

Catch up: Iran's Trump assassination plot; cases against president-elect wind down



America's Department of Justice charged three people for involvement in an alleged **Iranian plot** to murder targets including **Donald Trump** as well as an Iranian-American journalist critical of the country's regime. Two suspects were arrested in New York; a third, tasked with surveilling **Mr Trump** and plotting to assassinate him, is believed to remain at large in Iran.

Jack Smith, the special counsel prosecuting the American government's cases against Mr Trump, took a first step toward **winding them down**. He asked the judge overseeing Mr Trump's election-interference trial to postpone a series of deadlines in light of the former president's victory this week. The Justice Department has long forbidden the prosecution of sitting presidents.

Elon Musk joined Mr Trump for a telephone call with **Volodymyr Zelensky**, Ukraine's president, earlier this week, Axios reported. The tech mogul was one of Mr Trump's most **high-profile**

[supporters](#) during his presidential campaign and was promised a government role. Meanwhile the market capitalisation of Tesla, Mr Musk's electric-vehicle firm, rose above \$1trn for the first time in more than two years.

Israel sent commercial planes to the **Netherlands** to evacuate Israeli football fans who were [attacked](#) following a match against Ajax Amsterdam. Dick Schoof, the Dutch prime minister, said he was “horrificed by the antisemitic attacks” and told Binyamin Netanyahu, his Israeli counterpart, that “the perpetrators will be identified and prosecuted”. More than 60 people have been arrested.

At least 25 people died after a bomb exploded at Quetta railway station in **Balochistan**, a province of **Pakistan**. Around 50 people were injured in what appeared to be a suicide attack. The Balochistan Liberation Army, a militant group that wants independence for the region, claimed responsibility. Violence in the resource-rich province, which borders Iran and Afghanistan, has been increasing this year.

American stocks closed at record highs. The S&P 500 gained 4.7% in over five days—its best weekly performance since last November—and on Friday briefly leapt above 6,000 points for the first time. In another first the Dow Jones Industrial Average crossed 44,000 points. Stocks have [rallied](#) in the days following Mr Trump's election victory.

South Korea accused **North Korea** of blocking its GPS signals on Friday and Saturday. The action disrupted shipping vessels and civilian aircraft, the South said. Tensions between the two Koreas have been [mounting](#) recently. Last week Kim Jong Un's regime tested an intercontinental ballistic missile for the first time in almost a year

Word of the week: Kakistocracy, a word that may be useful over the next four years. [Read the full story](#).

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CEOs in Trumpland (part two)



A business boss in the White House should be a boon for [corporate America](#). When the boss is Donald Trump, the story is less clear-cut. The [stockmarket cheered](#) his decisive victory, though some of the rally was probably explained by the decisiveness rather than the victor. Still, investors like Mr Trump's talk of lower taxes and less red tape (which would boost profits). They treat as bluster his threats of higher [tariffs](#) and mass [deportations](#) (which would raise import and labour costs).

Much rests on who gets business-related jobs in the new administration. Mr Trump's chaotic governing style means that [personnel](#) truly is policy. Another question preoccupying America's corner offices is just how populist his Republican Party will get. It has been giving big business the cold shoulder in recent years, for fear of angering its working-class base. Chief executives are hoping for the best. They should also plan for the Trumpian.

What Trump might mean for the Middle East



The messages were predictable. Binyamin Netanyahu, Israel's prime minister, rushed to congratulate Donald Trump on [his victory in America's election](#). Iran's president said it made no difference who won. Leaders across the Middle East are now trying to figure out what Mr Trump's second term will mean for them. Will he support [Israel's wars](#) in Gaza and [Lebanon](#)? Or will he urge Mr Netanyahu to end them?

Yoav Gallant, who was [sacked as Israel's defence minister](#) on Tuesday, told the families of Israeli hostages that the war in Gaza should stop: the army had no goals left to achieve, he said. Mr Netanyahu has no desire to end it. Meanwhile, officials in Jerusalem wonder if the Biden administration will use its final months in office to push for a ceasefire—and, perhaps, to impose penalties on a Netanyahu government that has repeatedly defied Mr Biden. For months America has seemed to be a bystander to events in the region. That may not last much longer.

A life story from France's hard right



On Saturday [Jordan Bardella](#), the 29-year-old rising star of France's hard right, publishes his autobiography. "Ce que je cherche" ("What I am Looking For") tells the story of a French boy with an unusual first name, who grew up in a housing project with working-class parents from an Italian immigrant background.

It is also a political manifesto. Mr Bardella is [Marine Le Pen's](#) lieutenant and leader of her party, [National Rally](#). The pair have their eyes on France's presidential election of 2027, when the incumbent, [Emmanuel Macron](#), cannot stand again. However, Ms Le Pen is on trial for the misuse of European parliamentary funds to pay for party assistants. (She denies wrongdoing.) The case runs until the end of November. If found guilty, she could, as part of a maximum sentence, be ruled ineligible to stand for public office for ten years. It will not harm Mr Bardella to raise his profile.

A re-launch for Australian rugby union



These are dark times for Australian rugby union. The national team crashed out of the World Cup in 2023 after group-stage defeats to Fiji and Wales. In January they hired a new coach, Joe Schmidt, who has struggled to turn things around. This season the Wallabies finished bottom of the southern hemisphere's Rugby Championship table and suffered a record 67-27 defeat to Argentina.

Rugby Australia, the governing body, is in a hurry to improve results: Australia hosts the British and Irish Lions in 2025, and the World Cup in 2027. The rebuilding process begins on Saturday, when Australia plays the first match, against England, of its autumn tour of Britain. Making his debut for Australia is 21-year-old Joseph Sua'ali'i (pictured), a thrilling prospect poached from rugby league, a different form of the sport. That a rugby-union novice is the centre of attention shows just how shallow Australia's talent pool is at the moment.

Weekend profile: Dana White, martial-arts magnate and Trump cheerleader



Anyone unfamiliar with combat sports may have wondered about a bald, stocky man who appeared on the podium after Donald Trump's [victory speech](#) in the early hours of November 6th. Shouting the president-elect's praises was Dana White, the boss of the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC), the world's largest mixed-martial-arts (MMA) promotion.

To the Trump faithful, he was more familiar. Mr White spoke at the Republican National Convention (RNC) in 2016, when Mr Trump first became the party's presidential nominee. He told how their friendship began: when Mr White took over the failing UFC in 2001, no venue would host the "bloodsport". That is, until Mr Trump offered one of his casinos. "Nobody took us seriously, except Donald Trump," he said.

The story Mr White tells about himself is difficult to fact-check. He portrays himself as a kid who grew up on the hard-scrabble streets of Southie (as South Boston is affectionately known by locals) and

in Las Vegas. A bit of a brawler, he got into amateur boxing and co-ran a gym.

After an associate of [Whitey Bulger](#), a notorious local gangster, tried to extort money from him he returned from Boston to Las Vegas. He opened another gym and got into MMA, a multi-discipline combat sport so violent that 36 American states once banned it. Mr White convinced two childhood friends to buy the UFC for \$2m and let him run it. He professionalised and popularised the sport. The UFC now airs in more than 170 countries and is worth \$11.3bn, according to *Forbes*.

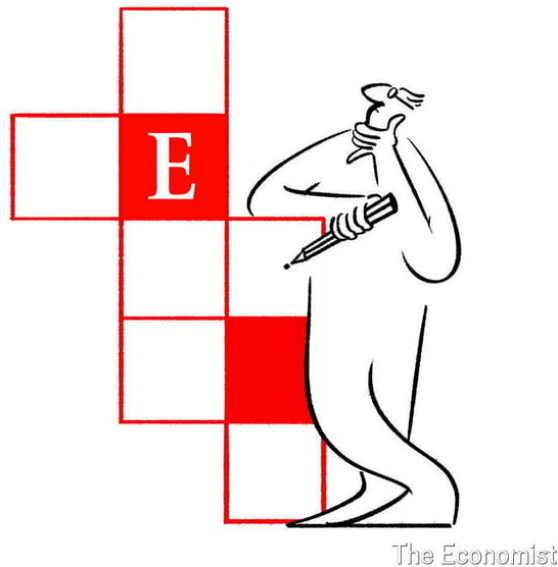
Mr White's superpower, he says proudly, is that he's "a savage". But there's always a hint of pantomime. Others have challenged his self-portrait. In her "unauthorised biography" of Mr White, his own mother denies the "boy-raising-himself-in-the-streets myth". He has had bitter legal fights with several of his fighters, who have accused him of paying them too little and binding them into exploitative contracts. (Mr White denies that there is any problem with fighters' pay.) A video that emerged of Mr White slapping his wife in 2022—an incident he admitted to and apologised for—suggests that his brash persona is not always harmless.

Mr Trump doubtless understands that his friendship with Mr White helps his standing with [young male voters](#). Some 49% of 18- to 29-year-old men voted for him, according to exit polls, up from 41% in 2020. At Mr Trump's victory celebration Mr White shouted out the names of podcasters and YouTube stars who appeal to the sort of young men who follow the UFC. One of them was Joe Rogan, a comedian and former UFC commentator who is now among the world's most popular podcasters.

Now that the electoral fight is won, what purse will Mr White will receive? A spokesman has said that he has "no personal political ambitions". Whatever happens, the UFC's fighting spirit seems

likely to remain in favour in the Trump White House, and its boss will be a potent influence there.

Weekly crossword



Our crossword has two sets of clues, one for seasoned cruciverbalists and the other for less experienced solvers. Both give the same answers, all of which feature in articles in this week's edition of *The Economist*:

Cryptic clues

1 down An old despot, eviscerated, battered, behind—yet still he won (6,5)

1 across Remodel historic container for capital (5)

2 across Fat loss is predicated in diet at first (5)

3 across Take drug, I hear, to find narcotic flower (5)

Factual clues

1 down This week's biggest winner (6,5)

1 across South Asian capital (5)

2 across Oily organic compound (5)

3 across Flower used as symbol of remembrance (5)

Email all four answers, along with your home city and country, by 9am GMT on Monday to crossword@economist.com. We will pick randomly from those with the right answers and crown three winners in next week's edition.

The winners of this week's quiz



The Economist

Thank you to everyone who took part in this week's quiz. The winners, chosen at random, were:

Jeannette Duplessis, Calgary, Canada

Stefaan Ottevaere, Deinze, Belgium

Aine Ui Ghiollagain, Inverness, Britain

They all gave the correct answers of quantum mechanics, royale with cheese, A Room With a View, diamonds and tomorrow. The theme is James Bond movies: Quantum of Solace, Casino Royale, A View to a Kill, Diamonds are Forever and Tomorrow Never Dies.

The questions were:

Monday: Niels Bohr and Werner Heisenberg were pioneers in which branch of physics?

Tuesday: What, according to a discussion between two characters in "Pulp Fiction", do the French call a cheeseburger?

Wednesday: Which E.M. Forster novel opens with a scene in a Florence boarding house?

Thursday: What is the distinctive pattern on a Pringle sweater?

Friday: The word procrastinate stems from *cras*, the Latin word which has which normal English translation?

Kakistocracy

*A word that may be useful over the next four years.
Read the full story.*

**How can you govern a country which has
246 varieties of cheese?**

Charles de Gaulle