sector						
Oct 2020 - Oct 2023 New Capital China Equity Fund							Fund							Category							Sector						
Firm Name	EFG Asset Management (UK) Ltd						Fund Name	1yr Return GBP	3yr Return GBP	5yr Return GBP	3yr Sharpe Ratio	3yr Std Dev	Fund Name	Base Currency	Morningstar Rating 3 Yr	Morningstar Rating 5 Yr	Morningstar Rating 10 Yr	Morningstar Category	Base Currency	Total Ret 1Yr GBP	Total Ret 3Yr GBP	Total Ret 5Yr GBP					
Fund Name	1yr Return GBP	3yr Return GBP	5yr Return GBP	3yr Sharpe Ratio	3yr Std Dev	Fund Name	1yr Return GBP	3yr Return GBP	5yr Return GBP	3yr Sharpe Ratio	3yr Std Dev	Fund Name	Base Currency	Morningstar Rating 3 Yr	Morningstar Rating 5 Yr	Morningstar Rating 10 Yr	Morningstar Category	Base Currency	Total Ret 1Yr GBP	Total Ret 3Yr GBP	Total Ret 5Yr GBP						
Hutchins & Wiley Value Opportunities Fund	12.99	15.37	7.65	0.86	23.56	WP Large Cap Income Plus Fund	8.09	-0.08	-2.89	0.11	27.73	Pound Sterling	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	Guaranteed Funds Equities	Mexican Peso	-4.87	6.66	-							
Hutchins & Wiley Diversified Value Fund	11.49	14.56	6.64	0.82	24.02	Boyar Fund	5.70	1.46	1.24	0.16	18.27	Pound Sterling	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	Capital Protected Funds	Mexican Peso	8.63	4.68	5.46							
BNY Mellon Dynamic Value Fund	11.83	14.50	8.70	1.00	17.62	City National Rockdale Equity Income Fund	-4.36	2.05	1.75	0.19	15.41	Global Bond Inc	★★★	★★★	★★★	Capital Protected	Baht	0.06	-0.18	-0.05							
BNY Mellon Income Stock Fund	10.28	14.38	7.92	0.98	17.57	CoHo Relative Value ESG Fund	-0.67	2.53	-	0.21	16.01	Jane Henderson Non-Manager Income & Growth Fund A Inc	★★★	★★★	★★★	Other	Mexican Peso	3.52	-0.19	1.21							
Invesco Constant Select Fund	10.24	14.16	7.71	0.94	19.74	The MP 63 Fund	3.57	3.15	5.23	0.31	16.34	Pound Sterling	★	*	★★★	ELF/DLF	US Dollar	-0.60	-4.38	-							

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Fund	Bid	Offer	+/-	Yield	1Yr	3Yr	Fund	Bid	Offer	+/-	Yield	1Yr	3Yr	Fund	Bid	Offer	+/-	Yield	1Yr	3Yr	Fund	Bid	Offer	+/-	Yield	1Yr	3Yr		
Fund	Bid	Offer	+/-	Yield	1Yr	3Yr	Fund	Bid	Offer	+/-	Yield	1Yr	3Yr	Fund	Bid	Offer	+/-	Yield	1Yr	3Yr	Fund	Bid	Offer	+/-	Yield	1Yr	3Yr		
LGT Wealth Management (CI) Limited (JER)	\$1,083.44	\$1,083.44	-	0.02%	2.46	3.53	1.11	\$1,083.44	\$1,083.44	-	0.00%	0.00	0.74	-	\$1,083.44	\$1,083.44	-	0.00%	0.00	0.74	-	\$1,083.44	\$1,083.44	-	0.00%	0.00	0.74	-	\$1,083.44
Sir Walter Raleigh House, 48 - 50 Esplanade, St Helier, Jersey, JE2 3QB																													
FCA Recognised																													
Volare Offshore Strategy Fund Limited																													
Bridge Fund	£1,083.44	£1,083.44	-	0.02%	2.46	3.53	1.11	Global Sustainable Total Return Bond USD B	£ 9.51	-	0.00	0.00	0.74	-	Global Sustainable Total Return Bond USD B	£ 9.51	-	0.00	0.00	0.74	-	Global Sustainable Total Return Bond USD B	£ 9.51	-	0.00	0.00	0.74	-	Global Sustainable Total Return Bond USD B
Global Equity Fund	£3,273.8	£3,273.8	-	0.00%	1.55	7.32	3.98	US Equity Growth Fund USD B	£ 49.36	-	0.75	0.00	19.23	-1.97	US Equity Growth Fund USD B	£ 49.36	-	0.75	0.00	19.23	-1.97	US Equity Growth Fund USD B	£ 49.36	-	0.75	0.00	19.23	-1.97	US Equity Growth Fund USD B
Global Fixed Interest Fund	£0.6890	£0.6890	-	0.00%	6.90	7.04	5.00	US Equity Fund USD B	£ 25.50	-	-0.31	0.00	22.24	7.48	US Equity Fund USD B	£ 25.50	-	-0.31	0.00	22.24	7.48	US Equity Fund USD B	£ 25.50	-	-0.31	0.00	22.24	7.48	US Equity Fund USD B
Income Fund	£0.5981	£0.5981	-	0.00%	3.38	3.74	2.56	US Mid-Cap Growth Fund USD C	£ 16.78	-	-0.18	0.00	12.17	-2.51	US Mid-Cap Growth Fund USD C	£ 16.78	-	-0.18	0.00	12.17	-2.51	US Mid-Cap Growth Fund USD C	£ 16.78	-	-0.18	0.00	12.17	-2.51	US Mid-Cap Growth Fund USD C
Sterling Fixed Interest Fund	£0.6403	£0.6403	-	0.00%	5.03	5.40	-7.48	US Small Cap Blend Fund USD B	£ 20.63	-	-0.25	0.00	4.40	4.55	US Small Cap Blend Fund USD B	£ 20.63	-	-0.25	0.00	4.40	4.55	US Small Cap Blend Fund USD B	£ 20.63	-	-0.25				

## MANAGED FUNDS SERVICE

Fund	Bid	Offer	+/-	Yield	1Yr	3Yr	Fund	Bid	Offer	+/-	Yield	1Yr	3Yr	Fund	Bid	Offer	+/-	Yield	1Yr	3Yr	Fund	Bid	Offer	+/-	Yield	1Yr	3Yr		
Oasis Crescent Global Medium Equity Fund A (Dist)	\$ 13.17	-	<b>-0.06</b>	0.70	4.95	0.83	Purisima Investment Fds (UK) (1200) <b>(UK)</b>							Toscafund Asset Management LLP <a href="http://www.toscafund.com">www.toscafund.com</a>															
Oasis Crescent Global Property Equity Fund USD A (Dist)	\$ 7.08	-	<b>-0.05</b>	1.65	3.49	-0.51	2nd floor, 20-22 Bedford Row, London, WC1R 4EB Order Desk and Enquiries: 0345 922 0044							Tosca A USD	\$ 440.36	-	<b>-2.51</b>	0.00	10.87	10.06									
Oasis Crescent Global Short Term Income Fund USD A (Dist)	\$ 0.93	-	<b>0.00</b>	2.72	3.42	0.05	Authorised Inv Funds							Tosca Mid Cap GBP	£ 120.64	-	<b>-6.43</b>	0.00	28.78	4.42									
Oasis Crescent Variable Fund GBP A (Dist)	£ 9.30	-	<b>-0.03</b>	0.68	1.09	1.28	Authorised Corporate Director - Waystone Management (UK) Limited							Tosca Opportunity B USD	\$ 252.81	-	<b>-15.03</b>	0.00	29.95	19.96									
							Global Total Fd PCG A	408.86	-	<b>-6.51</b>	0.17	14.83	7.12	Pegasus Fund Ltd A-1 GBP	£ 28.54	-	<b>0.00</b>	0.00	29.25	-4.72									
							Global Total Fd PCG B	402.88	-	<b>-6.48</b>	0.00	14.54	6.86																
							Global Total Fd PCG INT	394.58	-	<b>-6.38</b>	0.00	14.26	6.59																

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Authorised Inv Funds

Authorised Corporate Director - Waystone Management (UK) Limited

Global Total Fd PCG A

408.86 - **-6.51** 0.17 14.83 7.12

Global Total Fd PCG B

402.88 - **-6.48** 0.00 14.54 6.86

Global Total Fd PCG INT

394.58 - **-6.38** 0.00 14.26 6.59

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285.95 285.95 **-3.01** 0.00 -10.10 1.42

Slater Artorus

251.17 251.17 **-3.37** 0.57 -9.16 0.84**Toscafund Asset Management LLP**

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Tosca A USD

\$ 440.36 - **-2.51** 0.00 10.87 10.06

Tosca Mid Cap GBP

£ 120.64 - **-6.43** 0.00 28.78 4.42

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Trojan Investment Funds

Trojan Ethical Global Inc O Acc

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## ARTS



Young Fathers  
on stage at the  
Eventim Apollo  
Martin Harris/Capital Pictures

# A brilliantly synchronised riot

POP

**Young Fathers**  
Eventim Apollo, London

★★★★

Ian Gittins

Young Fathers started at the top and continued climbing. Having scooped the Mercury Music Prize with their 2014 debut album, *Dead*, the Edinburgh-based trio have seen sales of their subsequent three albums rise to the point where they are routinely selling out major British venues.

Yet if their ascent has been measured, their music is not. Alloysious Massaquoi, Kayus Bankole and Graham "G"

Hastings have defined themselves as a "Liberian/Nigerian/Scottish psychedelic hip-hop electro boy band" and it was clear from this visceral, thrilling London show that this description is on the money. It felt like bearing witness to a brilliantly synchronised riot.

The tone was set by opening track "Shoot Me Down" as Massaquoi, Bankole and Hastings lined up on the stage lip as if challenging an already fervent crowd to a fight. As soon as their pulsing electronic rhythms and hammered, martial drumbeats kicked in, they transformed into a seamless, jack-knifing blur. "Kinetic" didn't begin to describe it.

Along with a drummer, keyboardist and two female backing singers, they maintained this jaw-dropping intensity

all night long, not least on "Wow", an aggregation of frantic beats and rhythms pitched just short of spontaneous combustion. (There is a case that all Young Fathers tracks should be titled "Wow".) Yet it would be a profound mistake to consider them merely a party band.

Young Fathers' emotional signature notes are anxiety, doubt and agitation. Songs sounded like vexed inner monologues, externalised and amplified. "Old Rock n Roll" found Bankole reciting, "I'm tired of playing the good black, I'm tired of blaming the white man . . ." Their slogan was all the more compelling for being gnomic and difficult to unpack.

They are musical revolutionaries with cryptic manifestos. Their last album, *Heavy Heavy*, showed increased African

influences and, at this gig, "Drum" was an energy explosion that could strip the paint from the walls. On "Ululation", a whooping backing vocalist sang in the Zimbabwean Shona language.

The band combined wired intensity with impressive musical variety. On the electro-gospel "Tell Somebody", Massaquoi transformed into a cosmic soul man. Then the manic "Only God Knows" found Bankole spitting out guttural exhortations like bullets in a rapid-fire rap. This was tense, febrile music, with no slack or spare.

Young Fathers' singular talent is almost like testifying: preaching in riddles with devout urgency. Typical was the abstract, simmering "Geronimo", where the trio appeared to be striving to burst out of their skins as they crooned Confucian-sounding dicta: "Breathe in like a lion, breathe out like a lamb . . ."

The trio's political leanings tend to be implied rather than explicitly stated – but not always. "Ceasefire now!" demanded Hastings, dedicating the accusatory "Shame" to "the ones who choose missiles and bombs over peace". This led to thousands of voices raised in chants of "Free Palestine!" and "Fuck the Tories!" and a five-minute ovation.

It was an extraordinary evening. After this short UK tour, Young Fathers take their incendiary messaging to the US, supporting Depeche Mode. Their ascent appears set to continue.

[young-fathers.com](http://young-fathers.com)

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A service from the Financial Times

DANCE

Royal Ballet double bill  
Royal Opera House, London

Louise Levene

Sales had been sluggish for the Royal Ballet's strongly danced but poorly balanced double bill. Last-minute discounts guaranteed a young, buzzy audience at the Royal Opera House last weekend but such drastic measures surely shouldn't be necessary for a company with so many bankable one-act ballets in its repertoire.

Valentino Zucchetti's *Anemoi* began life in Covent Garden's Copley Studio and was then scaled up for the main stage in 2021. Zucchetti, who joined the company in 2010, has been making ballet since his student days.

Although a firecracker soloist, he has spent much of his dancing life flanking the action, perfectly placed to take private lessons from the greats. Petipa, Ashton, Balanchine and MacMillan have all left their mark on Zucchetti's expertly crafted, unfailingly musical writing.

The 25-minute piece is powered by Rachmaninov, in a seamless arrangement of extracts from the First and Second symphonies and the *Romance in A* orchestrated by Hans Vercauteren. The 16 dancers surge back and forth across the space in ever-varying ensembles, trios and duets with floor patterns that look as if they might – like Ashton's *Scènes de ballet* – be enjoyed from any angle.

Zucchetti's choreography is generously stuffed with bravura challenges that stretch and celebrate his young dancers. Daichi Ikarashi (Saturday) brought easy elevation, slippery turns and kitten-soft toes to his solos.

On Friday night Mariko Sasaki's switchblade limbs and thrilling attack were a perfect fit for the central duet. Zucchetti's pairwork is inventive but never circumspect.

Lukas Brændsrød wrangled his ballerina with nerveless skill, making light work of his travelling one-armed lift.

Unfortunately this potentially dazzling display was undersold by a tasteful palette of dingy secondary shades and complex but rather grudging lighting. Someone needs to turn up the contrast, saturation and brightness and really let these dancers shine. ★★★★

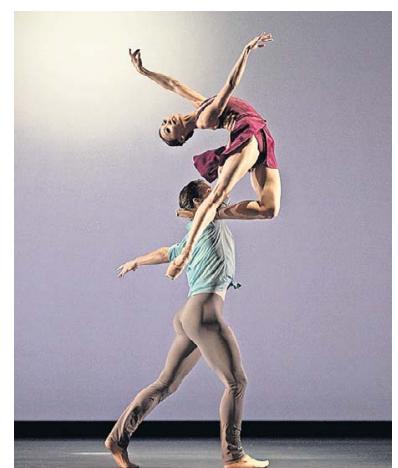
Inside *The Cellist*, Cathy Marston's 65-minute life of Jacqueline du Pré, is a terrific 30-minute *pas de trois* for the doomed virtuoso, her husband and her 1673 Stradivarius. Sadly, this brilliantly imagined love triangle is muffled by a distracting ensemble of teachers, concertgoers and family members who act out the various stages of du Pré's cruelly short career in Marston's over-complicated narrative.

Friday's opening was led by Lauren Cuthbertson and Marcelino Sambé, reprising roles they created in 2020. Cuthbertson gave a moving, richly detailed account of the artist's tragic rise and fall. Sambé, watchful and expressive, is the embodiment of the sound released by the cellist's touch, mapping the stage with rapturous tornadoes of turns as if being twirled on his own spike. Philip Feeney's score, an ingenious collage of du Pré standards, is rooted in the Elgar Cello Concerto (feelingly played by Hetty Snell in the pit).

Saturday's *Strad* was the expressive Calvin Richardson. Lukas Brændsrød – surely a prince in waiting? – impressed once again as the mercurial Conductor (aka her husband, Daniel Barenboim), sheathed in Bechstein black. Mayara Magri, making her debut, embodied the character's contradictions, switching from flex-footed gaucherie to concert-pitch command the instant she was reunited with her beloved instrument. ★★★★

To November 2, [roh.org.uk](http://roh.org.uk)

Mariko Sasaki and Lukas Brændsrød in 'Anemoi'  
Alice Pennefather/ROH



## Farewell with tenderness and intensity

CLASSICAL

Emerson String Quartet

Lincoln Center, New York

★★★★

George Grella

After 47 seasons, the Emerson String Quartet played their final concerts this past weekend for the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. The most consequential American string quartet after the Juilliard, in the 1980s they were chosen by Deutsche Grammophon to record the central repertoire for the still-new CD format. Their discography brought awards for their collections of the Beethoven, Shostakovich and Bartók quartets, among others, and fame.

Emerson always meant "intensity"; their robust sound often seemed poised at the edge of violence, especially live. Though the Saturday concert veiled this in warmth and thoughtfulness, intensity was there and doubtless stoked by the loud, vocal ovation from the audience the moment the group came on stage.

The programme for a quartet late in its style was music of late styles, Beethoven's Op 130 Quartet in B-flat major, with the Grosse Fuge as the last movement, and after intermission Schubert's Quintet in C major. A programme note from violinist Eugene Drucker explained that the Quintet was the piece used as transition from cellist David Finckel to Paul Watkins in 2013 – Finckel rejoined for this concert, making up the quintet – and that Op 130 was the "one piece through which to attempt a summation of our life and work as quartet players".

That came through in an engrossing performance. The sound was refined, with a warm, soft surface and a sensation of weight and strength underneath.

This had a feeling of great balance and insight. Late style of Beethoven's, coming from deep inside the deaf composer's mind, can seem fragmented; the challenge is to stitch together his logic and wilfulness. It's like writing *Finnegans Wake* with the succinct, placid prose of Hemingway.

The Emerson did this with subtlety and wisdom. Rather than differentiate anything as transitional or gestural, they played everything with equal weight. Quick changes of mood and musical ideas were connected by a way of shaping the ending of one phrase so that it perfectly prepared the start of another. This kind of passing around the music is the height of chamber music playing and one rarely hears it so natural and expressive.

The pace of the Presto was invigorating, the music unexpectedly playful. The Andante was a little polite, but the Alla danza tedesca was suave, with earthy rhythm. The Cavatina had the feel of a yearning for freedom. The Grosse Fuge was quick, slicing, with a feel of struggle and superb balance between introverted and extroverted

moods. The dotted rhythms were bounding, propelled by the quartet's intensity. This was great technique and even greater thinking.

The stately Schubert Quintet is a very different late style, the young composer contemplating life while knowing his death is not far off. The circumstances belie how serene the music can be, and the Emerson brought out the sunniness and tenderness. With a very different sense of form than Beethoven, they connected the long through-line with a sweet legato.

Internal balances between the five instruments were superb, always clear. The long Adagio had an exalted sense of ceremony, the group playing with a lyrical, symphonic sound. The storm in the middle returned to great calm. The Scherzo was tremendous, the most rousing playing of the night, and the Emerson brought great dance energy and articulation to the finale, the thinking again as exquisite as the energy, the sense of style full of life and joy. This was a farewell with greatness.

[emersonquartet.com](http://emersonquartet.com)



The Emerson String Quartet performing at Lincoln Center — Da Ping Lu

## FT BIG READ. COMMODITIES

Export restrictions imposed by India and other major producers, coupled with more extreme weather, are threatening the global supply of a staple food relied on by millions of people.

By Susannah Savage

**F**ried rice is usually a popular choice among diners in Lagos, the economic capital of Nigeria. Yet many people have stopped ordering it, says restaurant manager Toni Aladekomo.

With the price of the dish shooting up to N4,000 (\$5.20) from N1,500 a year ago, it is no longer "affordable for most", says Aladekomo, general manager of Grey Matter Social Space, in the affluent Victoria Island neighbourhood.

In Nigeria, rice is the most commonly consumed meal – and the bedrock of the national dish jollof rice. But the price of 1kg of the imported grain was up by 46.54 per cent in August compared with the same period last year, according to the most recent data from the country's statistics agency.

While prices have risen across the board as Nigeria grapples with its highest rate of inflation in two decades, the sharp increase in the cost of this everyday staple can be traced to a crackdown by India, the world's largest rice exporter, in response to fears of falling yields and rising domestic prices.

It started last year when the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi imposed export restrictions on broken rice – a cheap variety imported particularly by poorer countries from Bangladesh to Benin – which is still in place.

By the end of July, India had banned exports of non-basmati white rice and followed this in August with a minimum sale price for basmati rice and a 20 per cent tariff on parboiled rice until March.

"It's tough when a country that accounts for 40 per cent of global trade slaps a ban on half of what they export, and duties on the other half," says Joseph Glauber, senior research fellow at food security think-tank International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and a former chief economist at the US Department of Agriculture.

The immediate consequences of the ban has been panic-buying among consumers in Asia and North America and responsive measures from other major rice-producing nations.

Now, with India's rice harvest under way, net importers are hoping for better-than-expected yields that could prompt the government to ease restrictions. But an election is looming in the south Asian country and food prices are a red-button issue for Modi. The El Niño weather phenomenon, associated with heat and drought across the Pacific Ocean, also threatens to damage output next year as growing conditions may be too dry.

Analysts warn that if India maintains its current restrictions, and other producers follow, the world is on track for a repeat of the 2008 rice crisis, when a contagion of protectionist policies contributed to rice prices tripling in six months, driving inflation across the globe and sparking civil unrest in north Africa, south Asia and the Caribbean.

This time the crisis could be worse as soaring demand, driven by population growth, collides with the effects of ever more extreme climate change.

Rice prices are surging beyond India; the benchmark rice prices in Thailand and Vietnam, the world's second and third largest rice exporters, have risen 14 and 22 per cent since India's ban.

Arif Husain, chief economist at the UN World Food Programme, points out that the countries likely to be worst affected are already suffering from a litany of woes: sky-high food prices, soaring debt and depreciating currencies.

"When you look at the cumulative effect, you're essentially talking about a staple commodity not being affordable for millions and millions of households," he adds.

#### Hoarding, stockpiles and riots

India had been the first to react in 2007 when the price of food staples, such as wheat and maize, rose sharply as poor weather threatened yields.

Rice was in abundant supply, but upward pressure on food prices panicked governments. New Delhi swiftly imposed export restrictions.

Vietnam – then the world's second biggest rice supplier after Thailand – followed suit and imposed a ban in January 2008. International prices soared, reaching a record high of \$1,000 per tonne, as smaller exporters such as Egypt and Pakistan imposed similar bans, farmers hoarded and governments and shoppers stockpiled.

Frederic Neumann, chief Asia economist at HSBC, remembers supermarket shelves in Hong Kong being emptied of rice. Elsewhere, hungry citizens took to the streets. In Haiti, food riots in April 2008 toppled the prime minister, Jean-Pierre. Alexis.

The anger over food prices lingered and eventually coalesced with political discontent, contributing three years later to the Arab Spring, in which four Middle Eastern and north African leaders were overthrown.

This is a lesson many of today's politi-



## The return of the rice crisis

We are becoming more reliant on trade to secure food supplies for individual populations. But we're also seeing protectionist tendencies growing'

cians have taken to heart. In India, Modi's Bharatiya Janata party has made controlling food prices a priority ahead of a series of electoral tests. Food inflation has long been a politically sensitive issue in the country and rice is its most consumed staple.

Prices of the grain had risen 11.5 per cent in the year before the ban on exports was introduced, according to the government, with exports surging over the same period. The cost of other Indian staples such as tomatoes and onions has also risen in recent months as a volatile monsoon season has disrupted agricultural production.

India's government has defended the ban as a necessary step to protect domestic food security amid worrying inflation, and poor harvests exacerbated by weather that scientists say has become more erratic due to climate change.

Many of India's 1.4bn population continue to struggle with poverty and malnutrition, with about 800mn people eligible for free food grains.

"There's extra precaution being taken because state elections are around the corner and next year national elections," says Avinash Kishore, a senior research fellow at the IFPRI in New Delhi.

With global oil prices rising, he adds, "they don't want a double or triple whammy" as voters head to the polls.

For India's rice farmers, however, the export ban is a heavy blow. Sandeep Kumar, 37, and his uncle, Satish Kumar, thought they were in luck after India's fertile northern state of Haryana avoided flooding that had destroyed crops elsewhere in the country.

Then Modi banned exports of the non-basmati rice the Kumars had cultivated in expectation of strong global demand. Prices rapidly tumbled in the open market, according to Satish. "The

government doesn't value the hard work of the farmers," he says, speaking from a barn surrounded by green and yellow fields near the city of Karnal. "It has its eye on elections and doesn't want the rice prices to go up."

Other critics of the policy argue that the abrupt ban will hurt the country's reputation as a reliable global trading partner. Under Modi, India has sought to cement itself as a leading global power by expanding trade ties and negotiating free trade agreements with other large economies.

Kirti Kumar Dawar, who runs rice exporting company Jaishree Exports in Haryana, says that he had to retrieve almost 20 containers of rice, about 450 tonnes in total, that were already in a port for shipping to the Middle East when the ban was announced.

His clients in the region have since "gone silent", he says, adding that the business will not be able to survive much longer without making global sales. Dawar says he understands government concerns about food security, but "the knee-jerk reaction is wrong".

The argument has support. "It takes the exporters years to develop the market," says Ashok Gulati, an economist and longtime adviser to the Indian government on agricultural policy. "This not only upsets the exporters in your own country, it also upsets the importers who will say . . . you are handing over the market to the competitors."

The region is attempting to protect its own supplies. Although members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, which includes three of the five biggest rice exporters, committed to not using "unjustified" trade barriers in September, Malaysia's agriculture minister told state media this month that Asean leaders had agreed to prioritise rice supply to other members of the trade bloc.

This makes global contagion more likely, according to HSBC's Neumann, who says "the risk is certainly there of a repeat of what we saw in 2008".

"We are becoming more reliant on traded food to secure food supplies for individual populations," adds Neumann. "But at the same time, we're also seeing protectionist tendencies growing in the global trading system. And that combination is not very healthy."

Other countries in Asia are following

India's lead. At the end of August, Myanmar, the world's fifth-largest rice exporter, announced it would also ban exports of the grain for "about 45 days". Days later, the Philippines introduced a price ceiling on rice in an effort to dampen rising consumer costs.

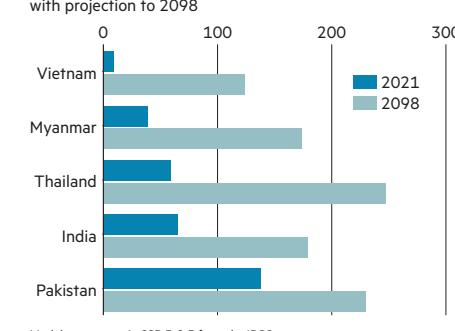
Rising rice prices are a significant obstacle for central banks in Asia trying to tame inflation. The Philippines' and Vietnam's consumer price indices rose

Countries like Senegal face the prospect of importing rice from more expensive sources such as Brazil, which locals won't be able to afford

FT montage/Getty

#### Climate change is expected to have a major impact on rice production this century

Days above 35C in rice-growing areas of major producers, with projection to 2098



5.3 and 3.6 per cent year on year in August, for instance.

In 2008, central bankers did not initially tighten monetary policy in response to the rice supply shock, because raising interest rates does not produce more rice, says Neumann.

But they need to do so this time around, he argues, because food has a disproportionate impact on inflation expectations, which matter more to central banks than actual inflation.

"Everyone knows what a bag of rice costs in India. So if the price goes up, then that immediately fuels the expectation component," he says. Rice is not like vegetables, which have a short harvest cycle and can be quickly replenished. Central bankers, therefore, "can shrug off a two-month tomato price hike but not a nine-month grain price spike."

The region is attempting to protect its own supplies. Although members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, which includes three of the five biggest rice exporters, committed to not using "unjustified" trade barriers in September, Malaysia's agriculture minister told state media this month that Asean leaders had agreed to prioritise rice supply to other members of the trade bloc.

This makes global contagion more likely, according to HSBC's Neumann, who says "the risk is certainly there of a repeat of what we saw in 2008".

"We are becoming more reliant on traded food to secure food supplies for individual populations," adds Neumann. "But at the same time, we're also seeing protectionist tendencies growing in the global trading system. And that combination is not very healthy."

Other countries in Asia are following

They are particularly exposed to India's export ban, says the WFP's Husain. In Togo, for example, almost 88 per cent of all rice imports came from India in 2022 and 61 per cent for Benin, the world's largest importer of Indian broken rice.

In Senegal, where 47 per cent of rice imports come from India, Cheikh Bamba Ndaw, the ministry of trade's director of interior trade, characterises his country's predicament as a "price problem, not a rice problem".

The situation has echoes of what happened last spring with wheat, says Husain. Prices of the cereal crop surged after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which supplied 10 per cent of global wheat exports, triggering a full-blown food security crisis in many countries.

At the moment, Senegal has reserve stocks, but if India continues to keep its borders closed and international prices do not come down, he says, the country will be forced to import other varieties of rice, from Brazil or the US, which are much more expensive than the Indian rice it usually relies on.

Bamba Ndaw warns that many people will no longer be able to afford rice, plunging the country into a food crisis.

#### Warming world

The last rice crisis came to an end after Japan, Thailand and Vietnam committed to boosting exports and shipping costs fell.

Today's predicament, analysts warn, is not so easily fixed. Fifteen years ago the world was not lacking in the grain, but that is no longer the case.

The world population is set to reach close to 10bn by 2050 with the biggest growth in Africa and Asia. Researchers estimate this rise will increase demand for rice by almost a third, but yields are not keeping pace.

After decades of rapid growth thanks to the development of new varieties, yields are stagnating in four big rice-producing countries in south-east Asia, according to a recent study in Nature Food, an academic journal. Globally, on average yields increased 0.9 per cent a year between 2011 and 2021, slowdown from 1.2 per cent a year between 2001 and 2011, according to data from the UN.

The chief reason for this setback is climate change. Because rice grows in hot climates – 90 per cent of the world's rice is produced in Asia – it is often assumed that a few extra degrees will not matter, says Bjoern Ole Sander, a climate scientist based in Thailand. This is not the case. Above certain temperatures, rice yields drop, explains Sander, adding that the grain is particularly sensitive to night-time heat.

A 2017 study found that a global increase in temperature of 1C was likely to reduce rice yield by an average of 3.3 per cent. Temperatures have already risen by at least 1.1C since pre-industrial times.

Modelling by commodity data group Gro Intelligence forecasts that by 2100, Asia's top rice exporters will all experience a sharp increase in the number of days above 35C, with Thailand potentially seeing an 188 additional days above this threshold in a worst-case scenario.

For Asia's rice-producing deltas, from the Mekong to Ganges, climate change could present other complications. As temperatures increase, sea levels rise and salty water flows into fresh water rivers, irrigation channels and the soil, reducing yields or making growing impossible.

This year producers are also facing El Niño. The weather phenomenon compounds the effects of climate change, says Sander, and can lead to less rainfall in rice-growing regions. Fewer downpours mean less fresh water coming down from the rivers to wash away excess salt.

While India waits to measure the toll of this year's weather on rice production, Thailand's agriculture ministry recently forecast that the country's crop would be lower than expected following below-average rainfall in September and October.

El Niño will endure well into next year, according to weather experts. This will risk a much tighter supply of rice on the global market, says Neumann.

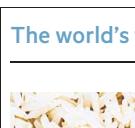
He warns that this is not merely about the cost of rice in the short term, but a taste of how the world deals with increasingly erratic weather patterns compounding volatility in global food prices.

For WFP's Husain, the answer is more trade to better distribute food around the world. But he fears that as climate change worsens, governments could increasingly shut their borders and shun global markets.

The current shock could become "mega shock", he says, unless "common sense prevails".

Additional reporting by Jyotsna Singh, Benjamin Parkin and Aanu Adeoye

#### The world's favourite rice



##### Basmati

India produces more than 30 varieties of this aromatic, long-grain rice. The bulk of these exports end up in the Middle East, with Iran the largest importer



##### Broken

This cheaper grain is split during milling. Most of the global supply is bought by China, followed by Senegal and Ivory Coast in West Africa



##### Parboiled

So-called because the grain is partially boiled in the husk. Demand is strong in international markets as it is easy to cook and has high nutritional value

# The FT View



**FINANCIAL TIMES**

'Without fear and without favour'

ft.com/opinion

## Opinion Global economy

### The G20 must be lean and mean to stay relevant

Ewan White



Duvvuri  
Subbarao

India's G20 summit last month turned out to be a celebration of the country's growing heft in the global arena. But now that the euphoria has ebbed, it's time to ask some hard questions.

Do we need the G20? Yes, certainly. In a world with a shared ecosystem and a shared economy, we face problems that don't respect political boundaries – climate and virus infections, for example. These cannot be solved without global co-operation. We desperately need a forum to foster such co-operation.

However, the way the G20 has evolved – into an overload of meetings, conferences, events, exhibitions and exchanges – is less helpful. Some argue that the group should remain focused on its core competence of global economy and finance. It's worth noting that the alliance originated in

**It should pursue a core agenda of global issues each year – and abandon anodyne communiqués**

the aftermath of the 1999 Asian financial crisis, with the aim of bringing together developed and developing countries to monitor global economic and financial stability. That annual meeting of finance officials was upgraded when then US president George W Bush called a meeting of the G20 heads of government in 2008 to craft a collective solution to the global financial crisis. Without this rescue effort, the financial system would probably have gone into free fall.

More recently, however, the G20 has not been able to repeat these early successes. There has been no shortage of pressing problems – climate, global health and debt restructuring, for example. But the G20 has turned out to be more of a talking shop than a problem solver. The broad refrain is that the group is effective only if there is a raging fire: when faced with slow-burning problems, narrow national interests trump globally optimal solutions. And all that follows is anodyne communiqués.

The world cannot afford such cynicism. While nothing concentrates the mind like a crisis, emerging problems can gather momentum if they are not addressed. For the sake of our collective future, the G20 must repurpose itself. I want to suggest three ideas for a way forward.

The first priority is for the G20 to return to being lean and mean by shunning all the baggage it has acquired over the years. The group has always taken pride in the fact that unlike other international bodies such as the UN, the World Bank, IMF and the WTO, it is not burdened by a charter, rules of procedure or formalised bureaucracies. These are strengths of course, but they should not be allowed to turn into liabilities with every country refashioning the G20 each year according to its whims. The group should pursue a core agenda of three or four global issues each year. It is unrealistic to expect dramatic results, but if the needle moves even a little each year, we will make more progress than we would while pursuing an amorphous agenda from summit to summit.

The second step is to abandon the practice of issuing a communiqué. This has turned out to be a needlessly contentious and unproductive exercise. The agenda of the New Delhi summit was almost entirely overshadowed by finding appropriate wording to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine. In the event, the compromise wording in the final joint declaration that touched on the war without specifically mentioning Russia pleased no one and made little difference to the real world. Even in the absence of divisive issues such as Ukraine, G20 communiqués have often read like manifestos for global governance, full of pious declarations and self-righteous intentions. With no concrete plan of action and measurable goals, no one is held accountable for results. And with a rotating presidency, the drama moves from one country to another.

The lesson is clear. Replace the communiqué with minutes of the meeting that will faithfully record differences of opinion and indicate the plan of action until the next summit.

The third imperative on my list is to keep politics out of the G20. Of course it's difficult to separate politics from economics when geopolitical tensions are running high. But we saw the cost of politics creeping into the forum when both Russia's Vladimir Putin and China's Xi Jinping stayed away from the New Delhi summit. The group will be more effective if all the leaders attend and express their differences than if some opt out because of political disagreements. After all, there is the UN for politics. What value can the G20 add on this front?

In a world divided by nation states, the G20 has to be the voice of consensus on the economy and related global problems. We cannot afford for it to fail.

The writer was governor of the Reserve Bank of India and is now a senior fellow at the Yale Jackson School of Global Affairs

## A Republican charade in the US people's House

### The odds on a Democratic 'coalition Speaker' are starting to narrow

America is now in its third week without a functioning House of Representatives. Given the Republican party's lack of consensus on who to elect as Speaker, it is hard to see what will stop this mess from continuing. The fact that the US government will run out of money in mid-November, and that Joe Biden urgently needs funds for Ukraine and Israel, ought to be enough to galvanise any sensible party – but evidently is not for a Republican party in hopeless disarray. Nor is the fact that US democracy seems to the world to be missing in action at a moment of acute geopolitical tension. At this point, it is difficult to know what would qualify as sufficiently embarrassing to prompt the Republicans to act.

Nine Republicans have put their names forward for the party's latest

attempt to find a new Speaker. Of these, Tom Emmer, the party's chief whip, has the best credentials to lead America's lower house with some degree of responsibility. Emmer was one of only two among the nine to have voted to certify the 2020 US presidential election. He is also one of five who voted in favour of new funding for Ukraine last month. On those two counts alone his chances are badly diminished. Donald Trump has made it clear that he would not like to see Emmer as Speaker.

It is possible one of the other names, such as Kevin Hern, the chair of the Republican Study Committee, a conservative group that is slightly less hardline than the mostly pro-Trump Freedom Caucus, or Austin Scott, a backer of the outgoing Speaker, Kevin McCarthy, could emerge as a compromise name. But it would be rash to bet on it. McCarthy was ousted after having done his best to thread a wildly disparate party together. It is unclear why less experienced names could do better.

The largest Republican faction is in thrall to the most destructive form of Trumpian obstructionism. Yet as their standard bearer, Jim Jordan, discovered, there is a large enough minority of so-called moderate Republicans to veto their choice. Jordan withdrew last week after three attempts at taking the gavel.

It looks increasingly possible that Republicans will remain too bitterly divided to resolve this impasse. At that point, moderate Republicans would face a choice between complicity in the further disabling of US democracy, or throwing their support to Hakeem Jeffries, the Democratic minority leader of a very thinly divided House. It would only take five Republicans to join with Democrats to elect Jeffries as a "coalition Speaker".

The plus point is that they could negotiate their terms. This would doubtless include federal spending restraint, new funding for US-Mexico border security, and a temporary truce on America's most divisive cultural issues, such as a

It looks increasingly possible that GOP lawmakers will remain too bitterly divided to resolve this impasse

federal right to abortion. Such a deal would ensure the US government does not shut down before Thanksgiving and passes the \$106bn package that Biden wants for Ukraine and Israel.

On the downside, any Republicans who voted for Jeffries would probably be writing suicide notes as GOP lawmakers. The Trumpians would brand them as traitors and launch primaries to unseat them. Such threats have succeeded in cowing non-Trumpian Republicans for many years. However, many Republican members of the "problem solver caucus" – a group that has yet to live up to its name – represent districts that Biden won in 2020. They would assuredly lose their seats in 2024 if this Republican mess continued.

They should weigh which career exit would be less ignominious; losing their seats because of Republican chaos; or losing their party's nomination because they did the right thing on behalf of their nation. The longer this charade continues, the closer that choice will loom.

## Letters

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## What was missing at the World Bank's Marrakech meeting

Martin Wolf's column ("How to finance a faster shift to a better world", Opinion, October 18) is right to underscore the urgency of better positioning the multilateral development banks to address today's pressing challenges: eliminating extreme poverty, addressing climate change and developing finance mechanisms that meet the needs of countries across a wide variety of circumstance.

Unfortunately, negotiations to date around transforming the multilateral

development banks have given relatively short shrift to those countries most in need of their resources. At the recent IMF/World Bank annual meetings in Marrakech, shareholders discussed how to expand World Bank financing to help middle-income countries, the best means to mobilise additional private sector financing and ways to streamline the World Bank's operational model – all worthy topics.

However, what was missing was a serious debate about how best to help low-income countries at a time when

they remain weighed down by debt distress, the lingering impact of the pandemic, rising interest rates, the need to adapt to climate change, and steep prices for food, fuel and fertiliser.

Boosting concessional financing for low-income countries will require bold and generous actions on the part of these institutions' wealthiest shareholders.

These include additional contributions for the International Development Association's enhanced crisis response window, significantly

increasing donor contributions to IDA's upcoming replenishment and recycling IMF special drawing rights including to the African Development Bank's new asset class of hybrid capital.

These are the kinds of steps necessary to help ensure that low-income countries – and their people – are not left behind at such an important moment.

**Gargee Ghosh**  
President, Global Policy & Advocacy,  
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation  
Seattle, WA, US

### Hamas shows Gazans 'nothing but disdain'

Philippe Lazzarini and Martin Griffiths write that people in Gaza feel desperate ("Humanity must prevail in the Gaza conflict", Opinion, October 19). And well they might.

For 16 years, Gazans have been under the suffocating boot of militant terrorists who have shown citizens nothing but disdain and terror, and used the populace to further their own nefarious ends.

Lazzarini and Griffiths also opine that the war between Israel and Hamas stems from "deep underlying grievances on both sides". Quite apart from the insulting moral equivalence between a terrorist organisation and a democratic state, Lazzarini and Griffiths both appear to forget why this war is being fought. This is a war for Israel's very existence, for its way of life.

But according to the authors, only "intense and genuine negotiations" can bring about a lasting change for Israel, not the battlefield.

Of course, in order to negotiate, you need a party with whom one can



conduct negotiations with a party which calls for its complete destruction? Lazzarini and Griffiths are right about one thing though: humanity must indeed prevail. And this is precisely why Hamas must not.

**Tzipi Hotovely**  
Ambassador of Israel to the United Kingdom, London W8, UK

### Tesco will take no lessons from the British Museum!

Jonathan Allum ("Japan should not be selling prime assets to foreigners", Letters, October 23) claims handing Nintendo over to Microsoft "would be an act of cultural recklessness, akin to entrusting the management of the British Museum to Tesco".

Given the British Museum's inability to manage "shrinkage" this year, as a longstanding, happy Tesco shareholder I for one would submit that the management of the British Museum would benefit from some advice from Tesco, if not the outsourcing of management to them.

**Richard Buxton**  
Former Chief Executive, Merian Global Investors, London N1, UK

### Objectionable sideswipe

Your review of *Aida* (Arts, FT.com, October 6) contains some harsh comments about the direction by Calixto Bieito. I have not yet had the opportunity to see what Bieito has done. But I particularly object to Shirley Apthorpe's sideswipe about the appointment of Christian Thielemann as successor to Daniel Barenboim as general music director at Berlin's Staatsoper. His recent production of Wagner's *Ring* at The Staatsoper was unquestionably outstanding.

**Uwe Hostmann**  
Berlin, Germany

### Corrections

• An article on October 23 stated that Revolut used its own accountancy software. In fact the company developed its own accountancy tools which it complements with a third-party package.

• An article on October 23 implied that the capital raise in Eviden had been agreed based on a share price of €15, when in fact it was agreed based on a valuation of €20 a share.

### OUTLOOK

#### ITALY

### Meloni's eventful home life whips up a national family drama



by Amy Kazmin

Italian prime minister Giorgia Meloni is a political champion of traditional family values, who believes all children need "a mother and a father" and has urged Italian women to have more babies to combat the country's looming demographic crisis.

But Meloni has proved that she values the preservation of women's dignity – including her own – over keeping a troubled family intact when she split from her partner Andrea Giambruno last week, after he was exposed as having harassed female colleagues, even propositioning one for a threesome or a foursome.

Shortly after footage of Giambruno's conduct was aired by Mediaset – the broadcast empire founded by Meloni's ally, the late Silvio Berlusconi, now run by his heirs – Meloni declared her relationship with Giambruno, father of her seven-year-old daughter, "ends here". Her decision won sympathy from women across Italy's political spectrum, with some former critics even hailing her much-needed example to women in how to stand up for themselves when confronted with male transgressions. "Meloni has given a social, cultural and political message . . . that a certain kind of macho behaviour . . . is now unacceptable," wrote Elena Tebano, a journalist focused on gender and LGBT rights. Citing the 1970s US feminist adage that "the personal is political", Tebano called Meloni's break-up a national turning point, which would have "a before and an after" in politics and Italian society.

Her example will undoubtedly resonate in both workplaces and homes across Italy, where casual workplace machismo is typically treated as harmless male fun and libidinous behaviour is packaged as intense Latin passion.

Simonetta Scialdiavasi, editor of the essay collection "The Children I Do Not Want", called Meloni's dumping of Giambruno her "first political act" since taking power. Meloni, she wrote, had delivered a "firm and effective lesson" to a "sweetly misogynistic" society, demonstrating "how to leave someone who hurts you: immediately and without conditions".

Even before last week's scandal, Giambruno was already becoming a headache for the premier. While anchoring a daytime show at Mediaset, he sparked outrage with a series of offensive comments, from appearing to blame the victim of a brutal gang-rape for her own assault to comparing African migrants arriving in Italy to migratory livestock. Revelations of his obnoxious off-screen misconduct was the final straw.

Until now, Meloni has hardly been considered a women's rights defender, despite being Italy's first female prime minister. A fiery advocate of traditional family values, she has argued passionately against gay couples having children, and speaks of women as potential mothers who need support to have babies.

Italians are now speculating feverishly about how the devastating out-takes from Giambruno's show

wound up broadcast on Mediaset's irreverent satirical news programme *Striscia La Notizia*. La Repubblica, the national daily, suggested that the so-called "first gentleman's" offensive behaviour was creating such discontent within Mediaset that the company resorted to extreme measures to rein him in.

Several newspapers have also speculated whether the drama reflects tensions within Meloni's conservative three-party coalition – of which Berlusconi's Forza Italia, still supported by his family, is a member. Antonio Ricci, director of *Striscia La Notizia*, insists he decided to air the out-takes without the Berlusconi family's knowledge. Ricci also told Italian news agency Ansa that Meloni would "one day discover that I have done her a favour".

Not everyone is sympathetic to Meloni. Author Chiara Valerio wrote that the break-up highlights the chasm between the prime minister's rightwing government's "obsessive exaltation of the traditional family" and the realities of the leaders' own messy personal lives. The novelist Nadia Terranova, however, is hopeful that Meloni's personal heartache might lead to greater empathy and policy support for those in single-parent or non-traditional families.

"The society that our prime minister lives in is not the one she talks about and she knows it," wrote Terranova. "Perhaps today she knows it a little more."

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# Opinion

## Sunak needs policy solutions, not political strategies

### BRITAIN

Stephen Bush



**D**uring a recent invite-only briefing for Conservative party parliamentary candidates, some of the more mathematically-inclined members started to become uneasy.

The strategy, they were told, was to focus relentlessly on former Tory voters who either say they will not vote, or plan to back a party that is to the right of the Conservatives. Local candidates should then seek to identify a local issue – perhaps an extravagance by a Labour or Liberal Democrat council, a football club in need of support or a housing development worth blocking – to get them the extra votes needed to be elected or re-elected in their seats.

What bothered those listening was that as they thought about the figures,

they realised the strategy being discussed was not enough for the Tories to win. It might be enough to mitigate their losses, and even to force Labour to govern as a minority administration. But it cannot lead them to outright success.

Labour's twin victories in Tamworth and Mid Bedfordshire last week mean that even the innumerate now realise that the Conservatives' electoral strategy is not working. As a result, Rishi Sunak is facing inevitable calls to once again reset his government – to embark on a "bold" reshuffle and make some kind of blood sacrifice to show that he is changing. (Greg Hands, the party's chair, is high up the list of those likely to be culled.)

But a high-profile reshuffle or another change of direction is not going to help the prime minister turn things around. His biggest mistake has been looking for a political solution to a policy problem. That cannot cure the Tories' troubles because they are the result not of political issues, but of policy ones.

Some of them are just the result of bad timing – the inflationary pressures created by the end of lockdown and the war

in Ukraine would have posed major challenges for any government. Others are the direct result of decisions taken or not taken by successive Conservative governments.

The failure to build enough prisons, which meant that the final weeks of the by-election campaigns were dominated by stories about English and Welsh judges being told to jail fewer criminals,

### A high-profile reshuffle or another change of direction is not going to help the PM turn things around

is one example. Sunak's own failure to tackle the issue of faulty concrete in schools while he was chancellor is another.

But the bigger issue is this: when people can't get a doctor's appointment, when petty crimes go unsolved and when two-thirds of British households are cutting back on spending due to the rising cost of living, political strategies

are no longer adequate solutions.

That at the last election, the Conservatives ran on a platform that explicitly promised they would fix public services and rebalance the economy aggravates the problem. In one of the brainstorming sessions that led to the Tory party adopting its "Get Brexit Done" slogan in 2019, one aide suggested "End the Uncertainty". That became a bit of a running joke internally, and it would no doubt have landed poorly had it made it on to a poster. But it did capture something important about what voters wanted in 2019 – an end not just to the rows over Brexit, but to the noise and division of the previous three years as a whole.

Yet since 2019, the Conservatives have delivered nothing but noise. Three prime ministers, lockdown-breaking parties, incessant infighting and internal disarray: these are deep-seated problems that cannot be cured by one speech.

Sunak's strategy is far from flawless. His latest reboot, an attempt to cast himself as a change candidate by talking about "30 years of vested interests stand-

ing in the way of change", is a poorly conceived and badly executed mess.

Even the timeframe is a demonstration of his weakness. The only reason to pick "30 years" is because 40 years would imply that not everything Margaret Thatcher did was good and 20 that not everything Tony Blair did was bad. Sunak is not strong enough to get away with either heresy, so instead we have the facile suggestion that a golden thread links every Tory prime minister from John Major to Liz Truss.

But all this "strategy" is a lot like a Tory parliamentary candidate looking at the minutes of their local Labour council to determine what they can use as a wedge issue. Yes, getting those things right can help, but that doesn't fix the problem when the fundamentals are bad.

What should Sunak do differently? Given that his problems lie in policy and delivery, so too do his thin chances of salvation. If he wants to turn things around, he will be better off rolling the dice with a new policy for the NHS than a new party chair.

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## Surprise win shows Peronism's resilience

### LATIN AMERICA

Michael Stott



**S**top collecting dollars and collect votes." Argentina's economy minister Sergio Massa heeded the election campaign advice from Brazil's veteran leftist President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and is now counting his blessings.

After presiding over rising spending and policies that have increasingly diverged from IMF targets, Argentina's foreign currency reserves may be exhausted but Massa has upended almost all predictions by winning the first round of the presidential election.

Javier Milei, the radical libertarian economist and TV personality who sent shockwaves through the political establishment, proved unable to grow his vote beyond the 50 per cent he received to win August's nationwide primary election and has now lost momentum going into the November 19 run-off.

Dominant on social media, Milei's insurgent campaign lacks a strong electioneering machine, and his extreme views – including denial of climate change, support for the sale of human organs and a radical shrinking of the state – alarmed many Argentines. But given his past strength and the dire state of the economy, it would be a mistake to count him out, especially if he continues to moderate his message.

The main centre-right opposition, once the firm favourites, destroyed their chances by staging a bitter internal fight for their nomination. They then chose a rightwing law-and-order candidate, Patricia Bullrich, whose message

### The veteran Massa is a pragmatist who is already wooing support from Argentina's centrists

seemed oddly out of kilter with the central concern of most voters: how to survive an economic crisis.

"Massa's victory was astonishing by any measure," said Michael Shifter at the Inter-American Dialogue think-tank in Washington. "He shrewdly played off Milei's proposed draconian measures to project himself as the defender of public health and education, which resonated with many Argentines."

Investors had little to cheer in Sunday's result, with their preferred candidate Bullrich eliminated and Massa likely to double down on his strategy of boosting welfare spending and offering tax breaks.

Massa has promised, if elected, to form a national unity government to tackle Argentina's dire economic problems and hinted that he would pursue pro-business reforms to attract foreign investment. The veteran Peronist is a pragmatist who is already wooing support from centrists in Bullrich's coalition, and he is the best placed to build a political consensus around reform. But he must avoid crashing the economy in the interim.

The new make-up of congress, where none of the major blocs has a majority in either house, could help foster consensus-building. Although Milei's party now has a total of 37 seats in the lower house, the Peronists remain the biggest party with 108 seats, 21 short of a majority.

But would Massa as president really pursue major changes from the policies he has followed as economy minister for 15 months? Many business leaders are sceptical. He would need to move away from the Peronist left, led by former president and current vice-president Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. A shrewd strategist, Fernández de Kirchner has backed Massa as the best hope for the Peronists to keep power, but she may be less happy to support a shift towards pro-business policies.

Massa's difficulty is that he owes much of his success on Sunday to a very strong Peronist performance by Axel Kicillof, a close ally of Fernández de Kirchner, in Buenos Aires province, where a third of Argentines live. Kicillof triumphed in the governor's race with nearly 45 per cent of the vote. That may make it harder for Massa to lean away from *kirchnerista* policies.

But whatever the outcome of next month's run-off, Argentina's most enduring political movement has once again confounded the sceptics. As the adage goes, "God is a Peronist".

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## Israel and the lessons of 9/11

### GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Gideon Rachman

**W**hile you feel that rage, don't be consumed by it. After 9/11, we were enraged in the United States. And while we sought justice and got justice, we also made mistakes."

So said Joe Biden on his recent visit to Israel. But the US president did not elaborate in public on the mistakes that America made. So what were they?

Broadly speaking, the US attempted to defeat "terrorism" through conventional military means. It launched wars in Afghanistan and Iraq that led to hundreds of thousands of deaths. But more than 20 years after starting its war on terror, America is probably less powerful and respected around the world than it was in 2001. And its own society has been gravely wounded.

Is Israel in danger of repeating many of these errors? Absolutely. But Israel has much less margin for error. The US is the world's largest economy. It is protected by two oceans and has a global network of allies and dependent powers. Israel, by contrast, is a small country in a hostile neighbourhood.

The desire to destroy the organisation that slaughtered your civilians is

entirely natural. Israel's vow to obliterate Hamas is strongly reminiscent of America's pledges to destroy al-Qaeda and the Taliban after 9/11.

The US can claim a partial success in the direct struggle against al-Qaeda. Osama bin Laden, its leader, was killed in 2011 and it has not managed to launch another spectacular attack on the American mainland. But Islamism is an idea and terrorism is a tactic. So destroying one Islamist terrorist organisation does not end the problem. New groups, such as Isis, have emerged. Europe, in particular France, has been hit hard by Islamist terror attacks. And jihadist militants are gaining ground in Africa.

Hamas resembles the Taliban more than al-Qaeda because it is an actual governing authority that has run a defined territory for some years. That should be a warning because, more than 20 years after US troops entered Kabul, the Taliban are back in charge of Afghanistan.

Both Hamas and the Taliban employ terrorist tactics. But the unpalatable truth is that they are also social and political movements with deep roots.

How many times did the allied forces in Afghanistan announce that they had killed this or that Taliban commander? There was always a replacement. Indeed, a war against a foreign occupier feeds the nationalism and fanaticism on which organisations like the Taliban and Hamas thrive. With the Taliban reinstalled in Afghanistan, who could rule out Hamas still running Gaza in 20 years' time, improbable as that now seems?

Despite its military victories, America



failed to find a sustainable political settlement in either Iraq or Afghanistan. By treating the Palestinians as purely a security issue, Israel is poised to repeat this error. "Restor[ing] deterrence" will not be enough.

At some point, Israel and the Palestinians need to find a durable political settlement, or another generation of Palestinians will emerge, committed to taking the fight to Israel. And yet the Israeli government seems to have no idea who or what might govern Gaza, once Hamas has been theoretically destroyed. All the options – the Palestinian Authority, Israeli occupation, a foreign peacekeeping mission – seem unworkable.

The Netanyahu government has also debated launching a second war – this time against Hezbollah in Lebanon,

### More than 20 years after starting its war on terror, the US is less powerful and respected than in 2001

such as water retention and filtration, soil retention by trees and plants, pollution, irrigation, aesthetic and spiritual enhancement, pollination and, of course, carbon sequestration.

We must now abandon the conventional approach to value and set up systems that account for nature as economically indispensable.

The economist Partha Dasgupta has written: "The view that the biosphere is a mosaic of self-regenerative assets also covers its role as a sink for pollution... The damage inflicted... should be interpreted as depreciation." It follows that this depreciation must be halted. This was the essence of the call made at the Amazon summit to avoid "a point of no return" for the rainforest.

But how? Fortunately new financial tools have emerged to help us invest in the value of the economically measurable benefits nature provides. A fascinating potential mechanism is the "forest resilience bond", piloted in Lake Tahoe, California, issued with capital from public and private investors.

Such direct payment to nations would compensate them for their contribu-

which is a much more powerful force than Hamas. Hizbollah itself could go on the offensive, which has led some in Israel to argue for a pre-emptive strike. The logic is similar to some of the arguments that led America to invade Iraq. The view was that, after 9/11, it was simply too dangerous to ignore a looming security threat. But many of those who voted for the Iraq war, including Biden, now accept that it was a mistake.

The way the war on terror was waged was also deeply damaging to America's global standing. The civilian deaths caused by drone strikes, the Guantánamo prison camp and the torture carried out by the CIA (and detailed by the US Senate report) did lasting damage to America's image.

Israel argues that many of those criticising its war in Gaza are misinformed, hypocritical or antisemitic. Some of the most ferocious critics of Israel are indeed dangerous enemies of the very idea of a Jewish state.

But there is also a large group who start from a position of real sympathy for Israel – but who will be alienated if,

for example, the cut-off of water and electricity to Gaza leads to starvation or outbreaks of disease; or if Israel flattens the territory, as the Russians once destroyed Grozny.

Israel cannot afford to simply brush aside international opinion. As it enters a very dangerous phase in its history, the Jewish state will need all the international support it can get – military, economic and diplomatic.

A war on terror can also damage the society that wages it. More than 30,000 US troops died by suicide after serving in Iraq and Afghanistan: more than three times as many as died in battle. The anti-elite rage and the "American carnage" that led to the rise of Donald Trump in 2016 were closely connected to the social wreckage wrought by the wars America fought after 9/11.

A war on terror unifies a country in the short term, but it can rip it apart over the longer term. That, too, is a lesson that a traumatised Israel needs to think about – before it is too late.

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## It is time we paid nature back

### Paula DiPerna

**N**ature is history's most exploited underpaid labourer, so has the time come to make good? It would seem so.

"Nature needs money," said the president of Brazil, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, at the Amazon summit in early August. It's time, he declared, for the world to "create a mechanism to fairly remunerate the environmental services that our forests provide to the world".

There's nothing new in that assertion. I heard a similar challenge at the landmark Earth Summit in 1992, when a Brazilian woman asked: "If the north cares so much about the rainforest, why don't they rent it from us?"

Nature does need money and more protection, but we've never met the need commensurate with the value of the constant labour that it performs –

services that improve forest wildfire resistance, soil retention by trees and plants, pollination, irrigation, aesthetic and spiritual enhancement, pollination and, of course, carbon sequestration.

Another approach is direct remuneration, where nations rich in biodiversity or carbon sink potential would be paid to forgo certain forms of exploitation, including fossil fuels, based perhaps on an annual average carbon price per tonne in mandatory carbon markets.

Another approach is direct remuneration, where nations rich in biodiversity or carbon sink potential would be paid to forgo certain forms of exploitation, including fossil fuels, based perhaps on an annual average carbon price per tonne in mandatory carbon markets.

Mia Mottley, prime minister of Barbados and architect of the Bridgetown Initiative calling for a revamp of international financing, invoked the "pay for nature" concept when explaining why

her nation remains involved in exploitation of natural gas. At September's Climate Week in New York, she said: "I would love somebody to pay me to keep our natural gas in the ground and our oceans, but if they don't, how can I finance my way to net zero and ensure my country has access to a credible supply of energy?"

Daily events warn us that our "line of credit" with nature is running out – suffocating heat, choking droughts and rampant floods and wildfires across the world. Are we destined only to catalogue these phenomena when the money is there to keep them in check?

As Lula said: "Mother Nature needs money because industrial development has destroyed it over the past 200 years." Trillions of dollars roam the world looking for applications and purpose. Where that tide flows will largely determine our planetary health. The world's economy is already being directly subsidised by nature, so why not subsidise nature back?

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## Chevron/ Hess: indy pop

In 2000, the Hess family sold the New York Jets to tycoon Woody Johnson for \$635m. That was a blowout valuation at the time.

The American football franchise is now valued at 10 times more, despite a patchy performance on the gridiron.

Chevron is hoping it has struck an equally shrewd deal with the Hess family. Yesterday, it said it would buy Hess Corporation, the listed oil and gas driller, at an enterprise value of \$60bn.

The deal comes just weeks after Chevron arch-rival Exxon snapped up another independent energy producer, Pioneer Natural Resources, at an enterprise value of \$64bn.

Both Chevron and Exxon are using their shares as a currency, eschewing debt that has turned pricey. In both deals, the buyers are giving up just over a tenth of pro forma equity to access ostensibly high-growth businesses in a world where fossil fuel remains crucial. Despite – or perhaps because of – the energy transition, supermajors covet “independents” like never before.

There are more targets than buyers. No matter how titanic the bidder, it must find complementary benefits in any purchase to justify issuing a stack of new shares. Hess stock has more than doubled since 2020. It had previously tangled with activist investor Elliott. The bone of contention was the balance between investment and capital returns to shareholders.

Like virtually all independents, Hess now returns a majority of its cash flow to shareholders in dividends and buybacks. Its prized assets are offshore Guyanese production and chunks of North Dakota’s Bakken shale deposit.

Hess’s current daily production is 330,000 barrels of oil equivalent. The aggregate transaction valuation implies a price of \$180,000 per barrel.

Chevron’s enterprise value of roughly \$325bn implies a valuation of just over \$100,000 per barrel for its own output.

Comparing the share price with 2024 estimated earnings, it is offering a similar premium to Hess investors.

Chevron is banking on Hess’s output, particularly in Guyana, spiking ever upwards in coming years as it is projected to do. The acquirer also aims to realise \$1bn in cost efficiencies.

The Hess family’s 7 per cent equity

stake is now valued at nearly \$4bn. This time around, the clan has a chance to share in any upside the acquirer creates. But it is moot whether anyone will see an oil company as a trophy asset 23 years from now.

## Interconnectors: long story bought

Renewable energy offers the chance for any country to produce fossil-fuel-free domestic electricity. Yet governments are casting the net wider. Look at Xlinks. The £20bn project aims to bring green electricity from Morocco to Devon. It has yet to secure the UK contract for difference required for UK renewables and gain financing, but the government last month designated the project of “national significance”. That will streamline planning.

Crossing waters with 3,800km of undersea cable sounds odd. Surely the UK is best served by producing its own wind power, or importing electricity from neighbouring countries. The argument for projects such as Xlinks is that renewable energy production in extremely sunny or windy places creates cost advantages.

In Morocco, a combined solar and wind plant such as the one Xlinks plans would deliver power at £15/MWh. A recent UK wind auction attracted no bidders at £60/MWh in today’s prices.

The UK’s wind turbines mostly spin at the same time. During calm weather, the network needs other sources of electricity to kick in. That piles on costs for networks, storage and back-up capacity. The UK’s Climate Change Committee, a government adviser, estimates that “integration costs” add £10/MWh. Costs rise as the proportion of renewables in the grid increases.

Will Xlinks’ extra-long cable eliminate the price differential between Moroccan sun and Scottish wind? It accounts for nearly half of project capex and would lose an estimated 15 per cent of its electricity en route. The calculation is complicated by the fact that the gap would shrink if capex for renewables fell over time. Even so, savings are considerable. It suggests long interconnectors will be an enduring facet of the energy transition.

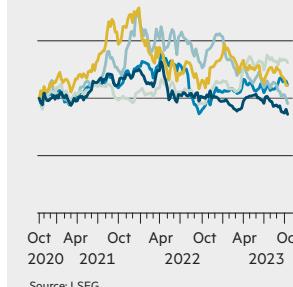
China has built 22 ultra-high-voltage above-ground megalinkins. That is good news for African and Middle Eastern

## Roche has underperformed against its peers

Total returns (rebased in \$ terms)

— Roche — Merck — Novartis

— GSK — Pfizer



Source: LSEG

Heal thyself, is the advice the Bible offers to ailing physicians. That holds true for pharmaceuticals companies, which are looking a bit peaky.

Roche, whose stock has fallen 27 per cent in the past 12 months, is a case in point.

After a spate of late-stage drug disappointments, including one involving Alzheimer’s, the market had been expecting a takeover.

Yesterday’s purchase of the US’s Telavant, for \$7.1bn plus a near-term milestone payment of \$150mn, fits the bill. Telavant’s potential drug for inflammatory bowel disease may open the door to large new markets.

But it also highlights the Swiss group’s own lagging status and reduces chances of a larger, more

## Molecule success rate in Phase 3\*

Five-year rolling average (%)

— Roche — Peers

— Pfizer

— Novartis

— GSK

— Merck

— LSEG

— Roche

— Roivant Sciences

— Pfizer

— Roche

— Roche