

## Catch up: Russia strikes Ukrainian infrastructure; displaced Lebanese journey home



**Ukraine's** electricity operator [cut power](#) to more than a million homes, many of them in the western region of Lviv, after **Russia** launched strikes on the country's energy infrastructure. Ukraine said it had intercepted more than half of the nearly 200 drones and missiles launched by Russia. As winter approaches, the Kremlin has increased its attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure.

**Israel** said that its [ceasefire](#) with **Hizbullah**, which came into effect on Wednesday, was breached by "suspects" who had arrived in areas of southern Lebanon. The Israeli army said it had fired on them. The deal demands an end to offensive operations, giving Hizbullah and Israel 60 days to leave southern Lebanon. Meanwhile Lebanese media reported that Israel attacked Lebanese villages.

**Australia** passed a law banning under-16s from [using social media](#). The bill, which will be one of the strictest of its kind in the world,

will require social-media platforms to verify the age of users when they sign up. The communications minister will decide later which sites will be banned for children. Businesses could be fined up to A\$49.5m (\$32m) for failing to comply.

**Romania's** top court requested a recount of votes cast in the first round of a presidential election on November 24th. A candidate alleged that votes were illegally transferred from another party to Elena Lasconi, a liberal. She beat the centre-left prime minister, Marcel Ciolacu, into third place. Ms Lasconi is set to face Calin Georgescu, an [ultranationalist](#) who came first, in a run-off.

**French** borrowing costs rose because of fears that the [country's government](#) could collapse. Yields on [French ten-year government bonds](#) briefly climbed higher than those on Greek debt, though later fell back below that level. France's government is struggling to pass a cost-cutting, tax-hiking budget without a majority in parliament, which could lead the opposition to call a no-confidence vote.

**Donald Trump** said he had a “wonderful” conversation on Wednesday with **Claudia Sheinbaum**, Mexico's president, and that she had agreed to “effectively closing [America's] southern border”. Ms Sheinbaum quickly responded that her country's stance is “not to close borders, but to build bridges”. On Tuesday she warned Mexico would retaliate if Mr Trump imposes [tariffs of 25%](#) on Mexican goods.

Net [migration](#) to **Britain** fell to 728,000 in the year to June 2024, according to the Office for National Statistics. The figure is 20% lower than the high of 906,000 recorded in the year before. The drop is largely explained by the previous Conservative government's decision to make it harder for students to bring family to Britain.

**Figure of the day:** 2%, the proportion of the world's green-energy projects that have been built in Africa over the past decade. [Read the full story.](#)

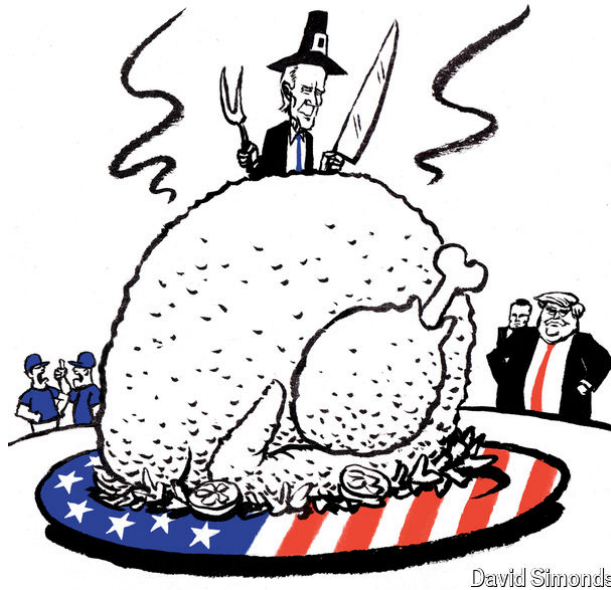
# Problems for Europe's economy



The European Central Bank's governing body meets on Thursday to consider the health of the euro-zone economy. It is not good. Surveys of purchasing managers, a closely watched barometer of economic activity, pointed this month to a sharp fall in output. The composite European index fell to a ten-month low, leading analysts to lower their GDP estimates for the fourth quarter.

Investors expect the latest consumer-price-index figures, released on Friday, to show that euro-zone inflation rose slightly in November. Higher energy prices could cause the annual inflation rate to rise from 2%, to 2.3%. But the ECB is more concerned about weak growth than it is about price pressures. The prospect of new tariffs under [Donald Trump](#), America's president-elect, and fears of a trade war have led to more pessimistic forecasts for growth in 2025. The odds are rising that the ECB at their next meeting will cut interest rates by half a percentage point, rather than a quarter.

# What Joe Biden is thankful for



Joe Biden is spending Thanksgiving on Nantucket, a posh island off Massachusetts. America's president can be cheered by some recent wins. On Tuesday he announced that America helped broker [a deal](#) to end the fighting between Israel and Hizbullah in Lebanon. He hopes (probably in vain) that will create momentum for a ceasefire in Gaza. And Donald Trump's team finally signed paperwork allowing them to co-ordinate with the existing federal workforce, suggesting that the transition will go more smoothly than some feared.

But these developments will not transform Mr Biden's legacy: after losing the White House and both chambers of Congress, the Democratic Party is [in disarray](#). Many [blame Mr Biden](#) for refusing to drop out of the race until it was too late. And he may not be thankful for the actions of the unpredictable Mr Trump, who has named [some shocking people](#) to his administration. After the pumpkin pie, Mr Biden returns to reality.

## Will the ceasefire in Lebanon hold?



Many Lebanese on Thursday will return to their homes after Israel and Hizbullah agreed to a [ceasefire](#) on November 26th. The deal took hold at 4am local time on Wednesday. It calls for a 60-day halt to the fighting. During that period Hizbullah will move its fighters north of the Litani river, about 30km from the border with Israel, which will gradually withdraw its own forces from southern Lebanon.

But not everyone will have homes to return to. The World Bank estimates the war has caused \$8.5bn in damage and economic losses. Entire villages in the south have been razed. And those hoping that this may lead to a ceasefire in Gaza will be disappointed. Binyamin Netanyahu, Israel's prime minister, has different incentives there. His far-right allies dream of rebuilding old settlements in the strip. By ending the war in Lebanon, it will be easier for Mr Netanyahu to continue in Gaza.



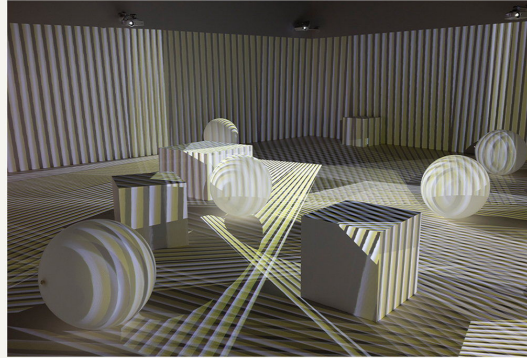
# Nicaragua's autocrats further cement their power



Is there anything Nicaraguans can do to resist the ruling family? This week [President Daniel Ortega](#) overhauled the country's constitution to further tighten his family's grip. The changes officially elevate Rosario Murillo, Mr Ortega's wife and chosen successor, to co-president and extend the presidential term from five years to six. They give the couple even more control over the courts, congress, the army and the police, as well as the right to strip citizens of their nationality.

Nicaragua's descent into totalitarianism has come at a rapid clip since 2018, when large protests broke out against the regime. Mr Ortega's crackdown has killed at least 300 people. Since then the president has shut down over 5,000 NGOs, locked up dissidents and former allies and forced others into exile. He has even gone after the Roman Catholic church. Condemnation has been swift from all quarters. But words alone will not be enough.

# An electrifying show at the Tate Modern



Andrea Rossetti

**Immersive art experiences** are in vogue. Hundreds of thousands of people have wandered through “Rain Rooms”, installed in a number of international art venues since 2012. (Visitors walk through a virtual downpour without getting wet.) Many have visited Yayoi Kusama’s “Infinity Mirror Rooms” or installations that project Vincent van Gogh’s paintings onto walls, ceilings and floors.

“Electric Dreams”, which opens at the Tate Modern in London on Thursday, showcases early proponents of immersive art. The exhibition displays the work of more than 70 digital artists who experimented with technology before the internet really took off. It is bright, eccentric and fun. Some of the installations are mind-bending, as with Carlos Cruz-Diez’s “Environnement Chromointerférent” (1974), which beams thin coloured stripes into a white room. Others involve the viewer: “Liquid Views” (1992) is a digital pool of water in which your face is distorted. It is also very Instagrammable: the pioneers of bringing whizzy new technology into art were certainly ahead of their time.



## Daily quiz



*The Economist*

We will serve you a new question each day this week. On Friday your challenge is to give us all five answers and, as important, tell us the connecting theme. Email your responses (and include mention of your home city and country) by 1700 GMT on Friday to [QuizEspresso@economist.com](mailto:QuizEspresso@economist.com). We'll pick randomly from those with the right answers and crown three winners on Saturday.

**Thursday:** Which Beatles album has a cover featuring a montage of people the group admired? (Hint: the full title is needed to guess the theme.)

**Wednesday:** Which Virginia town, on the James river, is noted for its marine terminal and military bases?

**There is no better teacher than history in determining the future.**

*Charlie Munger*