

Catch up: Trump's cabinet picks; the Archbishop of Canterbury resigns



Donald Trump reportedly picked **Kristi Noem** (pictured), the [governor of South Dakota](#) and a [loyal defender](#) of the president-elect, as his homeland-security secretary, overseeing [immigration](#). **Mike Huckabee**, a former governor of Arkansas, was tapped to be America's ambassador to Israel. **Stephen Miller**, who crafted Mr Trump's immigration policy during his first term, will probably be named deputy chief of staff. Mr Trump tapped **Mike Waltz** as his [national security adviser](#), and is expected to nominate **Marco Rubio**, a senator for Florida, as secretary of state.

Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury (the most senior bishop in the Church of England), [resigned](#) over his handling of an abuse scandal. A report revealed that Mr Welby did not follow up on allegations brought to him in 2013 about a man associated with the church who abused more than 100 boys over several decades. Archbishop Welby came under intense pressure from members of the church to step down.

Germany will hold an [early election](#) on February 23rd. The ruling Social Democrats and the main opposition party, the Christian Democratic Union, agreed to the date after days of quarrelling. **Olaf Scholz**, the chancellor, had originally proposed holding elections in March; the CDU preferred an earlier date to avoid uncertainty. Germany's coalition government collapsed last week after Mr Scholz sacked his finance minister.

Police said that a driver who crashed into a crowd near a stadium in Zhuhai, a town in southern **China**, on Monday is in a coma in hospital. The incident killed at least 35 people and injured 43 more. China has seen a surge of public attacks in recent months; in September a man stabbed several people at a supermarket in Shanghai.

Jack Teixeira, a member of America's Air National Guard who **leaked** [hundreds of classified files](#), was sentenced to 15 years in prison. In March the 22-year-old pleaded guilty to six charges related to transmitting national-defence information, which included military assessments on the war in Ukraine. He had [uploaded them](#) to Discord, a chat site popular with video-game enthusiasts.

Israel said it allowed more aid lorries to enter northern **Gaza** ahead of an American deadline to improve humanitarian access or face restrictions on shipments of weapons. The UN's aid agency for Palestinians, UNRWA, had warned that Gaza is on the brink of famine, with the amount of aid entering the enclave at its lowest level in a year.

A judge in **Louisiana** struck down a state law requiring public schools to [display the Ten Commandments](#) in every classroom. The judge ruled that the law, passed earlier this year, violated the First Amendment, which prohibits the government from "establishing" or privileging a religion. The state will appeal against the ruling to the Fifth Circuit, a [notoriously conservative appeals court](#).

Figure of the day: 4.5%, the amount by which global coal consumption grew last year. [Read the full story.](#)

America's new Senate majority leader



The end of an era is near. In January Mitch McConnell, the longest-ever serving Republican leader in America's Senate, will stand down. On Wednesday the party holds elections to decide his successor. John Thune, the party whip, and John Cornyn, his predecessor, are the front-runners. But Rick Scott, a MAGA dark horse from Florida (pictured), is also in contention.

Messrs Cornyn and Thune are touting their competence and experience, while Mr Scott is pitching his loyalty to Donald Trump. The president-elect has not endorsed a candidate, but has said that anyone who wants the job should allow him to make some [temporary appointments](#) without a Senate vote. Mr Scott has agreed to do as Mr Trump suggested; the others signalled openness to it. The election will be secret, so senators can vote with their conscience. Their pick will say something about whether they have greater loyalty to the Senate's responsibilities or to their new president.

Germany heads for fresh elections



It took nearly a week of wrangling, but Germany got there in the end. On November 6th the country's fractious three-party coalition [collapsed](#). Olaf Scholz, the chancellor (pictured right), had hoped to forestall early elections until March. But on Tuesday he yielded to the centre-right opposition, the Christian Democratic Union, and agreed to submit a vote of confidence to Germany's parliament on December 16th. Elections are now expected on February 23rd. The CDU, along with its Bavarian ally, the Christian Social Union, will probably unseat Mr Scholz's Social Democratic Party.

Before then, Mr Scholz wants to get various initiatives through parliament, including on asylum, tax and transport. Now leading a minority government with the Greens, he needs the help of the CDU/CSU. Mr Scholz is expected to offer more details to parliament on Wednesday. It may not be the parties' last dance: many predict that Germany's next government could be a "grand coalition" of the CDU/CSU and the SPD.

India's “quick-commerce” boom



Swiggy, one of India's largest [food-delivery apps](#), makes its stockmarket debut on Wednesday. The company plans to raise \$1.4bn through its initial public offering, which would value the firm at \$11.3bn. But investor interest has been lukewarm. Swiggy reported a \$280m net loss for its financial year ending in March. It trails Zomato, a rival worth \$27bn, in both prepared-food and grocery delivery.

Though still a small part of India's retail market, “quick commerce”—which delivers everything from food to phones to customers' homes, sometimes in less than ten minutes—is booming. Competition is increasingly fierce. Besides Swiggy and Zomato, upstarts and large e-commerce firms like Amazon and Walmart (through its ownership of Flipkart) are eyeing stay-at-home consumers. Swiggy will hope that the fast growth of India's delivery market will persuade investors that it can turn a profit.

The Horn of Africa's only democracy goes to the polls



Somaliland, an unrecognised state that declared independence from Somalia in 1991, elects a president on Wednesday. Many hope that international recognition may at last be at hand. [Muse Bihi Abdi](#), the president since 2017 (pictured), is campaigning for re-election on that basis. In January he struck a controversial deal with Ethiopia, which reportedly offered to recognise Somaliland's independence in return for a strip of its coastline. Mr Bihi has also developed ties with allies of Donald Trump, whose incoming administration may be persuaded to support the agreement.

But opposition figures have criticised the opacity surrounding Mr Bihi's deal and worry about tensions it has raised with Somalia. Moreover Somaliland's clan-riven society has become more polarised on his watch. Last year the army fought and lost a war against SSC-Khaatumo, a clan-based militia in the east. Fears of violence on polling day abound; some worry a contested election could spark a civil war. Somaliland's case for recognition rests on stability, which could be at risk.

'Tis the season... for bad films



Courtesy of Netflix

Christmas is a time of cosy predictability. Every year the same recipes, carols and moth-eaten jumpers make an appearance. Nowhere is convention adhered to more faithfully than on screen. Hallmark Media, an American company, is releasing 47 Christmas films this year. Many have cringeworthy titles like “To Have and To Holiday”. Most are romances; a quarter involve the protagonist returning to their hometown.

Netflix has also embraced festive [schlock](#). In 2022 one critic described the streamer’s leading seasonal film, “Falling for Christmas”, as a “rom-com in which both rom and com are in short supply”. That didn’t put off subscribers: the film was watched 31m times within four days of release. This year Netflix’s most eye-catching Christmas offering is “Hot Frosty”, which is out on Wednesday. It tells the story of a sexy snowman who comes to life to woo a young widow. Silly? So what? Viewers will probably give it a festive reception.

Daily quiz



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. We'll pick randomly from those with the right answers and crown three winners on Saturday.

Wednesday: Which bovine creature features in the Chinese zodiac?

Tuesday: Which medal was the award for bravery in the German army from 1871 to 1945?

**Life is not a matter of holding good cards,
but of playing a poor hand well.**

Robert Louis Stevenson