

## Catch up: Harris and Trump visit swing states; Berkshire Hathaway cuts Apple stake



In the last weekend before **America's election**, **Kamala Harris** and **Donald Trump** were on the stump in crucial swing states. Both had North Carolina, which narrowly voted for Mr Trump in 2020 and where [our election model](#) puts him just ahead, on their itineraries. In a state recently battered by Hurricane Helene, the Republican repeated false claims that the Biden administration was diverting relief funds to help migrants. Ms Harris vowed to protect abortion rights and bring down the cost of living. She also stopped in New York to make a surprise appearance on “Saturday Night Live”, a comedy-sketch show.

**Berkshire Hathaway** sold some 100m shares in **Apple** during the third quarter. Warren Buffett said his [investment firm](#) had pared its stake in the American tech titan to less than \$70bn, down from \$178bn in 2023. Berkshire, which has been a net seller of stocks for two years, has amassed large holdings of [cash](#)—totalling a record \$325bn—and Treasury bonds.

**Kemi Badenoch** was elected [leader](#) of Britain's **Conservative Party**. Ms Badenoch, who will be the Tories' fourth female leader and the first black person to lead a major British party, beat her last remaining rival, Robert Jenrick, by more than 12,000 votes out of 95,000 cast. She served as Secretary of State for Business under Rishi Sunak, who led the Conservatives to their worst election defeat in more than a century in July.

The **Israel Defence Forces** claimed to have captured a Hizbullah commander in Batroun, a coastal city in northern Lebanon. The man is believed to be an important figure in the militant group's naval operations, according to reports. The raid marks the first time Israel has launched a naval operation in northern Lebanon since it [invaded the south of the country](#) in late September.

Meanwhile Ali Khamenei, **Iran's** supreme leader, vowed that **Israel** and **America** would receive a "crushing response to what they are doing to Iran". His threat follows Israeli [air strikes on Iran](#) on October 26th, which killed four soldiers and reportedly damaged air-defence systems. The two countries have exchanged strikes on each other's territory twice since the beginning of the war in Gaza.

**Nvidia** will replace **Intel**, once America's chipmaking champion, in the Dow Jones Industrial Average. It will join the stockmarket index of 30 big American firms before trading begins on November 8th. [Nvidia](#), which specialises in designing high-end chips, has become the world's second-most valuable company owing to widespread excitement over artificial intelligence. Intel, meanwhile, has struggled to update its more [old-fashioned](#) chipmaking business.

**Spain** launched its biggest peacetime disaster-recovery operation, deploying some 5,000 troops to try to find dozens of people still missing after [flash floods](#). At least 214 people were killed after four days of copious rain, mainly concentrated in or around the eastern

city of Valencia. The toll, in what is already the worst flood-related disaster in the country's modern history, is expected to rise.

**Word of the week:** Galapagos syndrome, a term used to describe how many of the goods developed and sold in Japan do not get exported. [Read the full story](#).

*American politics matters intensely to the rest of the world. [The US in brief's](#) team of editors will be giving The Economist's fastest analysis of the election results as they come in. Find that on our app and home page on Tuesday November 5th, and [sign up here](#) to receive daily election updates delivered as a newsletter.*

## Preparing for a Stop the Steal sequel



[Election day](#) in America is on Tuesday, but it may take days to know the result. In 2020 it took nearly four days until news outlets called the race for Joe Biden. Then Donald Trump alleged that it had been stolen and pressured state and local officials, as well as federal lawmakers, to reverse his defeat. If Mr Trump loses to Kamala Harris, expect a similar playbook: allegations of fraud, petitions for recounts and strong-arming of officials to withhold “certification”

Certification is the process by which local and state officials attest to the results’ accuracy. It is mandatory. State officeholders are unlikely to block certification should Mr Trump lose; no election deniers hold those jobs. But some rogue MAGA officials might do so at the county level. Courts would then intervene. If that scenario comes to pass, count on lawsuits until January 6th 2025, when Congress affirms the winner. The conspiracy theories and acrimony will persist beyond.

## All of America's other votes



The presidential race hogs the limelight. But Americans are also voting on nearly 150 ballot initiatives that could profoundly change policy in their states. More than \$1bn has been spent by supporters and opponents campaigning on them.

Ten states will vote on [abortion-related measures](#). Pro-abortion campaigners have been victorious in all such votes since *Roe v Wade*, which guaranteed access to the procedure, was overturned in 2022. Democrats hope referendums in the swing states of Arizona and Nevada may help lift Kamala Harris over Donald Trump. The outcome in Florida matters hugely for women in the South, where abortion is strictly regulated.

States will also decide on policies ranging from criminal justice to climate. [Two groups of initiatives](#) stand out: whether to tweak voting systems (by adopting ranked-choice voting), and whether to ban noncitizens from voting (which is already illegal in most elections). The referendums are a reminder that, no matter who wins the White House, changes in important areas of policy are increasingly driven by the states.



# Moldova's run-off for the presidency



Moldovans go to the polls on Sunday to choose their president in a second round of voting. The incumbent, [Maia Sandu](#), a pro-Western reformer and former economist at the World Bank, won 42% in the first round against ten other candidates. Most of them were backed by Russia, which was accused of an array of [dirty tricks](#) to defeat Ms Sandu, including disinformation, bribery and sabotage. She will face off against Alexandr Stoianoglo, a former chief prosecutor, who won 26%.

The first poll was held alongside a referendum on whether to enshrine Moldova's aspiration to join the European Union in its constitution. A wafer-thin majority voted in favour, with most of the country's Russian-speaking minority (of around 15% of the population) fiercely opposed to it. The run-off for the presidency may be close, with Russia determined to bolster Mr Stoianoglo. Even if Ms Sandu again prevails, a general election scheduled for next July will pose another tough challenge.

## A security scandal in Israel



An Israeli court is set to rule on Sunday whether to remove a gag order on the details of a scandal which has been roiling the political and security establishments. Despite the order, quite a lot has already been reported. They include the existence of an investigation into the apparent leaking of confidential documents to newspapers in Germany and Britain and the presence in sensitive meetings of a spokesperson employed by Binyamin Netanyahu who hadn't passed security vetting.

The prime minister, who might have gained most from the leaks, has sought to get ahead of the story by calling for the removal of the gag order. People close to him have started blaming “the deep state” for going after the prime minister instead of defence officials whom they accuse of leaking as well. In the background is growing tension between Mr Netanyahu and Israel's generals over who bears responsibility for the [failures](#) leading to Hamas's surprise attack on October 7th 2023. It is now bursting into the open.

## The cruelty of “Small Things Like These”

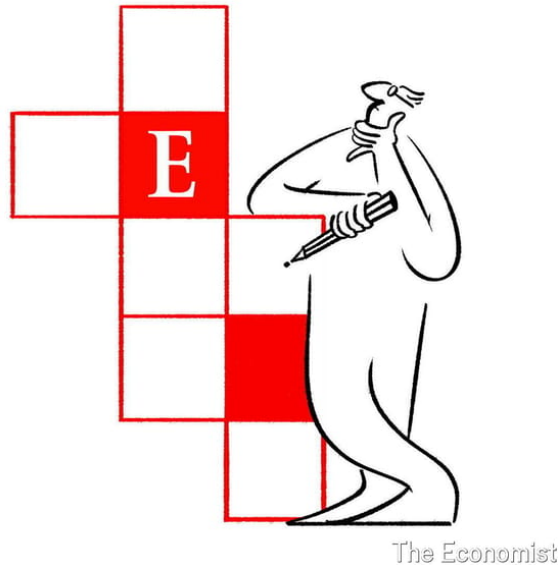


The film opens with the sound of church bells—for here, in New Ross, Ireland, in 1985, the Roman Catholic church is an integral part of the rhythms of everyday life. The winter has been bitterly cold and Bill Furlong (Cillian Murphy) is in demand as the town’s coal merchant. When he makes a delivery to the local convent, and finds a girl shivering in the storehouse, it prompts him to investigate the cruelties that are being inflicted there and to wrestle with his conscience.

“Small Things Like These”—released in Britain this week—is adapted from Claire Keegan’s prizewinning novella, and based on the true story of the church-run [Magdalene laundries](#) that forced “fallen women” to work for free. At least 10,000 women were confined in them between 1922 and 1996 (when the last laundry closed); some 1,600 died while inside. It is a grim episode in Ireland’s history. “Small Things Like These” shines a light on that darkness.



# Weekly crossword



Our crossword is designed for experienced cruciverbalists and newcomers alike. Both sets of clues give the same answers, all of which feature in articles in this week's edition of *The Economist*:

## Cryptic clues

- 1 down* Sculpting all hegemonic for artist (12)
- 1 across* Unknown among leaders of major economically independent country or state (6)
- 2 across* Little French one with odd aura on the moon (5)
- 3 across* Partially enjoys terrible seafood (6)

## Factual clues

- 1 down* Artistic beneficiary of the Medicis (12)
- 1 across* Where Netflix made its first foreign-language original (6)
- 2 across* A type of base that might be build underground in future, to shield them from radiation (5)
- 3 across* An indulgent food-stuff, normally slurped from its shell (6)

Email all four answers by 9am GMT on Monday to [crossword@economist.com](mailto:crossword@economist.com), along with your home city and country. 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:

**Jennifer Stapleton**, Cheltenham, England

**John-Mikal Stordal**, Oslo, Norway

**Greger Lindell**, Eemnes, Netherlands

They all gave the correct answers of Hawkeye Pierce, Steven Tyler, George Harrison, Garfield and Cleveland. The theme is 19th-century American presidents: Franklin Pierce, John Tyler, William and Benjamin Harrison, James Garfield and Grover Cleveland.

The questions were:

**Monday:** What was the name of the character played by Alan Alda in the long-running TV series "MASH"?

**Tuesday:** Steven Tallarico is the real name of which American rock singer, the lead vocalist of Aerosmith?

**Wednesday:** Which member of the Beatles was the youngest?

**Thursday:** Which cartoon cat was created by Jim Davis?

**Friday:** The baseball team of which city changed its name from the Indians to the Guardians?





# Galapagos syndrome

*A term used to describe how many of the goods developed and sold in Japan do not get exported.*

*Read the full story.*

**England and America are two countries  
separated by the same language.**

*George Bernard Shaw*