

FT Weekend Asia edition

INTERNATIONAL NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

SATURDAY 17 SEPTEMBER / SUNDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2022



Mourners queue near Tower Bridge, London, to attend the lying in state of Queen Elizabeth II before her funeral on Monday. The queue yesterday extended to more than 24 hours. Page 4 Emilio Horvath/AP

The kingdom to come
Matthew Engel on the monarchy's future

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The myth of western decadence

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Author Orhan Pamuk
has Lunch with the FT

LIFE & ARTS



Germany seizes Rosneft oil refineries

◆ Move to secure energy supply ◆ Scholz cites 'unavoidable' step ◆ Putin hit by India stance on Ukraine

GUY CHAZAN — BERLIN

The German government has taken control of three refineries owned by Russian oil company Rosneft, in an escalation of the energy war between Moscow and the west triggered by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Chancellor Olaf Scholz yesterday said his government had not taken the step lightly, but that it was "unavoidable".

"We have known for a long time that Russia is no longer a reliable energy supplier," he said. "That's why it's important to do everything we can now to safeguard Germany's energy supply."

The German move to seize control of the Russian refineries came as Vladimir Putin, Russia's president, faced increasing pressure over the war in Ukraine from Asian nations that had previously been neutral to the invasion.

Narendra Modi yesterday warned Putin that "today's era is not of war" during a meeting between the Indian and Russian leaders in Uzbekistan.

Putin had acknowledged New Delhi's "concerns" about the conflict for the first time — a day after using the same tone with China's president, Xi Jinping.

Xi and Modi's strong ties with Russia are crucial to Putin's attempt to show

that Moscow remains a major player on the world stage.

Berlin's decision to take control of the refineries is an attempt to protect the German economy from the effects of an EU-wide embargo on Russian crude, which comes into force on January 1 and is designed to deprive Putin of revenues to fund the war.

It secures the future of PCK, a refinery owned by Rosneft in the German town of Schwedt that was set to be hit hard by the oil embargo. PCK sits atop the Druzhba pipeline, which carries crude about 4,000km from central Russia to Schwedt. Efforts to secure alterna-

tive supplies of oil for the refinery had been complicated by the fact that Rosneft is its majority owner with a 54 per cent stake.

"This is a far-reaching decision on energy policy aimed at protecting our

Ukraine's counter-offensive has shattered the illusion of normalcy that the Kremlin has worked hard to sustain

PUTIN'S PROBLEM
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country," Scholz said. "We are making ourselves more independent of Russia."

PCK, which has a workforce of 1,200, is the main supplier of petrol, diesel, jet kerosene and fuel oil to Berlin and the surrounding region.

The move on Rosneft is the latest in a string of measures by the German government to deal with the chaos caused by the war in Ukraine, which has pushed European energy prices to record levels.

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US stocks decline after profit warning from bellwether FedEx worsens gloom

ADAM SAMSON AND IAN JOHNSTON
LONDON

Wall Street equities were on course to close the week with significant losses after a profit warning from package-delivery company FedEx amplified concerns about the global economy.

The S&P 500 dropped 1.4 per cent by midday in New York, with Nasdaq down 1.7 per cent. The falls came after shares in FedEx dropped 23 per cent in reaction to the group's disclosure that it would close offices, freeze hiring and park aircraft in response to a decline in package shipping volumes.

The US company, seen as an economic bellwether because of its central role in global commerce, released preliminary quarterly financial results that missed analysts' forecasts. It also withdrew guidance for the remainder of the fiscal

year as it warned of deteriorating "macroeconomic trends" in the US and abroad.

The stock market challenges show how "the underlying conditions have deteriorated quite sharply over the last couple of months", said Roger Lee, head of UK equity strategy at Investec. "In the first half, companies were able to get price rises through and pass on to customers. We may be getting to the point where that's getting more difficult."

European equities also reflected the rising investor jitters about the state of the global economy. The regional Stoxx 600 closed down 1.6 per cent while Germany's Dax slipped 1.7 per cent. In Asia, Hong Kong's Hang Seng lost 0.9 per cent and Japan's Topix fell 0.6 per cent.

The US S&P 500 had already fallen 4 per cent in the week to Thursday as traders worried that the Federal

Reserve may begin raising interest rates more forcefully in its effort to tame the worst spell of inflation in four decades.

Trading in federal funds futures suggested that markets expect the Fed to boost its main interest rate to 4.5 per cent by next March, against forecasts of about 4 per cent at the start of this week.

That would mark a sharp rise from the range of 2.25-2.5 per cent at present. Higher borrowing costs typically weigh on economic growth and some economists expect the central bank may struggle to avoid tipping the world's biggest economy into recession.

Traders are looking ahead to a major week for central banking news. In addition to the Fed, the Bank of England and Bank of Japan are set to make monetary policy decisions next week.

FedEx shares plunge page 10
The Long View page 18



Investors keen for details of ESPN turnaround plan

Back in the game ► PAGE 12

Australia	AS1000inc GST1
Brunei	B58.00
China	RMB30
Hong Kong	HK\$45
India	Rup260
Indonesia	Rp4,000
Japan	¥6500inc JCT1
Korea	₩5,000
Malaysia	RM42.50
Pakistan	Ruppee 450
Philippines	Peso 150
Singapore	S\$70inc GST1
Taiwan	NT\$150
Thailand	BH\$60
Vietnam	US\$5

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World Markets

STOCK MARKETS				CURRENCIES				GOVERNMENT BONDS			
	Pair	Sep 16	Prev %Chg	Pair	Sep 16	Prev	Yield (%)	Pair	Sep 16	Prev	Chg
S&P 500		3858.19	-1.11	\$/£	1.003	1.000	0.997	US 2 yr	3.87	3.88	-0.01
Nasdaq Composite		11393.55	-1.37	\$/€	1.143	1.149	0.875	US 10 yr	3.46	3.46	-0.01
Dow Jones Ind		33694.34	-0.86	£/€	0.877	0.870	1.140	US 30 yr	3.53	3.49	0.04
FTSEurofirst 300		1612.80	-1.59	\$/¥	142.940	143.470	143.376	UK 2 yr	3.19	3.16	0.03
Euro Stoxx 50		3493.01	-1.38	€/¥	163.424	164.861	77.012	UK 10 yr	3.13	3.16	-0.03
FTSE All-Share		3976.66	-0.62	\$/¥	0.965	0.960	1.100	UK 30 yr	3.45	3.48	-0.03
CAC 40		6077.30	-1.31	CRYPTO				JPN 2 yr	-0.08	-0.08	0.00
Xetra Dax		12741.26	-1.66					JPN 10 yr	0.25	0.25	0.00
								JPN 30 yr	1.29	1.25	0.03

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Nikkei	27987.85	27875.91	-1.11	Ethereum	1422.86	1472.42	-3.38	GER 2 yr	1.52	1.52	-0.01
Hang Seng	18781.69	18620.38	-0.86					GER 10 yr	1.76	1.77	-0.01
MSCI World	2582.00	2617.84	-0.99	COMMODITIES				GER 30 yr	1.76	1.76	0.00
MSCI EM \$	958.58	962.55	-0.41	Step 16	Prev	%chg					
MSCI ACWI \$	603.30	608.93	-0.92	Oil WTI \$	86.03	85.10	1.09				
FT Worldsh 2500	5093.54	5149.97	-1.10	Oil Brent \$	92.15	90.84	1.44				
FT Worldsh 5000	39192.63	40231.29	-1.08	Gold \$	1898.10	1703.30	-0.87				

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INTERNATIONAL

Ukraine

Mass grave found in recaptured Izyum

Discovery bolsters claims of war crimes committed by Russia since February

ROMAN OLEARCHYK — KYIV

Ukraine claims to have uncovered a mass grave of more than 440 people in Izyum, a city in the north-eastern region of Kharkiv recaptured in a lightning counteroffensive last week, calling the discovery further evidence of war crimes committed by Russian forces.

The burial site, which officials believe contains the bodies mostly of civilians but also soldiers, adds to the widely documented evidence of mass executions by Russian forces since Moscow launched its invasion nearly seven months ago. It includes the discovery of 422 civilian bodies in Bucha after Russia

retreated from the town near Kyiv in March. "The whole world should see this. A world in which there should be no cruelty and terrorism. But all this is there. And its name is Russia," Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, said yesterday, adding that many bodies showed signs of torture.

Zelenskyy said Ukrainian officials were gathering evidence at the site, a forest in Izyum where scores of wooden crosses stand above graves each containing multiple bodies. The UN's human rights office said yesterday that it planned to send a delegation.

There are several bodies with their hands tied behind their backs, and one person is buried with a rope around his neck. Obviously, these people were tortured and executed. There are also children among the buried."

Zelenskyy pledged to hold Russia accountable for the alleged crimes. Moscow has repeatedly denied targeting civilians despite mounting evidence of mass executions and indiscriminate shelling of civilian buildings in cities. "Russia leaves only death and suffering. You won't run away. You won't hide. Retribution will be justly dreadful. For every Ukrainian, for every tortured soul," Zelenskyy said.

'You won't run away. You won't hide. Retribution will be justly dreadful'

Ukraine's interior affairs minister who visited Izyum this week, told the Financial Times that numbers were scratched into the crosses, to count the amount of victims buried under each plot. Geraschenko said some of the bodies were likely to be troops from Ukraine's army units that tried to defend Izyum as the Russians stormed the city early in the invasion. "Each city which they occupy is likely to [uncover] another Bucha," Geraschenko said. As evidence was being gathered at Izyum, Russia for a third consecutive day conducted missile strikes on a dam in the central city of Kryvyi Rih, Zelenskyy's hometown. Ukraine carried out strikes on buildings in Kherson and the far-eastern city of Luhansk in an attempt to hit positions of Russians and local collaborators. **See FT Big Read**



WORLD WEEK IN REVIEW

US senators back \$6.5bn arms deal for Taiwan to counter China threat

US senators passed a bill that gives Taiwan \$6.5bn to fund weapons and other support to counter the threat of China. The Senate foreign relations committee voted 17-5 in favour of the Taiwan Policy Act, the first time the US would directly finance the provision of weapons to Taiwan. It goes to the full Senate and the House for approval. The TPA would also provide a \$2bn loan facility to help Taipei buy weapons and would make Taiwan eligible for a programme to enable it to stockpile weapons ahead of possible conflict with China. The bill would also require President Joe Biden to sanction Chinese state-owned banks should he determine that China has escalated tensions.

Far right holds sway in Sweden as PM concedes defeat in election

The far-right Sweden Democrats party is set to gain national influence for the first time after the ruling Social Democrats conceded defeat in elections. Centre-left prime minister Magdalena Andersson quit after the closest race in recent Swedish history went down to the final few thousand votes from citizens living abroad. Ulf Kristersson, leader of the centre-right Moderates, will try to form a coalition even though his party came third. Rightwing parties have a three-seat majority after Sweden Democrats gained the support of 20.5 per cent of voters to become the second-biggest party. The nationalist party, which had roots in the neo-Nazi movement, has already used threatening language against journalists since the election.

Game, set and match as tennis great Federer announces his retirement



Roger Federer, winner of 20 Grand Slams and one of the top earners in sport, called time on his tennis career. His decision comes less than two weeks after Serena Williams played her final match at the US Open.

Pakistan rains intensified because of climate change, report finds

Climate change is estimated to have made the rainfall that caused devastating flooding in Pakistan up to 50 per cent more intense. The World Weather Attribution group said most of its computer models "show an increase in likelihood and intensity that is potentially very large". The heavy rain affected more than 35m people, destroyed 1.7m homes and wrecked crops, Islamabad estimated. Sindh and Balochistan in the south experienced their wettest August on record — up to eight times what would be usual for the month. Between mid-June and the end of August, large areas of the country experienced record-breaking monsoon rainfall.

Demand for teachers to not discuss 'unacceptable' issues sends a chill through expats

SIMEON KERR — DUBAI

Teachers returning for the new academic year in the United Arab Emirates were struck by a new bureaucratic demand. In a new code of conduct, one clause jumped out: "refrain . . . from discussing gender identity, homosexuality or any other behaviour deemed unacceptable to UAE society".

The directive has sent a chill through the teaching community in English-language schools, where many of the staff are from the UK and Ireland. School management, responding to the perceived clampdown, has removed rainbow flags from classrooms and told teachers to remove rainbow wristbands. Children have been told that discussion of topics such as same-sex marriage and homosexuality are no longer allowed. "Every time we walk into the classroom, we are worried now," said one teacher. For many, the new school directive was just the latest sign that the culture wars and clashes over identity politics in the west have arrived in the conservative Gulf states.

Last week, Saudi Arabia led all six Gulf states, including the UAE, in demanding that streaming group Netflix remove shows deemed un-Islamic. The call followed a local media campaign accusing it of promoting homosexuality, a criminal offence in many countries in the region.

The clashes are particularly acute in the UAE, which has a big expatriate population. The government there has liberalised laws on alcohol and divorce to attract foreign talent but it also needs to be mindful of the concerns of conservative ethnic Emiratis, fearful that homosexuality could be decriminalised next. The UAE, one of the more liberal Gulf states, has largely adopted a "don't ask, don't tell" policy, tolerating homosexuals who hide their sexuality. Yet increasing promotion of equality in western companies and communities has forced the issue into the open. Multinational executives have lobbied the government to decriminalise



Arts centre: teenagers enjoy the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum on Saadiyat Island in the United Arab Emirates *See Reuters/Wamy*

Middle East. Culture wars

Anti-gay edict dents UAE liberal image

homosexuality in an effort to broaden the pool of employees willing to relocate to the UAE. An inclusive work culture, they argue, is also vital to attract and retain talent, especially in knowledge-based industries targeted by the government as part of its strategy to diversify the economy away from oil. "For cultural and creative industries to flourish, one must ensure public liberties, personal freedoms, free access to private funding — and tolerance, including for LGBTQ rights," said Mazen Hayek, a Dubai-based media consultant. Last week, US law firm Baker McKenzie cut ties with senior UAE lawyer Habib Al Mulla over tweets he made in relation to a viral video, in which young women gave their thoughts about contemporary womanhood. In the tweets, he had suggested that other Emirati women should sue the video makers for misrepresenting UAE society. Mulla, who comments on social and legal issues from his popular Twitter account, had

also previously described homosexuality as "ugly". Baker McKenzie issued a press release signalling the end of its partnership with Mulla, saying it wanted "an inclusive work environment for all". He refused to apologise for his comments, which he described as rooted in his religion. "As a Muslim, eastern culture here, this issue homosexuality is a no, no — society won't accept it," he said, echoing the views of many conservative Emiratis. "Live your own life, but don't try to force that culture." The UAE brooks little dissent. As a result, it may be easier for citizens to voice outrage over homosexuality and other social issues than more overtly political topics, said Mira Al Hussein, a postdoctoral researcher at Oxford University. "LGBTQ is a convenient and non-divisive topic for many Emiratis, which they can offload their rage on to without appearing to be making political state-

ments or demands. Many of these people expressing outrage on social media know they have the backing of key individuals in government." The backlash is also being felt by Dubai's thriving underground gay community. "People travel across the region to party here because it has always been seen as a more tolerant safe haven," said one gay resident. But the parties have dried up in recent months, with attendees afraid of sparking the interest of the authorities, the resident added. In schools, teachers remain on edge, as conservative parents complain to the authorities over liberal attitudes towards homosexuality and gender identity. One teacher was encouraged to leave after a pupil told their parents that they thought he was gay. Another received a fine for "cross dressing" when he wore the clothes of a female literary character to celebrate World Book Day. The situation, added the teacher, "is difficult for any educator".

Election

Disaffected southern voters shun Five Star for Brothers of Italy

AMY KAZMIN AND GIULIANA RICCOZZI CASERTA, ITALY

Edoardo Eremita, like many young voters in southern Italy, once supported the anti-establishment Five Star Movement, captivated by its promise to tackle poverty and corruption. Since then, he has grown disenchanted with the party. When Italians vote in an election later this month, Eremita, 28,

Now, however, its support in the south is crumbling. Many erstwhile Five Star voters plan to skip the polls next Sunday while others are shifting right, drawn by Meloni's charisma and novelty. Growing southern support, including in towns such as Caserta, where Eremita lives, is expected to help Meloni's 10-year-old party emerge as the largest in parliament. It's rightwing coalition with Matteo Salvini's Lega and Forza Italia,

in the south, government data show. Meanwhile, employers across Italy, including small business owners, complain of acute labour shortages. "Instead of creating jobs for young people, they created a tool for people not to work," said Giuseppe Arrighi, 67, who runs a small barber shop in Caserta. He voted for Five Star in 2018 and does not plan to vote. "I feel betrayed."

His cousin, Francesco Gravino, 28, a train driver, is also dismayed at what he feels is widespread abuse of the scheme, but says he is "torn" over whether to vote for Five Star or Meloni. "I'm in favour of citizens' income for people who cannot work, but not for people who can," Gravino said. Gimmi Cangiano, a Brothers of Italy parliamentary candidate from the southern Campania region, who hopes

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CECILIAR BICI AND BROTHERS, EXHIBING 20, will swing to the rightwing Brothers of Italy led by firebrand Giorgia Meloni.

Southern Italy, the poorest region, where distrust of mainstream politicians and traditional institutions runs deep, was once a bastion of support for Five Star. The region, which accounts for about a third of parliament's seats, voted overwhelmingly for Five Star in 2018.

PROFESSOR BERLUSCONI'S FORZA ITALIA IS forecast to secure a comfortable majority. The citizens' income policy, Five Star's flagship social welfare scheme launched in 2019, which provides a monthly basic income for the jobless, is among the most polarising issues ahead of the vote.

About 1.5m households have received citizens' income payments so far this year, about two-thirds of whom are

RECIPIENTS ALSO BELIEVES THAT MANY young recipients of citizens' income payments work informal jobs for which they receive cash, enabling them to earn more than he does after he pays tax.



Giorgia Meloni: Brothers of Italy head wants to abolish the citizens' income

SOUTHERN CALABRIA REGION, WHO HOPES to win in the area held by a Five Star member, expected many undecided voters to back Meloni. They are unlikely to be drawn both by her 'defence' of their interests and her nationalism, he said.

However, the threat to citizens' income is mobilising support for Five Star among benefit recipients. Angela, 38, a mother who receives the €350 citizens' income every month for two years, said: "Other politicians are egoists, but [Five Star leader] Conte is for the people."

INTERNATIONAL

Ukraine fallout tests limits of Putin's ties with Xi

Russian leader's remarks at Samarkand summit signal changing dynamic that gives Chinese president the upper hand

TOM MITCHELL — SINGAPORE EDWARD WHITE — SEOUL POLINA IVANOVA AND MAX SEDDON — BERLIN

Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin's touted "no limits" partnership has been limited in at least one respect over recent days: public messaging.

At the opening of the Russian and Chinese presidents' first face-to-face meeting since the Beijing Winter Olympics in February, Putin told Xi on Thursday he understood Beijing had "questions and concerns" about Russia's invasion of Ukraine, without specifying what these were.

Chinese state media did not carry Putin's cryptic comment at the meeting in Uzbekistan, where the leaders are attending a regional security forum, and quoted Xi as saying only that the two countries would continue to co-operate closely and support each other's defence of their "core interests", without mentioning Ukraine specifically.

Officially, China has echoed Russia's insistence that US-led Nato "encroachment" in Europe was the trigger for the Ukraine war. Washington, Beijing adds, is responsible for the conflict's consequences, from humanitarian tragedies to energy shortages and global inflation.

The divergent messaging does not, however, reflect a significant new fracture in Xi and Putin's decade-long partnership, analysts said. Russia was the first foreign country Xi visited after assuming power in late 2012, and on Wednesday he addressed Putin as his "dear old friend".

Zhao Long, a Russia and central Asia expert at the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies, said that many people outside China "have misunderstandings about the so-called no-limits Sino-Russian partnership".

"This is based on consensus on specific issues. It is not binding, or unlimited, in all fields," Zhao said. "When any country handles its foreign relations, its first consideration is its own interests, which may lead to areas where bilateral relations need to be fine-tuned."

Putin also hinted at this realpolitik when he recently noted that "our Chinese friends are tough bargainers".

"Naturally, they proceed from their national interests in any deal, which is the only way to go," he added.

Alexander Gabuev, senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, said that even if Xi was unsettled by some of the consequences of



'If Putin can do that to Ukraine, he can do that to Kazakhstan. That will enhance China's position'

Scrap metal: Ukrainian soldiers by a wrecked tank in Izium this week. Below, Vladimir Putin with Xi Jinping yesterday

the war, his options were limited. "If Putin is that obsessed with Ukraine, what can [Xi] realistically do?" Gabuev said.

"Getting cheap [Russian] commodities and weapons designs is good for [Beijing] and the departure of the Putin regime and the unlikely prospect of a pro-western government in Russia is a nightmare for China."

The Samarkand summit was Xi's 39th in-person meeting with Putin since he was appointed head of the Chinese Communist party a decade ago. While they have celebrated birthdays together and refer to each other as "best friends", Thursday's meeting reflected some changing dynamics.

Putin's unexpected remarks about Chinese concerns on Ukraine are "a sign of the shifting power balance in the relationship", said Jakub Jakubowski, a senior fellow at the Centre for Eastern Studies in Warsaw.

Putin landed in Uzbekistan after a lightning counteroffensive by Ukrainian forces recaptured stretches of territory in the north-east of the country.

"The summit comes at the worst possible time for Putin, in the wake of disastrous setbacks on the battlefield that have exposed, irrefutably, the truth that Russia cannot win this war and no longer knows what its objectives are," said Nigel Gould-Davies, senior fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, a London think-tank.

By comparison, for Xi's domestic purposes, the summit was successful, coming just weeks ahead of a party congress at which he will secure an unprecedented third term in power.

Putin also told Xi he blamed "the provocations of the United States and its satellites" for the recent crisis over Taiwan, which Xi threatened in August with a series of unprecedented military exercises after US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taipei.

"Xi received what he needed for his internal audiences on the eve of the party congress: Moscow's clear and repeated support of China's Taiwan pol-



Samarkand summit

Modi tells Russian president 'today's era is not era of war'

JOHN REED — NEW DELHI NASTASSIA ASTRASHESKAYA — RIGA AND MAX SEDDON — MOSCOW

Indian premier Narendra Modi told Vladimir Putin that "today's era is not

"I know your position on the conflict in Ukraine, your concerns that you constantly express," said Putin, according to a Kremlin transcript. "We will do our best to stoo this as soon as possible."

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an era of war", in some of his most pointed public remarks yet about Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

At a meeting between the two leaders in Uzbekistan yesterday, the Russian president acknowledged New Delhi's "concerns" about the conflict for the first time, a day after doing the same to Chinese president Xi Jinping.

The exchanges at the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation in Samarkand are Russia's most public recognitions yet of the disquiet in Beijing and New Delhi about the implications of the war.

Although Xi and Modi have tried to remain neutral on Ukraine, their ties with Russia are crucial to Putin showing Moscow remains a major global player.

Putin's deference highlights how Moscow has become increasingly dependent on the willingness of China and India to buy its exports after western nations imposed sanctions on Russia.

"I know today's era is not an era of war and we have talked to you many times on the subject," Modi told Putin, according to India's foreign ministry. Modi added that democracy, diplomacy and dialogue kept the world together.

But Putin blamed Kyiv for the conflict continuing. "Only, unfortunately, the opposing side, the leadership of Ukraine, announced its abandonment of the negotiation process, declared that it wants to achieve its goals by military means, as they say 'on the battlefield'."

The remarks on the war, which Putin calls a "special military operation" to Russians, appeared to differ from his usual mantra that "the tasks will be carried out in full".

Russia's invasion has caused disquiet in New Delhi centred on the disruption to food and raw energy supplies and the forced evacuation of thousands of Indian medical students from Ukraine.

India, whose political elite have long courted ties with Russia, has called for an end to hostilities in Ukraine, but has mostly been reserved in public.

"Certainly it's a change in tone," said Indrani Bagchi, chief executive of the Ananta Aspen Centre, a New Delhi think-tank. "The tone is not overtly critical, but the fact he's said this isn't a time to be fighting a war is implied criticism."

Putin's comments to Modi came a day after his first face-to-face meeting with Xi since the start of the conflict.

INTERNATIONAL

EU divisions

Brussels plan to lower energy costs attacked

Business and states criticise blueprint to curb surging gas and power prices

ALICE HANCOCK — BRUSSELS

Brussels' plan to lower energy prices in the EU is facing resistance from industries for being too vague and by members for not allowing enough flexibility to account for national energy markets.

The EU's proposals to counter spiralling gas and power prices and risks of blackouts this winter include windfall taxes worth €140bn on energy producers that would be redistributed among consumers and businesses and a mandatory cut to peak electricity use.

But energy-intensive sectors such as aluminium and steel production have said the plans will do little to ease current high prices that have led to the shutdown of large portions of industry.

The measures "are unlikely to stop the trend of production curtailments and temporary lay-offs," said Axel Eggert, director-general of Eurofer, the European steel association.

European Aluminium, the trade body, said Brussels' efforts "are not enough" to tackle soaring input prices sparked by Russia's "weaponisation" of energy, adding they "will not save the aluminium industry from further production cuts, job losses and possibly a complete breakdown". It suggested that some of the windfall taxes should go to

key industries under the state aid part of the European Commission's plans.

Several EU members want the proposed mandatory cut in electricity demand, set at 5 per cent of usage in peak hours, to be voluntary. Others have asked how peak hours of demand should be identified and are resisting the possibility of more regulation.

"How do we police this so it is legitimate and achieves the [objective] we want?" said a European energy official.

Members discussed the plans on Thursday and are expected to suggest revisions to the legal text over the weekend. Energy ministers will meet to agree the final proposal on September 30.

But national differences risk slowing a deal. The Netherlands has a liberalised

electricity market, which makes a levy on non-gas power generators difficult. Luxembourg, Lithuania and Latvia, net importers of electricity, have warned that with no power generators they will have no emergency income unless neighbours share the tax revenues.

Poland is among states to raise the issue of the windfall taxes, which Brussels has called a "revenue cap" for non-gas power generators and a levy or "solidarity contribution" on oil and gas majors, being pushed by a majority vote of members, when tax legislation usually requires unanimous approval.

Plans for a price cap on gas exports and liquidity support for energy companies have been left out of the legislation. The Czech Republic, which holds the

rotating European Council presidency, asked the commission to find mechanisms to cap gas prices and extend liquidity support for energy companies facing steep collateral demands.

Brussels had mooted a price cap solely on Russian gas, but the idea has been opposed by states such as Austria, which still get 50 per cent of gas from Russia and fear retailatory cut-offs.

Momentum is building among some members for an overall price cap on imported gas, several EU diplomats said.

Brussels is still working out how to support energy companies, and members are already proposing their ideas. Additional reporting by Andy Bounds in Brussels. Gas prices see Companies

London

Mourners for British Queen turned away after queue hits capacity

FT REPORTERS

Mourners hoping to view Queen Elizabeth II lying in state in London were turned away briefly yesterday when the queue reached capacity and extended to more than 24 hours.

Members of the public have been permitted to pay their respects in Westminster Hall since Wednesday afternoon. "Thousands have travelled to the capital from across the country and around the world, many standing through the night to bid to say a final goodbye."

The queue's designated route curves alongside the Thames, starting in Southwark Park and passing landmarks including Tower and London bridges before reaching Westminster Hall. It is flanked by hundreds of stewards, including members of the Metropolitan Police and volunteers from St John Ambulance and the Salvation Army.

Early yesterday, the queue was more than four miles long and at 9:50am the government announced that entry would be paused for six hours. The shorter accessible queue for those with mobility issues also reached capacity shortly after midday.

By early afternoon signs at the entrance to Southwark Park still informed visitors that entry was temporarily closed, but mourners continued to stream through the park gates.

Julie Palmer, 61, who travelled from Hull with her sister and daughter, decided to take the chances of joining the queue despite the official guidance advising visitors to hold off.

Palmer and her family were ready for nine hours in the queue but had no complaints. "We are royalists, we were brought up to be," she said, adding the Queen's death "felt like you've lost a family member".

In an update yesterday afternoon, the culture department said queueing had resumed but warned that "expected queueing time is over 24 hours and overnight temperatures will be cold".

Members of the public will be permitted to see the Queen lying in state until 6.50am on Monday, the day of the funeral.

More than 1m people, including hundreds of dignitaries from across the globe, are expected to flock to the capital on Monday. The operation to ensure security for the event is the most complex in the history of the capital.

Police are erecting 36km of barriers to control the flow of crowds.

Numerous heads of state, including US President Joe Biden and France's president Emmanuel Macron have confirmed that they will attend the funeral. Chinese president Xi Jinping was invited but it is unclear whether he will attend. Vice-president Wang Qishan is likely to represent China.

An official Chinese delegation was barred from the Queen's lying-in-state in light of Beijing's decision last year to impose sanctions on some UK politicians.

Reporting by Jasmine Cameron-Khleshe, Sebastian Payne, George Hammond, William Wallis and Philip Georgiadis in London

Europe. Meltdown

Alpine glaciers fall victim to warming climate

Change affecting ice sheets

from Himalayas to Andes is at its most apparent in Alps

SAM JONES — DIABLERETS MASSIF

It was the summer of 2022 that finally orphaned the Sces Rouge glacier, breaking the connection that linked it to its larger parent for millennia.

Only last year, three metres of ice covered a rocky saddle of land high in the Swiss Alps, across which a monumental tongue of ice has crept down from the bigger Tsaunleuron glacier for as many as 5,000 years. But this year, on a sunny September day, a slushy isthmus the depth of an icy puddle was all that connected the two, as a long-hidden path opened up between them.

"We knew the pass would emerge one day," said Bernhard Tschannen, chief executive of Glacier 3000, a ski resort that operates cable cars to the glaciers on the Diablerets massif. "This year was dramatic," he added. "We've lost about three times as much ice this year as we have on average in each of the last 10."

Here in Europe's highest mountain range, 3,000m above sea level, the impact of Europe's extreme summer, the latest in a series of blistering hot summers and unusually mild winters, has become glaringly clear. Ancient glaciers are under threat, from the Himalayas to the Andes, but the melting process has been most apparent in Europe, and in particular the Alps.

"We know from what we've measured so far that this year will definitely be the worst on record for glacial retreat, and by quite some distance," said Daniel Farinotti, a glaciologist at ETH, the research university of Zurich.

Like the rest of western Europe, Switzerland baked in record temperatures this summer. Average temperatures were 0.4C higher this year than the previous record set in 2021, according to data from the EU's Copernicus earth observation programme.

Far from being unusual, climatologists and glaciologists say the events of this summer are an acceleration of an already ominous trend.



Big thaw: a hiker passes the Fee glacier above the Swiss resort of Saas-Fee. Below, Bernhard Tschannen. Photos: AFP/Getty Images



Switzerland's glaciers have lost half their mass since the 1950s, according to a study last month by ETH and the Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research.

For some sceptics, the Alps' shrinking glaciers are an inevitable fact of geological change; the Earth is simply coming to the end of a long period of glaciation, they say.

Climate scientists, however, are clear that the current warming is so sudden and extreme it cannot simply be explained as part of the Earth's long-term natural climatic cycles.

For many communities in the Alps, the glaciers' disappearance is a cause of grave concern. The sense of crisis has

been driven home by a spate of eerie news stories this summer, as receding ice has relinquished long-frozen, unknown tragedies.

Bodies have emerged, clad in clothes from decades ago, along with the wreckage of a plane from 1968, the disappearance of which had until now been a mystery.

Then there are the myriad social and economic ways that the diminishing of the glaciers could alter life. Whole water systems may need rethinking, as this summer's severe drought in Europe showed.

Alpine glaciers acted this year as an effective emergency reserve, feeding rivers such as the Rhine, Rhone and Po

"This year will definitely be the worst on record for glacial retreat, and by quite some distance"

more than usual to make up for less rainfall in the lowlands. But once they are gone, the effects of droughts downstream will be even more severe.

According to scientists, even if warming temperatures could suddenly be halted, it would already be too late for hundreds of Switzerland's 1,400 glaciers, which make up about half of all the glacial ice in the Alps.

Tschannen was in no doubt that, cut off from the Tsaunleuron, Sces Rouge would not survive. "Glaciers are a living mass," he explained.

Severed from its parent, any efforts to save the ice mass would ultimately fail. "I think it will be gone within the decade."

Middle East

Bank heists multiply as Lebanese depositors grow desperate

RAYA JALABI — LONDON

After holding bank employees hostage at gunpoint to retrieve the frozen funds she needed for her sister's cancer treatment, Sali Hafiz had a message for her fellow Lebanese citizens.

"People are committing suicide," she told a local TV station this week of those who, like her, are increasingly desperate three years into a crippling financial crisis. "I tell them: don't pick up the gun and shoot yourselves. Go get your money, even if it costs you your life."

Hafiz was not the first person to storm a bank and demand their money. But her actions this week caught the public imagination, emboldening those disillusioned by the state and financial institutions they blame for the crisis.

Yesterday, at least five more people stormed banks with rifles, replica and pellet guns. They demanded their money from bank employees, before being taken into custody in front of cheering crowds.

"People are growing more and more desperate, with fewer avenues for justice: they can't go to the judiciary, since judges are on indefinite strike [over pay], and they can't go to the security forces, who are in the pocket of our banks and our politicians," said Fouad Debs, co-founder of the Depositors Union, a group of lawyers and activists

lobbying for depositors' rights. "What are they supposed to do?"

Debs, a lawyer whose group has helped file more than 400 lawsuits on behalf of depositors — most of which are pending, said people were right to now take matters into their own hands.

With Hafiz's funds frozen for the past two years and monthly withdrawals capped at the equivalent of \$400, she had been considering selling a kidney to pay for her sister's cancer treatment. After storming a branch of Blom bank with her nephew's toy gun, she walked out with \$15,000 of her \$20,000 of deposits.

Lebanon's financial collapse is in its third year and has forced three-quarters of the population into poverty. Last month, the World Bank published a report accusing Lebanese authorities of operating a giant Ponzi scheme that caused "unprecedented social and economic pain". The report said public finance was used to capture the state's resources for political patronage, creating a "deliberate" depression, adding that a significant portion of people's savings had been "misused and misspent over the past 30 years."

Hafiz has since gone on the run and Debs said it was unclear if these hold-ups constitute a crime under Lebanese law. "None of these people have an intent to hurt — especially those who go

in with a toy gun, like [Hafiz]. So I'm not sure it's technically a crime."

In August, a man who held up a Federal Bank branch before walking out with \$35,000 of his own money was never charged with a crime. Another man, arrested in January for robbing a BBAC branch for his \$50,000 in cash, was released on a bail equivalent to \$5.

While they have been widely praised by people whose funds are frozen, banks and employees are worried about the dangerous precedent it sets.

"They should all be prosecuted because the employees at the bank are not responsible for this crisis," said one bank teller, who works at a Blom bank branch in Beirut and asked for his name to be withheld.



Extreme measures: Sali Hafiz held up a Beirut bank with a toy gun

"I'm more worried about my safety when I go in to work now."

The bank employees' syndicate on Thursday said they no longer wanted to be "scapegoats" for Lebanon's crisis.

The Association of Banks in Lebanon declared a three-day strike from Monday to protest against "repeated attacks on banks" and their employees, a statement said yesterday, and called on the government to deal with the crisis.

Bank executives, meanwhile, have been holding crisis meetings this week, according to three bankers, as they consider ramping up security measures.

Some also say solidarity with the heisters is misplaced. "You can't not understand them or be compassionate, especially when they are asking for money for urgent matters like cancer treatment. This is where logic stops, and instinct takes over," said Marwan Khreiddine, chair of Al-Mawarid Bank.

"But anyone going into any bank in Lebanon and taking possession of any funds in the manner these people did — they're jumping the line, irrespective of other depositors. In my opinion, that's not fair."

An IMF delegation will visit Beirut next week to discuss banking reforms that would unlock \$3bn in loans. The government has so far been slow to act, with analysts and activists warning time was running out for recovery.

Islamic regulations

Iranian woman dies after arrest for violating dress code

NAJMEH BOZORGMEHR — TEHRAN

A 22-year-old Iranian woman has died after her arrest this week by the morality police for her alleged failure to fully observe Islamic dress regulations.

Mahsa Amini, who was from the Kurdish town of Saqqez and was visiting Tehran with her brother, was wearing a headscarf and long coat but was arrested outside a metro station on Tuesday. Police said that she "suddenly" had a "heart attack" and was "immediately" taken to a nearby hospital.

Pictures of Amini in a coma circulated on social media this week, fanning public outrage at authorities who have intensified a crackdown on young women in recent months. Amini's uncle, Vafa Aa'eli, told the Financial Times yesterday that "our innocent Zhina died".

The police denied any physical violence. State television displayed a CCTV video of Amini in a room with other women receiving lessons on morality. The video showed her talking to a female officer about her coat. Amini then collapsed on the floor.

Amini's mother told the Prague-based US-funded Radio Farda that "my daughter was healthy". She added: "I swear to the Koran" that Amini's dress —

a big coat, scarf and no make-up — complied with the republic's standards. "She was taken by force... they have to explain what her crime was," she said before Amini's death.

Iran's interior minister and the parliamentary speaker have ordered investigations and president Ebrahim Raisi had asked the interior ministry to look into "the incident". The judiciary has formed "a special team" to examine her medical file and see whether her transfer to the centre caused her death.

While authorities see the hijab as a defining image of Islamic rule, many pro-reform women see it as a symbol of oppression. It has become increasingly normal to see young women out in Tehran not wearing scarves. Videos published online have depicted violence by security forces arresting women accused of defying hijab regulations.

Sepideh Rashino, 26, was arrested in July and held for two months after she defied a woman who urged her to observe the hijab. Azam, a 25-year-old medical student, said: "This is so disgusting and extremely painful to see that innocent girl dead." Mina, a 42-year-old architect, also said that "it is not only about her now. This can happen to any of us."

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FT Weekend

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FT BIG READ. WAR IN UKRAINE

Following the dramatic advances by Ukrainian forces on the battlefield, the Russian leader is facing criticism from the right over his conduct of the war and growing calls to mobilise many more troops.

By Max Seddon, Polina Ivanova and Ben Hall

In late August, occupation authorities in the eastern Ukrainian town of Kupiansk held celebrations to mark Russian Flag Day.

A few dozen people — including both pro-Kremlin activists and locals who had stayed in the town after it was captured by Russian forces six months ago — unfurled an enormous 60m x 40m Russian tricolour on the main square, then waved flags and danced to a medley of patriotic tunes.

Just a few weeks later, the Russian occupying forces were gone after a surprise Ukrainian attack forced them to surrender more than 5,000 sq km of territory, leaving tanks, armoured vehicles and supplies.

The stunning reversal has shattered the mantra, repeated by senior officials visiting occupied territories over the spring and summer, that "Russia is here forever" in southeastern Ukraine.

Backed by western weapons and intelligence, Ukraine's lightning counter-offensive across the Kharkiv region has shifted the momentum of the war, laying bare the vulnerability of Russia's overstretched invasion forces and shattering the illusion of normalcy at home the Kremlin has worked to sustain.

The dramatic retreat on the battlefield is only one of a number of Ukraine setbacks that Russian leader Vladimir Putin has faced this week.

Russia's budget surplus for the year has almost evaporated, according to figures published this week, due to weaker oil prices and dwindling gas deliveries to Europe — potentially putting even greater pressure on the economy. The EU is mobilising for an energy war with Moscow with no sign of weakening resolve over western sanctions against Russia.

Non-western leaders who have until now stood by Moscow have begun to distance themselves from the Kremlin's war. The Russian president acknowledged at a summit on Thursday in Uzbekistan that his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping had "questions and concerns" about the invasion. On Friday, India's Narendra Modi publicly rebuked Putin at the same summit, saying "today's era is not an era of war". Since Putin ordered the invasion of Ukraine in February, the Russian leader has maintained the public stance that it is a "special military operation" — a term designed to introduce a sense of business as usual in domestic life, evoking far-off conflicts in places like Syria rather than Russians' traumatic memories of bloody, grinding wars in Chechnya and Afghanistan.

But that position is becoming increasingly untenable — both from a military point of view and in terms of domestic politics.

Escalation looms

Some military analysts believe he has little choice but to order a significant escalation of the conflict.



Putin under pressure

[The president] might know what he wants, but the rest are all guessing. We assume he must know what he wants. But he's not explaining it to people doing the work'

sians from the war's blowback. "He's playing a very dangerous game," says Alexei Venediktov, the longtime editor of liberal radio station Ekho Moskvy, which was closed down in March. "It's a battle of resources, and the most important resource is time. Now either he waits out longer than Europe [during the winter], or the Russian people get tired," Venediktov adds. "And it's unclear what collapses first — Putin, or everyone else."

On Wednesday, a video emerged of Yevgeny Prigozhin, a caterer-turned-warlord known as "Putin's chef", addressing convicts in a Russian prison. Prigozhin urged the prisoners to fight on the front lines in Wagner, a shadowy paramilitary group the US says he runs. If they survived six months, they would get amnesty; if they deserted, he said, they would be executed.

The video highlighted how Russia has been forced to adapt as the war drags on with no victory in sight. Russia's covert

entire Donbas region, say analysts. It has given Kyiv's forces momentum and Ukraine's western allies reassurance that it will prevail with their support.

"This counter-offensive shows very well that the Russian armed forces are exhausted," says Ludin.

Russia's defence ministry acknowledged the retreat but described it as a "regrouping".

Ultranationalist sabre-rattling

Moscow's setback in Kharkiv has stirred criticism from the most virulent pro-war camp at home, which has openly bemoaned the defeat and raced to find someone to blame.

This more radical, sabre-rattling group has long criticised the Kremlin for not going far enough in its assault on Ukraine. It wants Putin to declare a full-scale war, propelling Russia's large conscript army into battle and mobilising the wider population and economy.

"For the first half-year of the conflict

The hyperactivity of the ultranationalist group, and its highly vocal and emotional response to the defeat in Kharkiv, is affecting the mainstream pro-Kremlin elite, from the TV anchors to the technocrats, making its members nervous, says Stanovaya.

"If before, their fears were around the war dragging on, and potentially lasting years... Now, fears have appeared that Russia could lose," she says.

For the time being, the ultranationalist group's views do not align with those of the wider population. The majority of Russians appear happy to passively support Putin and the war, but prefer to pay as little attention to it as possible. Their support is predicated on them not having to escalate their involvement.

These "laymen", as Greg Yudin, head of Political Philosophy at the Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences, has termed them, are "completely depoliticised" and don't want to engage in any way with the war.

Russian leader Vladimir Putin has seen the momentum of the war shift this week with Ukraine's lightning counter-offensive

FT montage: Valery Shevchuk/PAWS/Hot Photo Agency/Reuters/FP

of Donbas but rarely mentions other hotspots such as Kharkiv and Kherson.

But as a result, "nobody knows why we need Kharkiv, as opposed to the Donbas," a person close to the Kremlin says. "Putin might know what he wants, but the rest are all guessing. He's been in power for 20 years and has become this godlike figure. So we assume he must know what he wants. But he's not explaining it to the people who are actually doing the work."

It's a battle

of Donbas but rarely mentions other hotspots such as Kharkiv and Kherson.

But as a result, "nobody knows why we need Kharkiv, as opposed to the Donbas," a person close to the Kremlin says. "Putin might know what he wants, but the rest are all guessing. He's been in power for 20 years and has become this godlike figure. So we assume he must know what he wants. But he's not explaining it to the people who are actually doing the work."

Putin could choose to escalate the conflict. This week Russia stepped up missile strikes on Ukraine's critical infrastructure, hitting the power network, district heating plants and hydroelectric installations, in what Ukrainian prime minister Denys Shmyhal described as an attempt to terrorise the Ukrainian population as winter approaches.

He could also try to expand the conflict by provoking a clash with Nato, says Luzin, thereby justifying a full mobilisa-

ever well suited it may have been to address stagflation in the 1970s, neoliberal policy has since then fostered grotesque inequality, fuelled the rise of populist demagogues, exacerbated racial disparities and hamstringing our ability to deal with crises like climate change. The 2008 financial crash exposed these flaws and inspired a reassessment of how government and markets relate to society — an effort given fresh energy by the pandemic, which elicited a range of (successful) public actions at odds with neoliberal bromides.

But powerful interests remain attached to neoliberalism, which has served them well. Regrettably, the re-emergence of inflation has given them

Powerful interests remain attached to neoliberalism, which has served them well

a hook not merely to criticise US President Joe Biden's spending, but to condemn efforts to change the prevailing paradigm as "socialistic" moves to destroy capitalism. Though the causes of today's inflation are complex, we have tools to deal with it and have begun to apply them. Managing the economic fallout from Covid-19 and the war in Ukraine must not be allowed to derail a long-overdue process of adapting governance for a 21st century economy and society.

Neoliberals accomplished many things in the 50 years their ideology has been dominant, but none is more impressive than their success in equating a very particular, very narrow conception of capitalism with capitalism itself — as if any deviation from their approach to government and markets is performance not capitalism or against capitalism.

But capitalism, properly understood, requires only that trade and industry are left primarily in the hands of private actors, something no one today seeks to overthrow. This allows room for countless different relationships among private business, government and civil society — possibilities limited only by imagination and choice. Mercantilism, laissez-faire and Keynesianism were all forms of capitalism, as was FDR's New Deal. As

ism, not certainly not the only one. The genius of capitalism has been in finding new ways to capture the energy, innovation and opportunity that private enterprise can offer, while adapting to changing circumstances. Mercantilism gave way to laissez-faire, which gave way to Keynesianism, which gave way to neoliberalism — each a capitalistic system that served for a time before yielding in the face of material and ideological changes to something more suited to the context.

We are in the midst of such a transformation today — driven by vastly increased wealth inequality, global warming, demands to address racial disparities, the rise of populism and new technologies. These developments have been accompanied by alarming political and social disruption. As faith in neoliberalism crumbles, we observe leaders — from Donald Trump to Jair Bolsonaro, Viktor Orbán and Vladimir Putin — embracing ethno-nationalism, with China's vision of state capitalism looming in the wings as an alternative. These are terrible options, but it's not going to forestall them by exhorting people to stick with a neoliberal system in which they have already lost faith. Change is happening; the question is whether it will be change for the better.

If capitalism is to survive, it will need to adapt, as it has done in the past. We need to acknowledge how neoliberalism has failed and address the legitimate demands of those it has failed. Alternative possibilities abound: how capitalism should change is something we must debate. The only position that makes no sense is protesting that any change is "anti-capitalism", as if Milton Friedman and friends achieved some perfect, timeless wisdom in the 1970s.

In the end, markets and governments are devices to provide citizens with the physical environment and opportunities for the material success needed to flourish and live with dignity. Neoliberals lost sight of this and began treating the market as an end in itself. They failed to see how their version of markets was not working for the majority of people. We're now living with the consequences of their blindness, and we need to rebuild and reimaginate, before it's too late.

The writer is president of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

about problem-solving, ideas and long-term results.

You close by citing Zoe Ellaby, a recent graduate at the start of her career, who gets it. She captures the stimulating and unique opportunities of a career which "gives you the chance to react to anything that's going on in culture, in a way that other industries do not".

Advertising can be hard because the problems it solves are important. That's why it pays talent exceptionally well: if cash is splashed it is earned.

Stewart Pearson
Seattle, WA, US

content spurs some of her royalties from that on the biggest freezer she could buy. When people asked her about it, she'd answer: "Oh I got that from some dead people in California."

M Paramasivam
Seattle, WA, US

Good to see lessons in lazy free will still apply to Lucy

It was a surprise to see that Lucy Kelloway has turned her back on the tidiness of her youth and has cluttered up her newly acquired Newcastle home (House & Home, September 5) with the stuff of its former residents.

A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE between work and a job

I feel some nuance was neglected in Jo Ellison's piece "Work is a four-letter word" (Opinion, FT Weekend, September 5). I like to work — purposeful, meaningful work is good for us — but I don't always like a job.

There's a big difference between them. Though I'm not convinced it's a long-term strategy for happiness, as a short-term tactic one may be able to do good work while also "quiet quitting" the job.

Lucy James
Glasgow, Scotland

presented, upon reflection, this is a predictable, perhaps even logical outcome of the original vision behind the Sex Pistols.

Trying to create "anarchy in the UK" by selling records proved over-optimistic. Promoting "anarchy for the USA" by electing a president is just the continuation of the same strategy with different and much more effective means.

As Lydon proclaimed in his *Good Morning Britain* broadcast during the most recent presidential elections: "He is the only hope."

Alessandro Lomi
Montagnola, Ticino, Switzerland

My visit to Kyiv's presidential palace

by Gillian Tett



Last week, inside the rabbit warren that is Kyiv's presidential headquarters, I stumbled down spooky and deliberately darkened corridors. It was surreal, a bit like entering the film set for a thriller.

I was in Ukraine with diplomats, economists, politicians and historians who, in recent years, have attended an annual meeting known as the Yalta European Strategy (YES). I had presumed this year's event would be cancelled or held online, as it had been during Covid-19 lockdowns. Ukraine has been fighting a brutal Russian invasion for the past seven months and Kyiv itself faced attack from tanks and missiles.

Wrong. Volodymyr Zelenskyy and his team, who work out of the presidential palace, are defiant and confident. Their eastern military offensive has recaptured vast tracts of land from the Russians. Their pleas to the west for aid continue. And they are keen to present a "business-as-usual" face in Kyiv. This is intended to bolster morale, prop up the shattered economy and encourage foreign investment if, or when, the war ends.

So last month the YES group, led by the billionaire Ukrainian businessman Viktor Pincuk, announced that its 2022 conference would take place in Kyiv, "as normal", albeit via an 11-hour train ride from Poland because Russian missiles have closed the airspace. The precise location was a plush bombproof hotel basement where we had to switch off our phones

for "security reasons" (to stop Russian forces using geolocated signals).

At the conference, discussions proceeded as expected. Zelenskyy appealed passionately for more military support, reiterating Ukraine's determination to re-establish the borders from 1991, when it declared independence from the Soviet Union. Various ministers called for economic aid. The first lady, Olena Zelenska, almost wept as she described the psychological damage inflicted on Ukraine's children by the war. And western leaders expressed their horror and support, but were vague when asked whether Ukraine should keep fighting until it recaptured Crimea, annexed by Putin in 2014.

More memorable than words was the experience of seeing Kyiv as it is today. It was a peculiar blend of banal, bizarre and, occasionally, shocking. For example, though the conference was in a basement, the food — which featured dishes from Crimea — was fabulous. Zelenskyy's team wore camouflage fatigues to signal their solidarity with soldiers and citizens, crucial given that Ukraine, unlike Russia, is a country where people can vote out leaders they dislike. Almost everyone else wore smart business attire, which flummoxed me as I had arrived in jeans for a war zone.

The centre of Kyiv looked so unscathed, with bustling restaurants and streets, that when I went out jogging, I was overwhelmed by déjà vu, as though reliving runs I had taken on prewar visits to the city. At least

until I suddenly had to swerve to avoid a row of iron anti-tank defences, or "hedgehogs" as locals call them.

On Friday night, Svyatoslav Vakarchuk, a popular musician, gave a haunting performance for guests. As he played, a computer screen behind his piano kept lighting up with air-raid warnings. When I left the conference basement to visit the government's "office" — a quasi-palace that used to house the Soviet Communist party — things got weirder. I arrived late, as I got stuck in traffic, watching shoppers crowd around stores festooned with adverts for designer clothing. Minutes later I was plunged into a labyrinth of military checkpoints around the vast building, where the windows were blacked out and electronics banned to foil would-be assassins.

Inside, there was another mood shift. Andriy Yermak, a key Zelenskyy adviser, reflected on Ukraine's strategies, invoking visual images. He used to work with Zelenskyy in film production. "You are storyboarding this!" I observed. He laughed and one official revealed that the selfie video of Zelenskyy and his team declaring they were still "but" (here) in Kyiv the day after the Russians invaded was shot close by: it went viral and was critical in rallying support.

Departing through gloomy corridors, an official apologised "for the inconvenience" of the dark, promising, "it will be better when you come next time!" Hopefully so. But in the meantime, Kyiv is a potent symbol of defiance, bravery and resilience.

Opinion

Britain has an opportunity to rebuild a global reputation

Peter Ricketts

Britain has been a long way from turning its best face to the world in recent years. Beset by rancorous divisions over Brexit, the UK has been largely absent from international diplomacy. But world leaders assembling in London this week will now be greeted by a very different Britain, united in mourning for the Queen.

This moment of national meditation creates a golden opportunity to rebuild the UK's international reputation, starting with an honest assessment of the country's weight in the world. It is high time to close the gap between rhetoric and reality that has blighted the country's foreign policy for too long.

The Ukraine crisis shows that the UK can still provide international leader-

ship — if ministers set clear priorities and pursue them consistently. Boris Johnson's championing of the Zelenskyy government and of sweeping sanctions on Russia was the one success of his foreign policy. It has also been welcomed in the Nordic and Baltic states. Finland and Sweden were delighted with their bilateral defence agreements with the UK to bridge the nervous months until they are full members of Nato. The UK-led Joint Expeditionary Force, created in 2014 to improve readiness among the ten nations of northern Europe, has turned out to be a far-sighted initiative.

Viewed from the countries most at risk from Russian aggression, Britain's defence strengths outweigh its troubled relationship with the EU. That is not the case in Brussels, or in Paris, Berlin and Dublin. But the recent signs that both sides want to avoid an early clash on the post-Brexit flashpoint, the Northern Ireland protocol, are encouraging. Detente on that issue would also open the way to a reset of the fractious political relations with France. Emmanuel

Macron's eloquent tributes to the Queen were a reminder of the deep underlying ties between two neighbouring peoples. Now is the moment for an apology from Prime Minister Liz Truss to Macron for her hesitation over whether the French president is a friend or foe.

Taking a more pragmatic approach to the Northern Ireland protocol would also be welcome in Washington. Joe Biden made a pointed reference, in his first telephone call with Truss, to a White House briefing later linked this to a US-UK trade deal. The Biden administration has welcomed the clarity of the UK stance on Ukraine and Russia, and the defence and intelligence relationship remains as strong as ever. But their assessment remains that Britain has been diminished by the strategic error of leaving the EU at a time when unity among America's allies is more important than ever.

There is much ground for British diplomacy to make up in other parts of the world. When was the last time a Brit-

ish foreign secretary took an initiative in the Middle East or threw themselves into reducing conflict in Africa? The drastic cut in the overseas aid budget in 2021 removed an important tool of UK soft power in many poorer countries. The Indo-Pacific tilt announced in the integrated review of 2021 raised hopes among the UK's allies in the region that

UK influence is at its best when using its powers of persuasion at the heart of the multilateral system

Britain would be back as a political and security presence. But there was little follow-up beyond a single flag-waving tour by the new aircraft carrier.

The best place to launch a campaign to improve Britain's international standing is where it has greatest credibility — Ukraine. Denying Vladimir Putin victory will not only mean contin-

ing the flow of western arms and finance to Kyiv, but making the sanctions on Russia more effective by widening the circle of countries implementing them. There is an important message in that more than 100 nations, particularly in the global south, including powers like India, South Africa and Brazil, have so far refused to do so. Britain is well placed to lead on opening up a debate with these countries about the functioning of the international system, recognising their perception that the system has too often been used by the west for its own purposes.

The Ukraine crisis could also provide a model for wider co-operation between Britain and the EU on foreign and security policies, building on the discreet work already under way on Russia sanctions. There are shared interests, for example, on energy security, where Britain and its neighbours should be coordinating rather than competing in world markets for gas. For these reasons, Truss should accept the promised invitation to join the security summit

organised by the Czech presidency of the EU on October 6.

Given the dire outlook for the UK economy, the government has to foster growth by expanding trade. That will involve difficult choices. The long-term threat from China requires vigilance on security issues and frank speaking on human rights abuses in Xinjiang and Hong Kong. But China is also Britain's third-largest market. Britain can ill-afford to close the door on trade in non-security goods. Again, there is scope for consultations with the EU.

Throughout the decades of Queen Elizabeth II's reign, Britain was at its most effective when using its influence and powers of persuasion at the heart of the multilateral system. King Charles is already exceptionally well known and respected around the world. Even as he stays carefully above politics, his international experience is itself a boost to Britain's soft power.

The writer is a former British diplomat and author of 'Hard Choices'



The King's problems with pens break the royal spell

John Gapper
All Consuming

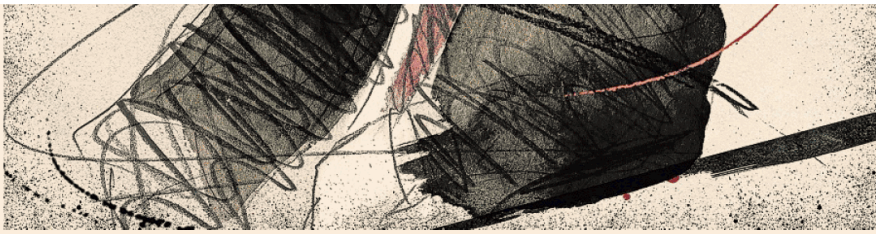


The funeral of the late Queen Elizabeth II and the accession of King Charles III have been planned in detail over several decades. But someone forgot to script how the King should react when faced on live television with a leaking fountain pen. Of such acci-

dent must not let in daylight upon magic," the Victorian essayist Walter Bagehot once warned.

His words are often echoed. Winston Churchill worried that televising the Queen's coronation in 1953 would turn a constitutional ceremony into "a theatrical performance". David Attenborough was a BBC executive when it made the fly-on-the-wall documentary *Royal Family* in 1969 and wrote to the director, "You're killing the monarchy, you know, with this film."

But the monarchy did not die as a result of being portrayed on television. It instead developed a symbiotic, if sometimes tense, relationship with the



Ukraine's counter-offensive leaves Putin encircled at home

Kyiv's military successes force Russian president into making choices he wished to avoid



WORLD AFFAIRS
Ivan Krastev

The genius of Ukrainian military commanders, Canadian analyst Michael MacKay tweeted early this week, "is to manoeuvre their forces to where the Russians aren't, forcing Russians to retreat from where they are."

This is precisely what transpired on Russia's domestic front too. While Russian troops avoided being encircled by retreating, Vladimir Putin found himself politically encircled in Moscow. Just as the word "war" has finally made an appearance in government-controlled media (previously the invasion of Ukraine had been referred to as a "special military operation"), it is hard-liners demanding total mobilisation who have become the Russian president's biggest problem. After failing to capture Kyiv and topple Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the Kremlin unveiled a strategy that can be summarised as follows: capture as much territory as possible with the available manpower; inflict as much damage as possible on Ukraine's economy; and organise referendums on annexing occupied territories, thereby creating a sense of inevitability. This strategy, the Kremlin believed,

would break Ukraine's resolve and discourage Kyiv's western allies from continuing to arm Zelenskyy's troops. By freezing the conflict on its terms, the Kremlin sought to gain the upper hand, and eliminate the need for any forced military mobilisation. Just 64 days before the Russian retreat, Kremlin first deputy chief of staff Sergei Kirilenko was reported as saying: "We view the liberated territories as part of our empire and part of our state." For a while this looked like a winning strategy. Ukraine was preparing for a war of attrition and high energy prices softened the shock of western sanctions on Moscow. It is true that Russia's economic elite was gloomy, but they were at least obedient. And opinion polls have suggested that a majority of Russians back Putin's aggression against Ukraine. Many people believe that even if this is not their war, Russia is still their country. However, this entire carefully designed strategic edifice was shattered in a matter of days. The Ukrainian counter-offensive has emboldened western political leaders who insist that Kyiv should receive the arms it needs and that the Russian army must not only be stopped, but defeated. Recent military clashes on the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan are a sign that some of Moscow's neighbours sense Russian weakness and are ready to unfreeze previously intractable conflicts in the post-Soviet space. Meanwhile on Thursday Putin, sitting with Chinese leader Xi Jinping and others from an authoritarian rogues gallery

at a meeting in Uzbekistan, was forced to explain why Russia is not winning. The growing pressure on Putin to declare war and start the mobilisation of forces has put the Kremlin on the ropes, and forces choices the Russian president has tried to avoid since the invasion began. In the eyes of reasonable people, the Kremlin's refusal to call its assault on Ukraine a war is simply a sign of deep cynicism. For many ordinary Russians, however, that decision is of great significance. A "special military operation" is something to be cheered, while war is something to be feared.

The Kremlin fears that mass mobilisation could reveal the internal weakness of the regime

The Russian attack on Georgia in 2008 was a "special operation", likewise Moscow's involvement in the conflict in Syria. The confrontation with Nazi Germany, on the other hand, was a war. Special operations are conflicts which can be lost without a population really noticing. But when you lose a war you risk losing your country. The lesson many Russians drew from the end of the cold war, for example, was that even if you are a nuclear power you should not take your survival for granted. Predicting what happens in Moscow after Russian troops have been humiliated in Ukraine is not easy. But it is safe

to say that while Putin is not in danger of losing power, he has lost his room for manoeuvre. The Kremlin fears that mass mobilisation could reveal the internal weakness of the regime. It could also expose the selfishness of Russian elites. In the event of mobilisation, the sons of Putin's praetorian guard would either flee the country or end up in hospital to avoid the draft. Corruption would paralyse the system. And while, at least initially, it is unlikely that people will revolt, they will do what Russians do best: drag their feet. Putin has resisted any effort at mass mobilisation for the same reason that he was reluctant to impose mandatory vaccination during the Covid pandemic: the fear that such a move would expose his lack of control. This is the cardinal difference between democracy and autocracy: even weak democratic governments are able to preserve their legitimacy, whereas the legitimacy of the autocrat depends on how strong the public perceives them to be. And contrary to the claims of Kremlin propaganda, while most Russians are ready to cheer on their army, they are much less enthusiastic about joining up. The only option left to Putin, if he resists a mass call-up, is to plunge Ukraine further into darkness. In the short-term, therefore, Kyiv's counter-offensive is likely to mean escalation rather than ceasefire.

The writer is an FT contributing editor and chair of the Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, and fellow at IWM Vienna

...students is history made. "I can't bear this bloody thing ... every stinking time," exclaimed the King, walking away irritably from the table after signing a visitors book in Northern Ireland. It was his second pen revolt in a week: at his accession in London, he was shown grimacing at aides, while gesturing for one to move a tray of pens. It was an awkward peek behind the curtain at a king once described in the New Yorker as "a ninny, a whinger, a tantrum-throwing dilettante", although many felt sympathy for a tired, grief-stricken man taking out his tensions on inanimate objects. This was the first accession on camera and some official may already be redrafting plans for the next one. All businesses now face the perils of a transparent media world in which slips and gaffes blow up into Twitter storms or TikTok clips. The Firm, as King George VI dubbed the royal family, is no exception. A viral meme gets halfway around the world before the King puts on his crown. "I have to be seen to be believed," was the late Queen's aphorism, and the Firm arranges regular shows and parades, along with public appearances to reinforce the family's appeal. Such is the flow of royal documentaries, podcasts and dramas such as Netflix's *The Crown* that the monarchy often seems to be in the entertainment business. Primarily, it is not. It is a charismatic enterprise that works constantly towards a single target: succession. The monarchy is a selfish gene, working to pass itself down generations, with the sovereign occupying the throne at any one moment part of that effort. We are witnessing a once-in-a-generation product launch. The product has required marketing since belief in the divine right of kings started to expire with Charles I's execution in 1649. Lord Halifax wrote in the 1860s after Queen Victoria's unpopular withdrawal from public life: "The mass of the people expect a King or Queen to look and play the part ... They want the gilding for the money." To maintain both popularity and authority, the monarchy has to combine intimacy with distance. "Visibility must be tightly stage-managed and balanced with ... invisibility," Laura Clancy, lecturer at Lancaster University, writes in her book *Running the Family Firm*. "We

mass media, which has served it rather well. "I very much hope ... that this new medium will make my Christmas message more personal and direct," the Queen told her subjects on television at the end of 1957, and so it did. Although Prince Harry complains about the "invisible contract" with royal journalists, it afforded the Firm plenty of control. The Queen appeared enough in public to forge a bond, without giving all of herself away. "The showman is not material unless you care about the show," Bagehot wrote, and the long lines for her lying-in-state indicate deep loyalty to both. The King's irritation about pens is trivial in itself. But the way in which those images spread rapidly on social media, despite initially being ignored in the UK papers and on television, is a warning. Not only is a new sovereign being tested,

A monarchy is a charismatic enterprise that has to balance intimacy with invisibility

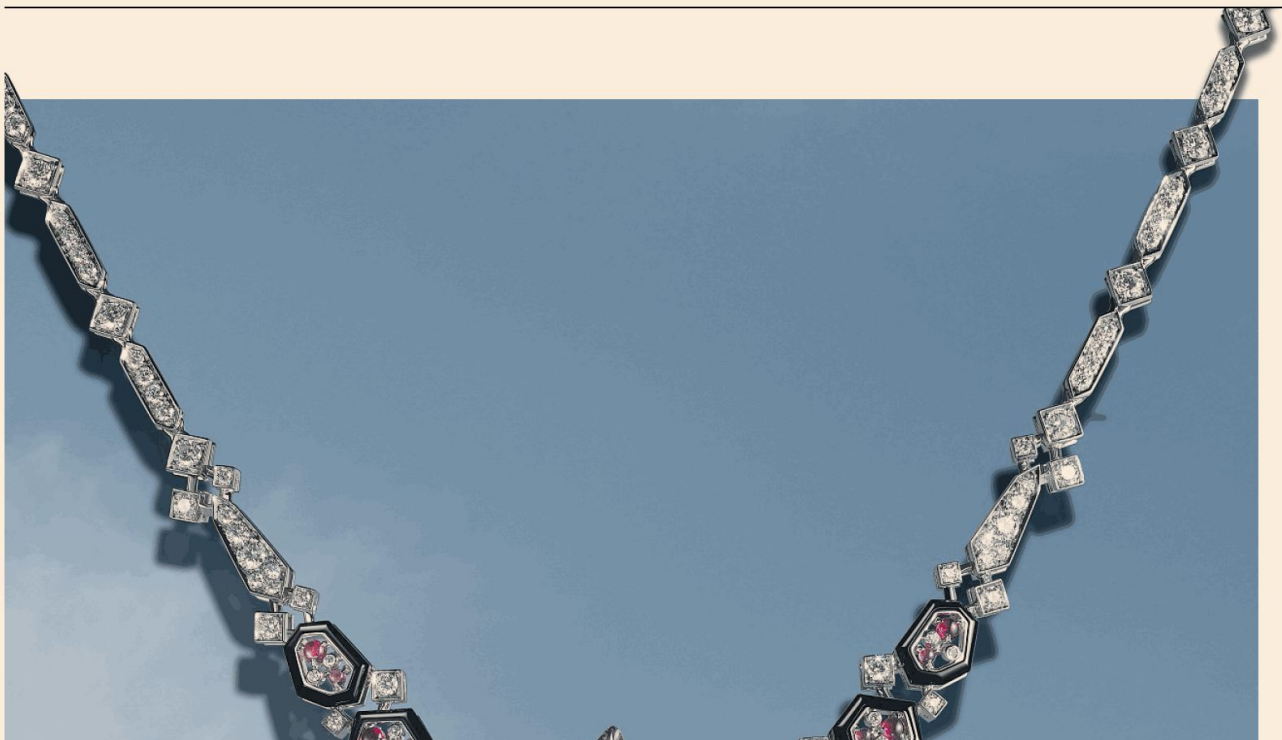
but the new media is tougher to corral. The Firm faces tighter constraints than other family enterprises. If one generation is not up to the job, it cannot hire a professional chief executive instead: it must work with what the genes provide. The King needs to be a good constitutional monarch because only he qualifies. He has handled himself gracefully in other respects, making an articulate and affectionate address after his mother's death, and greeting crowds of mourners sympathetically. His approval ratings have risen sharply as a result, with a majority confident in him. But while royal officials can manipulate photo opportunities, they cannot block 2.7bn TikTok views of videos of his flashes of temper. So there are two alternatives for the Firm in its mission to secure the next succession: either King Charles stops snapping at things, or it must be hidden. "The annoyance at the pens not being moved will never not be funny," wrote one TikTok user. It is better for a king to be ridiculed than executed, but neither outcome is ideal.

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Companies & Markets

FINANCIAL TIMES



Pipe dream European gas traders dare to hope that prices have peaked — MARKETS, PAGE 13

Banking bonanza Corebridge IPO employs a near-record 43 underwriters — MARKETS, PAGE 14

KPMG partners in Dubai seek suspension of local leadership

● CEO accused over 'culture of fear' ● Global bosses urged to send turnaround team

FedEx shares tumble after profit warning

ALEXANDRA WHITE — NEW YORK

FedEx shares plunged after the company warned on its outlook and said it would close offices, freeze hiring and park aircraft in response to a decline in package shipping volumes.

The update, from a company considered a bellwether of global economic growth because of the wide range of items it ships, was issued after Wall Street's closing bell on Thursday and included a warning on its earnings in the

"Global volumes declined as macroeconomic trends significantly worsened later in the quarter, both internationally and in the US," said chief executive Raj Subramaniam. "We are swiftly addressing these headwinds, but given the speed at which conditions shifted, first-quarter results are below our expectations."

Subramaniam described the performance as "disappointing" and said the company was "aggressively accelerating" efforts to cut costs and enhance



Dubai protest: a group of KPMG Lower Gulf partners has emailed global bosses claiming nepotism and expressing concern over falling profits — Francois Niv/Getty Images

MADISON MARRIAGE AND MICHAEL O'DWYER — LONDON SIMEON KERR — DUBAI A group of senior partners at KPMG has urged the firm's global bosses to suspend the leadership at its United Arab Emirates business, citing nepotism, cronyism and a culture of fear allegedly stoked by the chief executive. The demands, which include a call for a temporary chief executive to be brought in from the firm's global operations, were set out in an email to some of KPMG International's top executives. The email, sent to recipients including KPMG International's chair Bill Thomas, vice-chair Carl Carande, global general counsel Anne Collins and global head of people Nihlami Dloum, states that it represents the views of 10 capital partners at KPMG Lower Gulf. It highlights a series of criticisms of Lower Gulf chief executive Nader Haffar and his leadership team, including his appointment of his brother-in-law as head of clients and markets last year without disclosing their relationship to partners. KPMG Lower Gulf has

3,400 clients, including the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company and sovereign investment funds ADQ and Mubadala. The partners call on KPMG International to bring in a turnaround team to support the business and address the brewing "massive crisis". KPMG International declined to comment. In the email, they accuse Haffar of surrounding himself with cronies in key roles and fostering a "fear culture" with many partners afraid they will lose their jobs if they express "dissenting views". They also call for the suspension of the board, alleging that its independence is being undermined because some independent directors receive unusually large salaries of \$500,000 or more. KPMG International should establish an independent committee to assess Haffar's performance, the email says, and install an acting chief executive from the international organisation. The partners also highlight concerns about falling profits, which have hit their pay. At the start of Haffar's tenure as KPMG Lower Gulf chief executive in 2018, average profits per partner were

around \$800,000, according to the email and current and former partners. This has fallen to a projected \$450,000 for 2022. Partner bonuses have not yet been fully paid for 2021 because of "cash flow issues", the email states. They blame the decline in profitability on Haffar's lack of "commercial acumen", the hiring of expensive senior people who have increased overheads. 'Despite the impact of Covid, KPMG Lower Gulf has consistently grown year on year' without improving profitability and expensive PR campaigns aiming to boost the CEO's image in the region. Their email also highlights a charitable contribution by KPMG Lower Gulf in April of around \$272,000 to the One Billion Meals campaign, an initiative set up by the UAE prime minister's philanthropic foundation to ease global hunger. A former partner described the

widely publicised donation as an "extraordinary charitable contribution for a firm our size" and "very unusual", adding: "This did not have a business purpose, this had a Nader purpose." KPMG Lower Gulf said it was "very proud of the contribution that the company and over 300 of its employees made to the UAE's One Billion Meals initiative. . . . The size of this contribution was in line with many other local and international brands". It added: "Over the past five years, and despite the impact of Covid, KPMG Lower Gulf has consistently grown year on year almost doubling its revenue, the number of partners and its employees." KPMG Lower Gulf announced in July that it would rerun an election for Haffar's position as chair and chief executive following allegations that the previous process had been a sham. It also said it would hire a law firm to review its governance after criticism of its leadership. KPMG Lower Gulf is based in Dubai and has around 60 partners in total, of which roughly 40 are capital partners who own the 1,300-person operation.

quarter and the withdrawal of its guidance for fiscal 2023. FedEx shares were down more than 22 per cent at \$159.54 in early afternoon trading yesterday, putting the company's stock on track for its biggest one-day drop since listing in 1978. Shares of US-listed rival parcel and logistics companies were also weaker in afternoon trading, with UPS down 4.6 per cent, Amazon falling 2.7 per cent and XPO Logistics sinking 8.7 per cent. FedEx on Thursday evening released preliminary results for the three months to August 31 that were worse than analysts had expected, blaming "global volume softness" that "accelerated" in the final weeks of the quarter. The company said it expected business conditions to weaken further in the second quarter, prompting it to cut its forecast for capital expenditure and withdraw guidance for the remainder of its fiscal year.

proactivity. Headwinds: the delivery group says it will reduce flights and park aircraft in response to the outlook shift. To help mitigate the effects of reduced demand, FedEx announced it would close more than 90 FedEx Office locations, defer staff hiring, cancel certain projects, reduce flights and temporarily park aircraft, among other actions. In its preliminary results, FedEx reported a profit of \$3.33 a share in its first quarter, down 19 per cent from a year ago and well below the \$5.14 a share Wall Street had expected. Revenue increased 5 per cent from a year ago to \$23.2bn but was slightly below analysts' forecast of \$23.6bn. See Lex

French TV merger collapse a blow to consolidation hopes

ALEX BARKER — LONDON LEILA ABOUD — PARIS The merger of France's biggest broadcasters, TF1 and M6, has collapsed over competition concerns, dealing a blow to efforts to consolidate Europe's television market. Bouygues-owned TF1 and its smaller rival, M6, controlled by the German media group Bertelsmann, retracted their application to merge yesterday after France's competition authority raised far-reaching objections. To secure clearance, the companies were recently told by officials that they would, at a minimum, need either to sell the main M6 or TF1 channel, a step Bouygues and Bertelsmann see as making the whole deal unviable. The companies said they "therefore concluded that the proposed merger no longer has any strategic rationale." "The parties regret that the Competition Authority did not take into account the speed and extent of the changes sweeping through the French broadcasting sector," a joint statement added. The tie-up between TF1 and M6 has

been closely watched across the EU as a test case for deals between big national broadcasters, which are desperate to build scale as the audience for traditional TV declines. Bouygues and Bertelsmann had acknowledged the TF1-M6 combination pushed the boundaries of competition law, but argued it was time for regulators and politicians to recognise fundamental changes in media caused by the rise of digital advertising and streaming. Benoit Coeuré, head of the competition authority, said allowing TF1 and M6 to merge "would have created a strong risk of price rises for advertising space to the detriment of advertisers and consumers". The failure to secure clearance is a setback for Bertelsmann's chief executive Thomas Rabe. He told the Financial Times last month that a negative decision would have "profound" consequences, adding it would make it "very difficult for a similar deal to go through in Germany and other countries". Bertelsmann said yesterday it remained "firmly committed" to creating "national media champions".

Travel & leisure. Motorsport

F1 teams warn of accelerating labour costs as inflation bites

Ferrari flags up risk of 'vicious circle' if sector pay is slashed to manage rapidly rising bills

SAMUEL AGINI Formula One teams have warned of rising labour costs as energy prices and inflation pile pressure on a sport that depends on developing cars at high-tech factories and whizzing parts and drivers around the world to race. Bigger salaries would compound a surge in costs for car parts, travel and energy, as F1 teams grapple with how to protect the real income of their staff in a sector characterised by fierce competition for engineers and demand for raw materials. In a technical and travel-intensive world championship, teams are exposed to global supply chains as they source parts and move staff across continents to stage grands prix. Rising costs also pose the first big test for the sport's newly introduced spending rules, which cap team budgets to prevent any one group outperforming rivals to dominate.

"You can see this inflation coming through everything," said Aston Martin F1 chief financial officer Robert Yeowart. "We've got it in raw materials but that's fed by the energy price as well. I think the next thing that's going to hit us is salary inflation, directly and indirectly." Aston Martin F1's energy bills more than doubled when its 12-month contract expired in the middle of the year, although Yeowart was more concerned about the knock-on effects of rising wholesale prices. Mercedes warned: "The risk is that further [energy price] rises will place pressure on labour costs which come under the cost cap, at the same time as we work to ensure our employees are able to maintain their living standards in an inflationary environment." "Shipping and energy are the two big ones," said the chief executive of another team, "and salaries are rising". Ferrari said the situation risked a "vicious circle" should teams have to cut labour costs to manage surging energy bills, with top employees likely to leave if their salaries stagnate. F1 introduced its so-called budget cap in 2021. Initially set at \$145m, the cap

was reduced to \$140m this year and was set to fall to \$135m from 2023 — representing a huge drop from the \$400m that some teams would spend prior to its implementation. The ceiling was designed to level the playing field in a sport dominated by the largest teams, namely Ferrari, Mercedes and Red Bull, which historically outspent rivals and won more races. Cost limits were also designed to make teams more attractive to investors by putting profitability within reach. The cap

excludes certain things such as finance, marketing and HR costs, as well as driver salaries. The Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile, the sport's governing body, has a range of options to punish teams for breaching the cap, including fines and points deductions. In an extreme scenario, the FIA could exclude a team from the championship, but this would be for a "material" overspend. Although teams struggled to agree on the financial regulations, they agreed to

implement the cap when the coronavirus pandemic put smaller rivals — and the championship — at risk. However inflation has forced the FIA to allow for some flexibility this year and next. At the Austrian grand prix in July, it recognised that inflation had created a "risk of non-compliance" with the financial rules and allowed for a 5.1 per cent increase in 2022. Next year's \$135m will be adjusted by this 5.1 per cent allowance, and compounded by the 6.7 inflation data that will be published by the IMF in March 2023. The FIA said it was "confident that the measures taken to mitigate the current global economic challenges are the right compromise . . . the variation in financial resources available across the 10 different teams meant that finding a compromise that was acceptable to the majority was a significant challenge". However increasing the frustration for some is the fact that many teams are receiving a revenue boost from pound and euro weakness because F1 pays prize money in dollars. The problem is that they cannot spend this freely because of the financial regulations. Although they have stopped short of calling for the limit to be scrapped, there

is deep frustration at some teams. Larger teams, in particular, have already redeployed staff or made cuts to meet the original cap. Inflationary pressures also risk job cuts. "The right thing to do is allow the cap to be flexible for real challenges. And this is a real challenge," said Yeowart. Ferrari, which is second in this year's rankings, said that the budget cap "at the moment is too low" and that partially to cover the increased costs it had to "save money in other areas, predominantly at the development of the car". However, the chief executive of another team who preferred to remain anonymous, said: "We all need to figure it out. We've been given enough leeway to address it." Mercedes said that it "will not be easy" to find the right balance within the adjusted cap, though it is "committed to doing so". Although teams have their own interests to consider, there is also concern that multiple breaches of the cap could hurt the integrity of the spending rules. "This is the first real test of the cap since we brought the rules in," said Yeowart. "If the cap fails on its first test, it won't survive."



Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton at the Monza circuit this month — David Davies/PA

COMPANIES & MARKETS

Only US borrowers are shielded from the great mortgage reset



The Top Line Tom Naylor

US mortgage rates hit 6 per cent this week, the highest level in 14 years, adding to fears about the housing market. But Americans live in a socialist paradise. Homeowners are shielded from rising interest rates by 30-year government-backed fixed deals. When rates fall, the mortgage can be refinanced, locking in cheaper payments. When rates rise, no pain is passed on. Most of the world lacks this insulation. Refinancing at a higher rate is an increasingly grim prospect for individuals and companies alike. Fitch has warned that borrowers in the UK, Spain and Australia are especially exposed, with a high proportion of mortgages tracking central bank rates or with short-term fixed deals set to expire. This sounds like bad news for the banks. But the consensus is that

lenders jack up rates for borrowers while passing on crumbs to depositors. And this happy situation is supposedly durable because the system has been made safer since the financial crisis. Alastair Ryan, analyst at Bank of America, notes that at the UK's last serious housing downturn way back in 1989, some 58 per cent of first-time buyers borrowed at a loan-to-value ratio of 95 per cent or more. Last year only 0.2 per cent were permitted to borrow at that level. Despite soaring prices in the interim, houses in Britain are selling at lower multiples of income than 33 years ago. Back then, homeowners were using their houses as cash machines, with mortgage equity withdrawal equivalent to 6 per cent of post-tax household income. This phenomenon has vanished; people make early repayments instead

of it forced by regulators, may be dire for the prospects of young people hoping to buy a home, but it certainly buttresses bank balance sheets. Providing further comfort, regulators put banks through annual stress tests to gauge their ability to endure an economic shock, which they generally pass. But the real world never matches the forecasts. The last UK stress test in 2021 envisaged an unemployment rate of 12 per cent with low inflation. The reverse has happened. Markets have consistently underestimated the level and persistence of inflation and the strength of central bank medicine required to cure it. At the same time as energy and grocery bills surge, mortgage costs will also be rising for more and more homeowners and landlords. This may not cause a

At the same time as energy and grocery bills surge, mortgage costs will also be rising

it causing a housing slump. On the corporate front, many of the largest borrowers have exploited the era of cheap money to extend maturity dates on their debt. High inflation shrinks the value of that debt over time. But this ignores large swaths of the corporate world that are too small or too weak to tap markets for this cheap long-term financing. The Financial Times this week profiled some of the companies with bond yields that are trading at more than 10 percentage points above government debt. They include household names, from Bed Bath & Beyond to WesWork. Some of this debt is maturing in the next 12 months. A great deal more comes due in 2024 and 2025. It is a worrying time for anyone without the luxury of a US mortgage.

Shell successor prepares to navigate the energy transition

Spotlight

Wael Sawan

Chief executive designate, Shell

When Wael Sawan takes the helm at Shell in January, the new chief executive will inherit a company in rude financial health but still facing existential questions about its future.

Since 2014, outgoing boss Ben van Beurden has steered the company through two oil price crashes, strengthened its balance sheet, relocated the headquarters to London and pledged to slash emissions by gradually shifting from hydrocarbons to cleaner forms of energy.

Shell has stressed that 48-year-old Sawan, who joined the executive committee in 2019, was closely involved in the development of that strategy and will focus on delivering rather than overhauling van Beurden's plan. "Ben's legacy will frame Shell's success for decades to come," chair Sir Andrew Mackenzie said when announcing the appointment on Thursday.

Yet in naming Sawan, a dual Lebanese-Canadian national born in Beirut, bankers and former colleagues said Shell had selected someone steeped in the company's culture but independent-minded enough to make changes if required.

"I think you're going to see a level of ruthlessness with Wael that we've not seen before with Ben, and I think that's going to be a good thing," said one former Shell colleague who worked with Sawan for more than 20 years.

Sawan is a Shell lifer, having joined the company shortly after graduating and, barring a two-year stint at Harvard Business School, working there ever since.

But unlike the series of western European men that has preceded him as chief executive, he grew up in the United Arab Emirates before attending university in Canada to study chemical engineering.

"It is a big step that someone from the rest of the world is getting the top job," said one former colleague. "That in itself is an important milestone."

In his 25 years at Shell, Sawan has worked all over the world but made his name in Qatar running the company's liquefied natural gas projects from 2012-15 in what has arguably become Shell's most



'He's younger, more energetic [and] really up for the challenge'

important producing market. During an earlier stint in Qatar he worked for Andy Brown, a former Shell executive who went on to become its director of upstream business, which includes exploration and production, before leaving in 2019 and later heading Portuguese energy group Galp.

"Wael's a great leader," said Brown, who has been close to Sawan since 1999. "He is empowering but he's also decisive and I think that will be a great combination of ingredients to take Shell on to the next level. I do think he's the right man for the job at this particular moment."

After Qatar, Sawan was sent to New Orleans where he ran Shell's deepwater oil and gas business and is credited with transforming the division's financial performance with a sharp focus on capital discipline.

Other former colleagues also commented on what they described as a willingness to take difficult decisions. "He's someone who absorbs information, is quiet and considered, forms his own view and isn't afraid to take action," said one.

While Shell is generating record profits – \$11.5bn in the last quarter – challenging decisions lie ahead. In 2020 Shell was the first of the supermajors to commit to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050 but has since struggled to retain talent in the low-carbon businesses that are central to its transition strategy.

Elisabeth Brinton, head of the renewables and energy solutions division, left Shell in February after three years at the company. Senior green energy appointments from investment bank Macquarie and solar group Lightsource BP have also arrived and left in the past two years.

Last year Shell was ordered by a Dutch court to cut emissions faster, and although it has agreed to implement most of the judge's ruling, it has appealed against the decision.

Sawan has less experience in clean energy than in other parts of Shell, having only run the gas and renewables division since October. But former colleagues from that division said that should not be an obstacle to success. "He's got the intellectual

capacity to think through and know what needs to happen," said one. When Bernard Looney took over as chief executive of BP in 2020, his appointment was followed by one of the most ambitious overhauls of corporate strategy in the sector, as the Irish executive pledged to cut oil production by 40 per cent by 2030 and fast-track the development of 50 gigawatts of renewable power.

With Shell already having launched its transition strategy, Sawan was very unlikely to attempt anything close to that level of change, analysts said. "I think he sings from the same hymn book as we've been hearing from the higher echelons of Shell for a number of years, which is a focus on decarbonising the customer," said Oswald Clint, a Bernstein analyst who has followed Shell since 2004.

Still, while it was hard to make "supertankers" such as Shell change direction, Clint said Sawan could bring new energy to the strategy. "He's younger, more energetic, ready to go, so you are slotting in someone who is just really up for the challenge of capitalising on what I see is a huge opportunity" for Shell to lead the energy transition, he said.

One top 10 active shareholder stressed that investors should not "make too much" of the succession. "There's not going to be a lot of change internally. Van Beurden set things up not for the next two to three years but for the next 10 to 15."

Some changes, however, will be required, including appointing someone to replace Sawan as director for integrated gas, renewables and energy solutions.

One former colleague said Sawan had favoured small leadership teams in previous roles. Chief financial officer Sinead Gorman and upstream director Zoe Yujnovich, both of whom have worked closely with him, were likely to be central to the incoming chief executive's future plans, the person added.

Sawan on Thursday said he looked forward to channelling Shell's "pioneering spirit" to "grasp the opportunities" presented by the energy transition.

Van Beurden will leave him with the financial firepower to do that. Execution will be the difficult part. *Tom Wilson with additional reporting by Adrienne Klasa*

BUSINESS WEEK IN REVIEW

Adobe splashes out

● **Adobe** has agreed to buy design software group **Figma** for about \$20bn, sending a jolt through a sector that has been among the hardest hit in the tech sell-off. San Francisco-based Figma, founded in 2012, allows software developers and designers to collaborate remotely and design everything from presentations to user interfaces on mobile apps.

● **Patagonia's** billionaire founder is handing the outdoor clothing company to a trust that will use future profits to battle the climate crisis. Yvon Chouinard, 83, told shareholders that the money the company makes after reinvesting in the business would be used to "help fight" climate change.

● **Goldman Sachs** is planning a round of job cuts in the coming weeks, according to a person briefed on the matter. In a sign of the dealmaking slowdown on Wall Street, Goldman will restart its annual cull of underperforming bankers.

● **JPMorgan Chase's** third-quarter investment banking revenues could be as much as 50 per cent down on last year, JPMorgan president and head of the corporate and investment bank Daniel Pinto warned. The bank's results are due on October 14.

● **Citigroup** has opened its new hub for junior investment bankers in the coastal Spanish city of Málaga.

A Twitter whistleblower central to Musk's attempt to back out of his deal has accused its leaders of prioritising 'profits over security'

as Wall Street lenders battle for young talent amid criticism of burnout in banking. The US bank selected 27 analysts for the two-year programme.

● **Electrolux**, the world's second-largest manufacturer of home appliances, has warned of a steep drop in demand in Europe and the US, in one of the starkest signs yet of the toll high inflation is having on consumer spending. The outlook prompted the Swedish company to embark on a cost-cutting plan.

● The former **Twitter** security chief central to Elon Musk's attempt to back out of buying the social media company has accused its leadership of prioritising "profits over security". Peiter "Mudge" Zatkoff told the US Senate judiciary committee Twitter was "over a decade behind industry security standards".

● California has sued **Amazon** over claims it punishes third-party sellers who offer their products more cheaply on other websites, in the latest legal

\$75bn	27
Microsoft's deal for games maker Activision, which faces scrutiny	Young Citigroup analysts selected to join a new Málaga hub

action against the tech group in the US and Europe.

● **Microsoft's** \$75bn acquisition of video game maker **Activision Blizzard** faces in-depth probes in Brussels and the UK following concerns the deal is anti-competitive and will exclude rivals from accessing the blockbuster game *Call of Duty*.

● **Terry Smith** is to close his £319.4m emerging markets investment trust, in a blow to the star stock-picker and one of the UK's best-known fund managers after a spell of weak performance.

● UK prime minister **Liz Truss** and chancellor **Kwasi Kwarteng** are preparing a last-ditch charm offensive to persuade Japan's **SoftBank** to list the British tech company **Arm** in the UK. SoftBank has indicated that it wants to list chip designer **Arm** in New York.

Food & beverage

Germany's brewers hopping mad over carbon dioxide prices

MARTIN ARNOLD – FRANKFURT

A shortage of carbon dioxide is causing German drinks manufacturers to cut production and warn of bankruptcies, in the latest sign of how Europe's energy crisis is sending shockwaves through the region's economy.

"More and more of the companies in the beverage industry that depend on the availability of CO₂ are having to significantly reduce their production or stop it altogether," Holger Eichele, head of the German brewers' association, told the Financial Times. "For many of the companies affected, this has dramatic consequences."

The gas is an important raw material for beverage companies because it is used to add fizz to carbonated drinks and to fill and empty beer bottles, kegs and tanks without the drink foaming or suffering taste effects through contact with air.

The shortage of CO₂ – a byproduct of

ammonia production – has been worsening for months as record gas prices prompt the fertiliser industry to reduce output.

But it was aggravated in Germany when the country's largest producer of ammonia and urea – SKW Piesteritz – halted output two weeks ago in response to a new levy that will push gas prices even higher.

That caused suppliers of CO₂ to the food and drinks industry to declare "force majeure" as they failed to deliver regular orders, leaving many drinks makers racing to find alternative supplies.

Eichele said only 30-40 per cent of usual CO₂ supplies were available on the German market and that these were "at immense cost". The price of CO₂ has shot up to almost €3,500 per tonne from €100 per tonne a year ago.

"We receive new cries for help from the industry every day," he said, urging the government to "take short-term

measures to ensure a preferential supply of affordable carbon dioxide for food and beverage production to the critical infrastructure of the food industry".

The German brewers' association, along with trade bodies representing makers of fruit juice, mineral water and wholesale beverages, published a joint statement yesterday warning that "without rapid government intervention and without effective aid, hundreds of companies and thousands of employees will lose their livelihoods in the German beverage industry".

"They said it was 'usually impossible' for drinks makers to pass on their higher costs because of the negotiating power of large supermarket chains and the squeeze on consumer spending from soaring energy bills.

The trade bodies also warned that the closure of the Piesteritz plant had hit them in other ways by causing a shortage of AdBlue, an important ingredient for diesel fuel, causing its price to surge

and pushing up costs for road haulage operators.

"The scarcity of resources, raw materials and materials – for example AdBlue – is taking on threatening proportions," they said. "Companies in the transport industry have already cancelled countless orders that have become unprofitable and temporarily shut down parts of the fleet."

Eichele said CO₂ shortages were hitting smaller breweries hardest, as the biggest ones often capture excess gas produced during the brewing process and reuse it. He also said there was no risk of the crisis causing flat beer, adding: "Soft drink producers such as Coke need CO₂ to make their product fizz – our beer fizzes automatically."

The Piesteritz plant is in the process of restarting production after seeking government aid and warning this week that it "fears for the international competitiveness of Germany as a business location under these conditions".

It is 'usually impossible' to pass on costs given the power of large retailers

COMPANIES & MARKETS

Disney gets activist on side with plan to put ESPN sports back in the game

Travel & leisure

Silver Lake lifts stake in Manchester

US media group wins over Loeb but others are sceptical that the network's growth can be restored

CHRISTOPHER GRIMES — LOS ANGELES
SARA GERMANO — NEW YORK

In a letter addressed to Disney chief executive Bob Chapek in mid-August, activist hedge fund manager Dan Loeb said a "strong case can be made" for the ESPN sports network to be spun off from the company.

Loeb, known for waging bruising battles against the likes of Sony and Sotheby's, outlined his argument along with a host of other recommendations to improve performance at Disney, including a board "refresh", taking full control of the Hulu streaming network and cost-cutting measures.

Less than a month later, however, the aggressive manager of hedge fund Third Point reversed his position on spinning off Disney's sports network after Chapek told the Financial Times that he had a plan to "restore ESPN to its growth trajectory". In a tweet, Loeb said he had come to a "better understanding of ESPN's potential as a standalone business".

Loeb's message came as a relief to Disney and ESPN employees, but the episode has shone a light on the deeper problems facing the sports network — and left investors wondering about the details of Chapek's plan to fix them.

"[Chapek] has got to explain to Wall Street how ESPN can be a good business," said Rich Greenfield, an analyst at LightShed Partners. "Cable networks are just a challenged business. The problem is less and less people are subscribing to [traditional] TV, and the sports costs keep coming up."

Neither Disney nor Third Point would comment on the matter but both emphasised there has been cordial dialogue between Loeb and Chapek.

Once Disney's profit engine — thanks to its commanding share of cable subscribers, a steady stream of affiliate fees and advertising revenue — ESPN has suffered in the streaming age.

Its subscriber base has fallen from a peak of 99.4mn in 2011 to a projected 73.6mn by the end of this year — a drop of more than 25 per cent — according to estimates by S&P Global Market Intelligence.

Worse, its famous cash-spinning ability is expected to shrink dramatically over the next three years, said Scott Robson, senior research analyst at S&P Global. He estimates cash flow will drop from about \$2.5bn in 2021 to \$1bn in 2025.

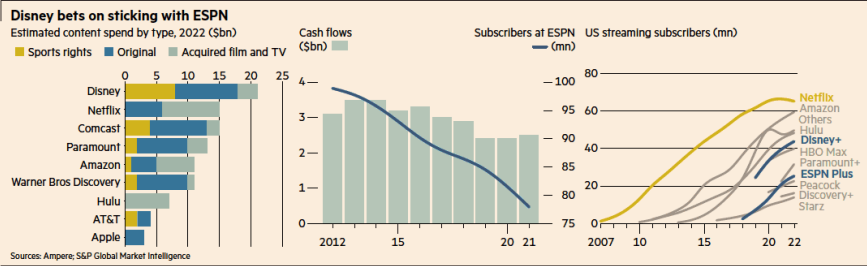
"Everybody knows that the... cable bundle is deteriorating over time," Chapek told a Goldman Sachs conference this week. "It's still a significant business, very appreciative from a cash flow standpoint for us. But, at some point, we see the writing on the wall where this is going and we're preparing for that."

Besides cord-cutting, ESPN is facing escalating costs of rights to broadcast sports — driven in part by streaming services run by deep-pocketed Apple and Amazon.

Disney expects to pay \$10.3bn in contractual commitments for sports programming this year, and an additional \$60bn in future commitments.

"These sports rights are getting more and more expensive," Robson said. "It's really going to start negatively impacting the bottom line at ESPN."

But Chapek told the FT he believed ESPN could return to its growth. Crucial



Brising battle: Colorado Avalanche vs Tampa Bay Lightning. ESPN secured a seven-year rights deal with the National Hockey League in 2021. Getty Images-USA TODAY Sports

to this will be more aggressive marketing of ESPN Plus, its sports streaming network, as part of a bundle with its other streaming platforms, Disney Plus and Hulu.

ESPN Plus has about 22.8mn subscribers, about 10 per cent of Disney's 221mn streaming subscribers.

Chapek noted the enduring power of sports to attract large audiences, even in an age of audience fragmentation. He also believes ESPN can become a force in the rapidly expanding US sports betting industry — a step that earlier generations of Disney leaders would have thought too racy for the family-friendly company.

Disney acquired a 5 per cent stake in DraftKings, a fantasy sports and betting group, in 2019 when it bought 21st Century Fox. It also has a deal with Caesars Entertainment that gives it the exclusive right to provide sports betting odds to ESPN.

Chapek has even floated the idea of launching an ESPN-branded sports betting app, though the company has not started work on this, insiders say.

In his letter, Loeb said it would be easier for ESPN to pursue sports betting

outside of Disney. He also said a spin-off would help reduce Disney's debt, which stood at \$46bn at the end of the most recent quarter.

But Loeb's proposal to spin off ESPN divided Wall Street analysts. Greenfield at LightShed Partners supports the idea, but analysts at Moffett-Nathanson wrote last month that it would be "financially dangerous to divest ESPN".

Not only are Disney's revenues reliant on ESPN's cash, they wrote, but investors aren't keen on a leveraged asset whose primary business is cable television in the era of cord-cutting.

Moreover, recent sports rights deals show the ever-appreciating value of live events. Disney rival Paramount last month more than doubled the price it will pay football's Uefa for US rights to broadcast the Champions League, now worth \$1.5bn over six years.

Apple has reached multibillion-dollar agreements to air Major League Soccer and Major League Baseball, while Amazon last year joined the most expensive package of live sports rights ever sold: the National Football League's \$110bn broadcast terms over 11 years.

'If everyone wants to come in and buy [ESPN] I think that says something about its potential'

Bob Chapek

Inside ESPN, executives argue that the network is better served with the marketing might of the rest of the Disney company, which includes the ABC broadcast network.

They point to the seven-year deal ESPN signed last year with the National Hockey League allowing it to show games on the ESPN cable network, ESPN Plus, the Hulu streaming service and ABC.

A similar 12-year plan was signed recently for the rights to the Wimbledon tennis championships.

Even with the headwinds facing its core cable television business, Chapek said Disney had been "deluged" with interest from companies seeking to buy ESPN or join in a spin-off after reports that the company was weighing a sale earlier this year.

"If everyone wants to come in and buy it... I think that says something about its potential," Chapek said.

He added: "When the rest of the world knows what our plans are, they will be as confident about that proposition as we are."

Loeb appears satisfied to wait for Chapek's plan — at least for now.

City owner

SAMUEL AGINI, ARASH MASSOUDI AND ANDREW ENGLAND — LONDON

US private equity group Silver Lake has increased its stake in the parent company of Manchester City Football Club, making it the second-largest shareholder in the business behind its Abu Dhabi owners.

The Silicon Valley-based group acquired a 4.1 per cent share in City Football Group from China Media Capital, taking its total holding to 14.5 per cent.

Silver Lake, which made a name for itself as a tech investor, has been stepping up its bets on the sports industry, with investments ranging from football and rugby to baseball. This latest deal strengthens its ties to Abu Dhabi's royal family and Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the billionaire royal who acquired Manchester City in 2008 and established CFG five years later.

CFG is now one of the biggest sports club owners in the industry, with investments in football clubs ranging from Australia and Japan to Uruguay and the US. Silver Lake bought its original 10 per cent stake in CFG for \$500mn in 2019, valuing the business at \$4.8bn.

Sheikh Mansour controls CFG through Abu Dhabi-based Newton Investment and Development.

Silver Lake's growing sports portfolio shows how the balance of power in the industry is changing as private equity groups and billionaires acquire clubs and invest in leagues.

In June, it won approval to invest NZ\$200mn (\$120mn) in New Zealand Rugby, the organisation behind the All Blacks team, following its acquisition of a minority stake in the Australian Professional Leagues football group.

It is also a shareholder in sports merchandising company Fanatics and in Endeavor, the New York-listed owner of Ultimate Fighting Championship, the mixed martial arts series. In August, it bought Diamond Baseball Holdings, which owns a number of baseball clubs.

Silver Lake bought into CFG after Hollywood impresario Ari Emanuel — founder of Endeavor — introduced managing partner Egon Durban to CFG's Khaldoun Al-Mubarak.

The private equity firm has formed deep ties with Abu Dhabi. Mubarak is chief executive of Mubadala, an Abu Dhabi sovereign investment fund that took a stake in Silver Lake in 2020.

The following year, Silver Lake paid about \$800mn for a stake in G42, an artificial intelligence and cloud computing group with links to Abu Dhabi's ruling family.

China Media Capital still owns 8.2 per cent of CFG, having originally paid \$485mn to amass a 13 per cent stake. That investment, which valued CFG at \$5bn, came after China's president Xi Jinping visited Manchester City's football academy in 2015.

Chinese investors had bought into a series of European football clubs but many made for the exit after Beijing tightened capital controls in recent years.

Under CFG ownership, Manchester City has won the English Premier League five times and this year overtook rivals to top Deloitte's annual ranking of the highest revenue-generating football clubs in the world.

Additional reporting by Cheng Leng in Hong Kong



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COMPANIES & MARKETS

On Wall Street

Corebridge IPO proves a bonanza for bankers



Nicholas Megaw



Bankers on initial public offerings are often keen to take credit for working on high-profile deals, however marginal their involvement. But anyone hoping to stand out in their next client pitch with a reference to this year's largest IPO offering is likely to be disappointed: almost the whole industry appeared to be in the prospectus.

Corebridge, the life and asset management business of insurance group AIG, went public this week with the help of 43 different banks, the second-highest number of managing underwriters for a US listing on record, according to data collected by the University of Florida's Jay Ritter.

The numbers highlight a questionable habit among companies for using prestigious appointments more like a gift to be bestowed on favoured partners than an efficient use of shareholder cash. "They've [often] got some business arrangement with the vast majority of underwriters on the cover," said one senior banker who did not work on the Corebridge offering. "They're paying back the financial institutions that are their partners."

Stock market volatility and economic uncertainty have made 2022 a horrible year for equity capital markets. Corebridge was the first company to raise more than \$1bn through a US IPO since January, and the deal was being closely watched as a test of whether investors would have any appetite for a broader revival in listings before the end of the year. In such a tough environment,

increasing the number of underwriters might look like a sensible idea: it could help to ensure the share offer reaches as many potential investors as possible and spread the risk for banks that do not want to be caught carrying the bag in case of a disaster.

But in practice, the banks on the top line will end up doing the vast majority of the work on any IPO regardless of the number of names lower down the prospectus. "The number of managing underwriters is more about Corebridge than the state of the market," according to Ritter.

On Visa's 2008 listing — the last time a US company hired more underwriters than Corebridge — the top two

"The number of managing underwriters is more about Corebridge than the state of the market"

bookrunners handled 50 per cent of the shares on offer, while the bottom 50 underwriters contributed 7 per cent.

In theory, "co-managers" are picked because they can provide good analyst coverage, or complement the breadth of the lead bookrunners by giving access to a niche cohort of investors.

There are some positives, such as creating opportunities for groups that have traditionally struggled to break into the sector. Corebridge said its syndicate included 10 firms that it classed as "diverse".

But some of the larger companies on its underwriter list are hardly known for their US IPO expertise. Natixis and ING, for example, won mandates despite each working on just two US floats in 2021 — the hottest year for equity capital markets in history, according to Dealogic data. Both banks were also co-

managers on Corebridge's \$6.5bn bond offering earlier this year.

Corebridge declined to comment on the reasons it had hired so many underwriters.

Record-holder Visa was owned by a consortium of thousands of banks before it went public, so it would not be surprising if the company had a particularly large number of companies it felt obliged to hire for the IPO.

Likewise, Corebridge and AIG's tumultuous recent history may have given it more advisers to thank than most companies. Since 2008, AIG has received and paid back a \$175bn government bailout while churning through seven chief executives. It has sold everything from Hong Kong insurer AIA to Vermont ski resort, and pivoted from planning life insurance acquisitions to carving out the whole life insurance business as it jumped between multiple restructuring plans.

AIG chief Peter Zaffino said last week that he "couldn't be more pleased with the progress" the company had made in its latest turnaround, with the Corebridge IPO one of the last steps in creating a slimmed-down, specialist property and casualty insurer.

Long-suffering AIG investors would be forgiven some irritation at the company for hiring more banks for the listing than some companies needed for deals multiple times its size.

The near-record number of underwriters wasn't enough to stop the IPO pricing at the bottom of its target range, as markets were rocked by concerns about inflation during the final days of the deal roadshow.

Still, the milestone finally marks an end to AIG's near two decades of disruption, they may decide giving away a few easy pay cheques on the last deal was worth it.

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The day in the markets

What you need to know

- Gold price hits two-year low
- Fed rate rise expectations add to woes
- Strong dollar pressures commodities

Gold prices dipped to their lowest in more than two years yesterday, as expectations of a significant US interest rate rise next week, along with a strong US dollar, weighed on prices.

With bond yields expected to go higher, some investors have sold out of gold and moved into other assets, particularly dollar-denominated ones. "Until recently, gold has managed to fend off the news," said Ole Hansen, head of commodity strategy at Saxo Bank. "But just recently it has broken lower; there is a lot of technical trading in that."

Negative economic news, including the US Consumer Price Index last Tuesday, has contributed to the expectation of a significant rise in borrowing costs when the US Federal Reserve meets next week. Yesterday, the spot gold price briefly fell to \$1,656 per ounce, 19 per cent below its peak in March, and 8 per cent lower than at the beginning of this year.

Unlike most other commodities, gold prices move primarily in response to economic trends rather than underlying physical demand. The unexpected US CPI numbers, combined with slowing jobs growth, and rate rise forecasts have weighed on the gold market.

"People are paring back and rebalancing... looking at bonds, and dollar-denominated assets," said Joseph Cavatoni, chief market strategist for the World Gold Council.

"Everything has had a wild week in terms of price performance. You are

Gold loses its lustre

\$ per troy ounce



seeing a lot of volatility, and the same with gold."

The strong dollar has put pressure on gold and other commodities by making them more expensive in other currencies.

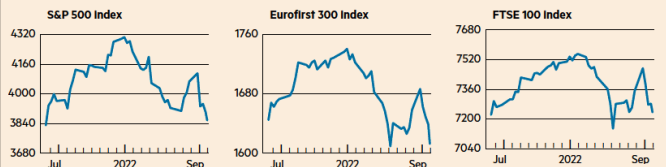
Colin Hamilton, commodities analyst at BMO Capital Markets, said considering the headwinds, "the gold price is holding up pretty well," adding: "For gold as a whole, we are still trading reasonably above the marginal cost of production." "Gold is traditionally viewed as a hedge against long-term inflation but that does not always hold true in the short term and has not been the case this year.

"What it looks like at the moment, is that the gold price is tracking real yield on US government bonds," said Alex Bedway, mining analyst at Canaccord Genuity. "The indicators at the moment are not looking all that positive for gold." But others foresee that in coming years, in the event of an economic slowdown combined with high inflation, gold will be a safe store of value. "The market is still looking to gold as a hedge against a policy mistake," said Hansen, referring to a scenario in which rate rises fail to tame inflation. "Stagflation is a good friend of gold." **Leslie Hook**

Markets update

	US	Eurozone	Japan	UK	China	Brazil
Stocks	S&P 500	Eurofirst 300	Nikkei 225	FTSE100	Shanghai Comp	Bovespa
Level	3858.19	1612.80	27567.65	7236.68	3126.40	108569.03
% change on day	-1.11	-1.59	-1.11	-0.62	-2.30	-1.26
Currency	\$ index (DXY)	\$ per €	Yen per \$	\$ per £	Rmb per \$	Real per \$
Level	110.096	1.003	142.940	1.143	7.021	5.271
% change on day	0.325	0.300	-0.369	-0.522	0.616	0.796
Govt. bonds	10-year Treasury	10-year Bund	10-year JGB	10-year Gilt	10-year bond	10-year bond
Yield	3.455	1.754	0.252	3.133	2.671	12.814
Basis point change on day	-0.820	-1.100	0.010	-3.000	1.000	7.600
World Index, Commods	FTSE All-World	Oil - Brent	Oil - WTI	Gold	Silver	Metals (LME)
Level	3922.99	92.15	86.03	1689.10	19.37	3676.90
% change on day	-1.20	1.63	1.02	-0.87	-0.69	-1.06

Main equity markets



Biggest movers

	US	Eurozone	UK
Ups	Newmont 2.71	Kone 5.67	Ocado 3.23
Firstenergy 1.90	Colruyt 4.49	M&G 2.00	
Lennar 1.80	Gecina 2.83	Hikma Pharmaceuticals 1.79	
Dollar General 1.42	Ses 1.92	Barraitt Developments 1.13	
Nvr 1.37	Casino Guichard 1.46	Aveva 0.89	
Downs	Fedex -22.78	Telecom Italia -8.14	Intercontinental Hotels -4.67
Packaging -11.43	Deutsche Post -6.05	Dechra Pharmaceuticals -4.47	
Inf Paper Co -11.16	A.P. Moller - Maersk B -5.31	Smith (ds) -3.31	
Westrock -11.04	Bouygues -4.94	Spirax-sarco Eng -2.99	
Celanese -8.05	Eni Industrial -4.73	Schroders -2.63	

Wall Street

Delivery group and economic bellwether FedEx sank to the bottom of the S&P 500 index after withdrawing its annual earnings forecast.

Within a gloomy update that took markets by surprise, FedEx revealed preliminary earnings of \$3.44 per share for its fiscal first quarter, down a fifth on a year earlier and well below Bank of America's \$5.30 estimate.

The results were blamed on "significantly" worsening macroeconomic trends, which prompted FedEx to pull its guidance owing to a "volatile operating environment", it said.

This warning dragged several peers lower, including United Parcel Service and XPO Logistics.

Ride-hailing group Uber fell sharply after tweeting it was "responding to a cyber security incident".

The New York Times said Uber had found a breach, with the person claiming responsibility said to be taking images of email and cloud storage as proof.

Europe

Shares in Finland's Fortum rose after the utility said that it would restart an idle coal-fired power plant to boost capacity to Europe's struggling energy market.

The plant, on Finland's west coast, would add 560 megawatts to the market.

However, Fortum added that electricity production would depend on the market situation at the given time.

Logistics and shipping companies slumped following an earnings warning overnight from FedEx that analysts said was an indication of a slowing global economy. German duo Deutsche Post and Hapag-Lloyd were both down, as were Denmark's DSV and AP Moller-Maersk.

JP Morgan also cut its target price on Maersk from Dkn32,000 to Dkn28,100. Travel stocks slid as investors forecast that the summer's disrupted travel schedules would spill into the autumn. Amsterdam's Schiphol airport, one of Europe's busiest, said that it would cut daily passenger numbers 18 per cent until at least the end of October to deal with

London

Shares in InterContinental Hotels Group, which owns the Crowne Plaza and Holiday Inn chains, fell after Citigroup cut its rating to "sell" from "neutral", citing competition and the onset of more uncertain demand from a slowing economy.

AstraZeneca rose after EU regulators approved the use of its Covid therapy drug as a treatment for preventing the virus from worsening. Authorities in the bloc have already approved Evusheld as a Covid prevention drug.

Jupiter Fund Management rose to the top of the FTSE 250 following a Financial Times report that it was preparing for a restructuring under its incoming chief executive.

Matthew Beesley takes up the role in early October and has said that he wants to slash costs and revive growth to reverse years of investors withdrawing funds, the report noted, citing an internal memo.

Royal Mail dropped after an earnings

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Uber said it was "in touch with law enforcement" about the affair. Expectations of higher fuel costs weighed on the airline. Analysts were forecasting fuel per gallon of \$3.68 for the third quarter from its estimate of \$3.68. It did, however, add that demand remained strong. Ray Dumas

labour shortages. Ryanair fell in Dublin. Telecom Italia fell on its all-time low after Barclays cut its rating from "equal weight" to "underweight". Trading was volatile and the shares were temporarily suspended in Milan. The broker said that the company was highly exposed to slowing economic growth. Philip Stafford

warning from US logistics company FedEx. In addition, bank JP Morgan lowered its rating to "neutral". It also cut its price target from 36p to 27p, forecasting the company's earnings would be below what the market expected. Philip Stafford

MARKET DATA

WORLD MARKETS AT A GLANCE



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

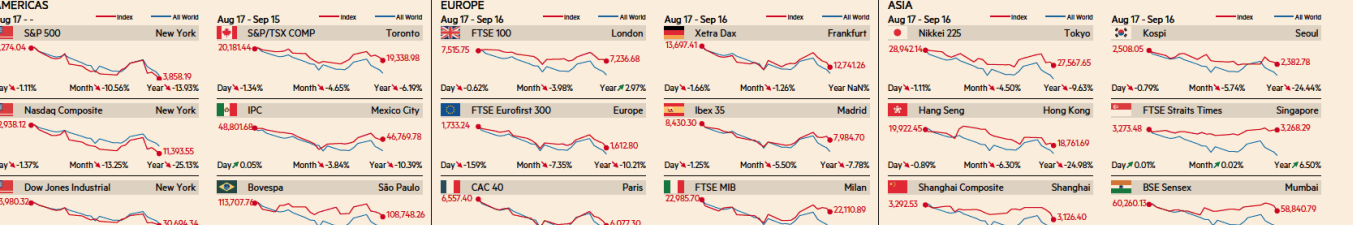


Table with columns: Country, Index, Latest, Previous, % Change, and % Change. Lists various global indices and their performance.

STOCK MARKET: BIGGEST MOVERS

Table with columns: Stock, Price, % Change, and % Change. Lists top gainers and losers in the US, Europe, and Asia.

UK MARKET WINNERS AND LOSERS

Table with columns: Stock, Price, % Change, and % Change. Lists top gainers and losers in the UK market.

CURRENCIES

Table with columns: Currency, DOLLAR, EURO, POUND, and % Change. Shows exchange rates for various currencies.

FTSE ACTUARIES SHARE INDICES

Table with columns: Index, Price, % Change, and % Change. Lists various FTSE Actuarial indices.

FT 30 INDEX

Table with columns: Index, Price, % Change, and % Change. Lists FT 30 index components.

FT WILSHIRE 5000 INDEX SERIES

Table with columns: Index, Price, % Change, and % Change. Lists FT Wilshire 5000 index series.

FTSE 500 LEADERS & LAGGARDS

Table with columns: Index, Price, % Change, and % Change. Lists FTSE 500 leaders and laggards.

FTSE 100 SUMMARY

Table with columns: Index, Price, % Change, and % Change. Lists FTSE 100 summary data.



FTSE 500 18712.4 18714.5 18716.1 18682.3 18682.0 18682.4 18681.7 18682.5 18682.1 18682.5 18682.1 18682.5

US 10Y Treasury 2.93% 2.93% 2.93% 2.93% 2.93% 2.93% 2.93% 2.93% 2.93% 2.93% 2.93% 2.93%

UK AIRCRAFT OFFERS

UK COMPANY RESULTS

UK RECENT EQUITY ISSUES

There are currently no rights offers by any companies listed on the Stock Exchange.

Figures in £m. Exchange board figures in \$m for corresponding period unless stated otherwise.

Offering price: 100p. Minimum: 250,000 shares. Annual percentage increase in value: 10%.

MARKET DATA

FT500: THE WORLD'S LARGEST COMPANIES

UK COMPANY RESULTS

UK RECENT EQUITY ISSUES

FT500: THE WORLD'S LARGEST COMPANIES

UK COMPANY RESULTS

UK RECENT EQUITY ISSUES

FT 500: TOP 20

FT 500: BOTTOM 20

UK RECENT EQUITY ISSUES

INTEREST RATES: OFFICIAL

BONDS: HIGH YIELD & EMERGING MARKET

BONDS: GLOBAL INVESTMENT GRADE

INTEREST RATES: MARKET

BONDS: BENCHMARK GOVERNMENT

GILTS: UK CASH MARKET

COMMODITIES

BONDS: INDEX-LINKED

GILTS: UK FTSE ACTUARIES INDEX

COMMODITIES

BONDS: INDEX-LINKED

GILTS: UK FTSE ACTUARIES INDEX

COMMODITIES

BONDS: INDEX-LINKED

GILTS: UK FTSE ACTUARIES INDEX

COMMODITIES

BONDS: INDEX-LINKED

GILTS: UK FTSE ACTUARIES INDEX

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Table with columns: Ticker, Price, %Chg, %YTD, Div, Yield, Bond Yields. Includes sectors like Commodities, Metals, and Energy.

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