

Catch up: Syrian rebels attack Aleppo; British MPs vote for assisted dying



Rebels in **Syria** attacked Aleppo, the country's second-biggest city. More than 180 fighters have been killed and some 14,000 people have been forced to flee, according to reports. It is the first time Syria's opposition has captured territory from the regime in years. The fighters are part of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, an Islamist group with a stronghold in [Idlib](#), a north-western province.

British MPs passed a bill that would [legalise assisted dying](#) for terminally ill people in England and Wales. After a heated debate, 330 MPs voted in favour of the reform and 275 voted against it. Surveys suggest that a majority of Britons support the idea. The bill will face further scrutiny from lawmakers before it becomes law.

Chad said it was leaving a defence pact with **France**, five years after signing a revised version of the deal because of growing threats from Islamic extremists. Some 1,000 French soldiers in Chad may soon be required to leave. The announcement is a blow to [Western influence in the Sahel](#) as other powers such as [Russia](#) grow their interests in the region.

The [euro zone's](#) annual **inflation rate** was 2.3% in November, up from 2% in October. It is the first time since August that inflation has exceeded the European Central Bank's target rate of 2%. Still, the relatively modest rise probably won't stop the ECB from cutting interest rates again at its monetary-policy meeting on December 12th.

France's president, Emmanuel Macron, visited **Notre Dame** in Paris ahead of its [official re-opening](#) on December 7th. In 2019 a fire tore through the gothic cathedral, destroying much of its wooden roof and toppling its 19th-century spire. France has restored the building and its interior at a cost of €700m (\$739m), much of which came from small donations.

Spain approved paid "**climate leave**" that allows workers to take up to four days off to avoid travel during extreme weather events. The measure, which is inspired by similar legislation in Canada, comes after [floods](#) in the eastern region of Valencia killed more than 200 people last month. Several companies were criticised for forcing employees to work during the emergency.

Shares in [HYBE](#), **South Korea's** biggest music company, plunged by 7% after NewJeans, a chart-topping K-pop girl group, ended their partnership with Ador, one of HYBE's affiliates. The artists announced the shock termination in response to Ador's refusal to reinstate Min Hee-jin, NewJeans's manager, who was accused of trying to take control of the sublabel. A legal battle will probably ensue.

Word of the week: Securonomics, a buzzword coined by Britain's chancellor, Rachel Reeves. It has not appeared in her speeches since she entered office. [Read the full story.](#)

A Taiwanese tour angers China



On Saturday Lai Ching-te, Taiwan's president, will set off for his first international trip since taking office in May. He will visit the Marshall Islands, Tuvalu and Palau, three of the twelve states that still have official relations with [Taiwan](#). All the world's other countries recognise China instead. On his way Mr Lai will stop over for two nights in Hawaii and one in Guam, an American territory.

This is nothing new. Taiwanese presidents often transit through America on their way to other countries. Mr Lai's trip, which pauses in Hawaii rather than on the American mainland, is less provocative than routes taken by his predecessor, Tsai Ing-wen. She made stopovers in Los Angeles and New York. Nevertheless, China is angry. A spokeswoman for the foreign ministry said that China opposes visits by [Taiwan's leaders](#) to America "in any name or for any reason". Taiwanese and other regional officials expect China to use Mr Lai's transit as an excuse to carry out military drills around Taiwan in the coming days.

Moana 2 boosts the box office



Cinema operators have much to be thankful for this Thanksgiving weekend, with releases that are poised to beat box-office records. The star attraction is “Moana 2”, Disney’s sequel to a hit from 2016 which was America’s most-streamed movie last year. Universal’s “Wicked” opened strongly last weekend. “[Gladiator II](#)”, from Paramount, is also doing well. Together the three films are expected to beat the Thanksgiving box-office record of \$316m set in 2018.

The expected success will offer a vital boost to an industry that is still trying to recover from the coronavirus pandemic—and that seems unlikely to return to its former glory. American cinemas are projected to generate about \$8.5bn of ticket sales this year, down by 25% from 2019 levels. “Moana 2”, “Wicked”, and “Gladiator II” will draw millions to cinemas—but millions more will probably wait to stream them at home.

Copa Libertadores' Brazilian clash



Brazilian football teams have won the past five editions of the Copa Libertadores, [South America's top club competition](#). Saturday's final in Buenos Aires, Argentina's capital, is set to add yet another winner from the country to the list: Atlético Mineiro, champions in 2013, face Botafogo, first-time finalists.

This time there's an extra incentive beyond the trophy, too. The winner will secure a spot in the 2025 Club World Cup. FIFA is expanding the tournament from 7 to 32 teams. The revamped competition will feature European powerhouses like Real Madrid, Inter Milan and Manchester City, with a group stage and knock-out rounds.

FIFA wants the tournament to rival the prestige of the other football World Cup, which features international teams, and the Champions League, Europe's leading club tournament. The prize money will be in the hundreds of millions of dollars. For Brazilian clubs, a share of that pot would be transformative: their revenues lag far behind Europe's football giants'.

Caricaturing Churchill



Associated Newspapers Ltd.

Winston Churchill knew well how influential cartoonists could be. In the mid-20th century 85% of Britons read a newspaper every day; Churchill reckoned that sketches and caricatures were the means by which the public “form[ed] their views of public men” and often decided whom to vote for. With his jowls and cigars, Churchill was an ideal, easily recognisable subject for cartoonists. A new exhibition at the Imperial War Museum in London brings together depictions of the statesman from Britain and abroad between 1909 and 2003. Marking 150 years since Churchill’s birth on Saturday, the show traces his rise, wartime leadership and political legacy.

Predictably, the cartoons drawn during the second world war are the most interesting. At home [Churchill was depicted as fearless](#), slaying the Nazi dragon. In Axis countries he was shown as a drunk, grotesque war criminal. Probably no British leader before or since has inspired artists as much as the bulldog.

Weekend profile: Pep Guardiola, a footballing mastermind under pressure



Pep Guardiola isn't used to losing. Since becoming Manchester City's manager in 2016, he has won 18 trophies, including six Premier League titles and the Champions League, Europe's leading club competition. Previously he dominated German football as coach of Bayern Munich, and both the Spanish and European game at Barcelona. Now Mr Guardiola is on the ropes. After losing five games in a row, the worst run of his tenure, on Tuesday City squandered a three-goal lead to draw against Feyernoord, a little-fancied Dutch side, in the Champions League. Should they lose away to Liverpool on Sunday, they will fall 11 points behind the Premier League leaders. Even with two-thirds of the season to play, closing such a gap would be remarkable.

Many still believe Mr Guardiola can turn things around. He has one of the sport's great tactical minds, honed in the elite footballing institutions of Catalonia. In 1984, he arrived at Barcelona's *La Masia*, the club's legendary academy. After making his first-team debut in 1990, he won multiple trophies, including the club's first European Cup, the precursor to the Champions League, in 1992.

He also played almost 50 times for Spain, though he is a supporter of Catalan independence.

His reputation as a manager was forged in Catalonia, too. He became Barça's first-team coach in 2008 and created arguably football's greatest-ever side. Blessed with brilliant players including Lionel Messi, an Argentine superstar, the club won 14 trophies in four seasons, including two Champions Leagues. His management style is intense. One moment he lavishes a player with praise and tactical advice. The next he might appear distant, obsessing over his side's weaknesses or their opponent's strengths. His commitment to constant innovation is effective, but exhausting. After just four years at Barcelona, he stepped down owing to the relentless pressure of bettering near-perfection.

Reversing City's slump may be his greatest challenge yet, in part because of matters off the field. An independent commission is investigating whether City broke the Premier League's financial rules between 2009 and 2018, charges the club denies. If found guilty, the team could lose points and even be relegated. Mr Guardiola recently signed a two-year extension to his contract, and has vowed to stay put even if City face the drop. For a coach who has only ever worked at the apex of the game, that would be an unfamiliar test.

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 “President Valerie—I, Jim, reformed!” (6,5)

1 across Some maharaja panhandled land (5)

2 across Planet's poverty without leader (5)

3 across Regularly find cashbox in a state (5)

Factual clues

1 down Another president idolised by Trump fans (6,5)

1 across Where the share of eligible men taking paternity leave reached 30% in 2023 (5)

2 *across* What plays host to three trillion trees (5)

3 *across* What 13 counties in Oregon recently said they'd rather join (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:

Rob Blair, Harare, Zimbabwe

Zoe Hill, Oxshott, Britain

Peter Nicklin, Naivasha, Kenya

They all gave the correct answers of: Down Under, A Hat, Newport News, Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, the Grand Canal. The theme is words ending in stand: understand, hatstand, newsstand, bandstand and grandstand.

The questions were:

Monday: Which hit song by Men at Work has a title usually associated with Australia and New Zealand?

Tuesday: What did a man mistake his wife for, in the title of a book by Oliver Sacks?

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

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.)

Friday: Which Chinese waterway, more than 1,000 miles long, has sections that were built as far back as the 5th century BC?

Experience is simply the name we give our mistakes.

Oscar Wilde