

## Catch up: America's presidential showdown; dollar falls



On the eve of **America's presidential election**, Donald Trump and Kamala Harris made frantic tours of swing states. Both visited Pennsylvania, which [The Economist's forecast model](#) says has a 34% chance of being the state that decides the election. Mr Trump warned of economic stagnation and unchecked immigration, calling undocumented migrants accused of crimes “savages” and “animals”. Ms Harris promised a “fresh start” with restored abortion rights, a stronger economy and a more united future. More than 82m early votes have been cast.

Meanwhile the **dollar** weakened, after strengthening in the run-up to Tuesday's vote. The dollar's [recent appreciation](#) may have been an indication that markets were readying themselves for a second Trump presidency—which, some traders predicted, would fuel inflation, thus keeping interest rates high and strengthening the greenback. But the dollar's fall suggests that some are now [betting](#) on Ms Harris instead.

**Israel's** army said it struck **Hizbullah's** “intelligence headquarters” in **Syria**. Syria's defence ministry said that civilian sites near Damascus, the capital, were targeted. Meanwhile the UN's agency for Palestinians said Israel had reduced the number of aid trucks allowed into Gaza, which Israel denied. Last month America threatened to cut Israel's military aid if it did not increase supplies.

Western officials believe **Russia** plotted to place incendiary devices on passenger or cargo planes bound for America and Canada, reported the *Wall Street Journal*. Two devices ignited at DHL hubs in Germany and Britain in July in what the *WSJ* claimed was a test run for setting aircraft on fire. Russia is ramping up **a sabotage campaign** across Europe.

**North Korea** fired short-range ballistic missiles into waters off its east coast. Last week the hermit kingdom conducted an **intercontinental ballistic missile test** with the longest flight time yet. On Monday Ukrainian officials said its army had attacked **North Korean soldiers** fighting for Russia in Kursk, a Russian border region—the first time they have clashed.

**Robert Habeck** said uncertainty over the result of America's election made it “the worst possible time” for **Germany's** tottering government to collapse. The economy minister and vice-chancellor offered a concession to his coalition partners, suggesting that €7bn (\$7.6bn) set aside for subsidies could be used to meet a budget shortfall. Disagreements over **Germany's budget** have soured relations between coalition partners.

A judge in Pennsylvania allowed **Elon Musk's** daily **\$1m voter giveaway** to continue. Last week Philadelphia's district attorney sued the tech mogul and his pro-Trump America PAC, arguing that the **sweepstake**, which is open until election day to registered voters in swing states, was an “illegal lottery”. Earlier Mr Musk's lawyers said the competition's winners were “not chosen by chance”.

**Figure of the day:** \$35, the cost of a cubic metre of helium, the amount needed to lift a single kilogram. [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.*

# America's presidential showdown



As polling day in America begins on Tuesday, *The Economist's* forecast model suggests that the presidential contest [could not be any closer](#). Kamala Harris and Donald Trump each have a one in two chance of winning. If the polls are even slightly wrong, one of them could win a decisive electoral-college victory.

How quickly the results will be known will depend in part on how large is the winning candidate's margin of victory. The first states to be called, based on exit polls, will be where one candidate is far ahead. A better early indicator of the overall result will be changes in county-level tallies since 2020: these will appear live on [our results page](#) throughout election night. The race will probably depend on [seven swing states](#). Of these, Georgia and Michigan may be fastest to count; Pennsylvania, the likely pivotal state, will probably be slower. It will not start processing postal ballots until Tuesday morning.

# Who will control America's Congress?



The prospect of a divided Congress—and with it the shelving of much of the next president's agenda—looms large in America's election. [Our forecast model](#) gives the Republicans a 71% chance of taking the Senate. To retain control, Democrats cannot afford to lose Arizona, Michigan, Montana, Nevada, Ohio, Pennsylvania or Wisconsin. Yet their incumbents in the largely red states of Ohio and [Montana](#) look particularly vulnerable. They could withstand a loss if they flipped a seat elsewhere, and some recent surveys have put the challengers to Republican senators in the pale-red states of [Florida and Texas](#) just a few points behind them. But our model only gives Democrats a one-in-five chance of flipping seats in either state.

Meanwhile the battle for the House is a [coin-toss](#). California is a [key battleground](#). If Democrats can flip five Republican-held districts in the blue state, they may well take the lower chamber. That will be another nail-biting race that adds to the uncertainty on election day.



# Showing off China's wealth



China's government hosts endless forums, summits and expos each year. But the China International Import Expo has special significance to the ruling Communist Party. The country's main economic contribution to the world has been in the form of exports. An import expo—one in which thousands of foreign companies advertise their wares to local consumers—intends to show that China is more than a giant factory. It is a country of increasingly wealthy consumers, too.

The event, which started on Tuesday, will attract all manner of multinational groups, hoping to get a small share of [China's market](#). But the domestic demand that China's rulers are so eager to display is flagging. Imports rose only 0.3% year on year in dollar terms in September. That is hurting international brands. LVMH, a luxury group, recently attributed poor quarterly results to “deteriorating trends from the Chinese customer”. Expos alone will not improve local consumer sentiment.

# Turkey's growing sway in Central Asia



On Tuesday the presidents of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey and Uzbekistan will discuss prospects for economic integration at a summit of the [Organization of Turkic States](#) in Bishkek, the Kyrgyzstani capital. Once a talking shop, the OTS is turning into a vehicle for regional co-operation. The war in Ukraine has damaged Central Asian countries' trust in Russia. Many of the group's members see the OTS as a way of reducing dependence on the Kremlin.

Turkey, the biggest of the OTS countries, has taken note. Turkish developers have signed contracts worth tens of billions of dollars across Central Asia. Turkey's arms companies are busy in the region, too. Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan (the latter an OTS observer) have already bought Turkey's battle-tested Bayraktar drones. Kazakhstan is in talks to produce them. Russia maintains economic and political sway in the region. But Central Asian officials now talk of pursuing a "multi-vector" foreign policy and believe time is on their side.

## A celebration of black photography



The photographs are lighthearted. A woman in a colourful dress leans against a car in London; a boy pushing a bike grins at the camera; two friends pose on New York's subway. "As We Rise", an exhibition which opens at the Saatchi Gallery in London on Tuesday, brings together more than 100 such images to explore "black identity on both sides of the Atlantic". From Britain to Canada to the Caribbean, the images capture everyday interactions in the 20th and 21st centuries. The photographers featured include Sir Horace Ové, a Trinidadian-born British artist who died last year, and Arielle Bobb-Willis, an up-and-coming American talent.

Since the mid-19th century, [black photographers](#) have documented the spirit of their communities. They have countered centuries of stereotypes and clichéd representations. This exhibition has a mix of family pictures, artsy shots and self-portraits. It is both a historical archive of the African diaspora and a testament to the joy of good photography.



## 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.

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

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

**\$35**

*The cost of a cubic metre of helium, the amount needed to lift a single kilogram.*

*Read the full story.*

**Thoroughly conscious ignorance is the  
prelude to every real advance in science.**

*James Clerk Maxwell*