

## Catch up: Gaetz drops bid for attorney-general; Russia's new missile



**Matt Gaetz**, Donald Trump's [nominee to be attorney-general](#), withdrew from contention. Both the justice department and a congressional ethics committee had investigated him for alleged sex-trafficking. The DoJ did not press charges; the committee has not released its report. Mr Gaetz denies the allegations, but said that his nomination was “unfairly becoming a distraction” during the transition.

**Russia** confirmed that it launched a medium-range ballistic missile at the eastern **Ukrainian** city of Dnipro. In a national address, **Vladimir Putin**, Russia's president, claimed that there were “currently no ways of counteracting” its new hypersonic weapon, and said that the attack was in response to Ukraine's [recent use](#) of American- and British-made longer-range missiles.

The **International Criminal Court** issued arrest warrants for Israel's prime minister, **Binyamin Netanyahu** and his former defence minister, **Yoav Gallant**, over [war crimes in Gaza](#). The top UN court said it suspected they were responsible for causing mass

starvation in the enclave. Mr Netanyahu rejected the ruling as “absurd and false”. The ICC’s 124 members are obliged to arrest them if they enter their territory.

Brazilian police accused **Jair Bolsonaro** and 36 others of attempting a coup after the presidential election in 2022. Now Brazil’s prosecutor-general must decide whether to take the case to trial. The charges stem from [Mr Bolsonaro’s](#) alleged attempt to retain power after losing to Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, which culminated in his supporters storming the national legislature in January 2023.

**Gary Gensler**, the chair of America’s Securities and Exchange Commission, said he would step down in January, just as Donald Trump takes office. The [controversial regulator](#) has pushed through sweeping changes, including to the **crypto** industry—a sector he called the “wild west”, but which Mr Trump [has embraced](#). SEC chairs typically resign when new presidents take over.

**Kenya** cancelled a procurement process to expand its main airport in Nairobi, the capital, which **Adani Group** was expected to win, after the Indian conglomerate’s chairman was [indicted in America](#). Prosecutors allege that [Gautam Adani](#), India’s second-richest man, and seven other Indian businessmen with securities and wire fraud in connection to a solar-energy project.

**Jobless claims in America** unexpectedly hit their lowest point in seven months last week, according to the labour department. There were 213,000 applications for unemployment benefits in the week to November 16th. That is far lower than the 220,000 claims that economists had expected after extreme weather and strikes last month, and signals the robustness of [America’s labour market](#).

**Figure of the day:** 52%, the share of Ukrainians who support negotiating an end to the war as soon as possible—a sharp rise from 27% a year ago. [Read the full story](#).

# Trump's shadow over NATO



On Friday the leaders of NATO will meet in Montreal, in Canada, for their annual gathering. Over four days they will discuss how to make their troops better prepared for the battlefield, support for Ukraine, and new defence technology, including artificial intelligence.

But the [elephant in the room](#) will be what Donald Trump's comeback means for an institution which he makes no secret of disliking. One thing is certain: Europe and Canada are going to have to [spend more on defence](#). Mr Trump has threatened to cut American support for those who don't meet the alliance's target of spending 2% of GDP on defence.

Out of NATO's 32 members, 24 now meet or exceed that goal. But Mark Rutte, NATO's new boss, believes the 2% requirement is obsolete. He recently said that countries need to spend "much more" on defence. Nobody disagrees. The problem is finding the money.

## Bibi accused of war crimes



Israel's cabinet is expected to decide in the coming days whether to hire private contractors—basically mercenaries—to provide security for food convoys going into the Gaza Strip. The debate is timely: on Thursday the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for Binyamin Netanyahu, Israel's prime minister, and Yoav Gallant, the former defence minister. They are accused of bearing “criminal responsibility” for using “starvation as a method of warfare”, among other crimes.

Israel's leaders have certainly taken their time organising humanitarian supplies to the strip, which has been at war for more than 13 months. In recent weeks the situation has deteriorated drastically. The convoys allowed through crossings by Israel have been looted by criminal gangs. Mr Netanyahu and his defence minister [disagreed over a solution](#). Mr Gallant supported a ceasefire and a new Palestinian security force in Gaza. Mr Netanyahu, who refuses to end the war, fired him. Now they both have warrants against them.

# Germany's manufacturing malaise



Germany's Purchasing Managers' Index, a gauge of the state of the manufacturing and service sectors, is released on Friday. The figures will probably show that [Germany's economy is hardly growing](#)—and unlikely to regain its former vigour any time soon. Despite an unexpected 0.2% quarterly GDP increase from July to September, Germany's central bank said that the figures do not “give any cause” to expect a recovery.

The industrial sector is particularly weak. Higher energy prices, an ageing population, competition from Chinese manufacturers and the demands of the green transition are weighing heavily on its performance. Volkswagen, Europe's biggest carmaker and a big employer in Germany, is considering the closure of three factories and up to 30,000 job cuts.

A “debt brake”, which limits the federal structural deficit to 0.35% of GDP a year, restricts the government's ability to juice the economy through public investments. Without its reform, Europe's industrial powerhouse will continue to struggle.



# The WHO's fight against mpox



The World Health Organisation's emergency committee will meet on Friday to address the rapid rise of mpox cases. The [highly contagious disease](#) has spread across parts of Africa. Cases have also been seen in America, Australia, Britain and Germany.

Officials are concerned about the so-called “clade Ib” virus, which is even more contagious than other variants of this virus. The new strain has been spreading since August. It can be fatal in some cases. The WHO on Friday will decide whether the spread of mpox remains a global health emergency (it almost certainly will), and if it needs to adjust any measure in response to the new variant.

The WHO has allocated 899,000 vaccine doses to nine African countries hardest hit by the disease. Over 50,000 people have already been vaccinated in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Nigeria launched its vaccination campaign on Monday. Other countries, including the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, and Kenya, are set to receive doses in the coming weeks.

## Wicked hits the big screen



“Wicked”, based on a Tony-winning musical that opened in 2003, is released in cinemas on Friday. The first instalment of the two-part adaptation centres on two witches: Elphaba, played by Cynthia Erivo, who doesn’t fit in partly because she has green skin, and Glinda (Ariana Grande), a popularity-obsessed blonde. They become friends while studying in the magical Land of Oz. After an encounter with The Wizard of Oz (Jeff Goldblum), their paths diverge. Glinda later becomes the Good Witch of the North, Elphaba the Wicked Witch of the West.

Jon Chu, the director of “Crazy Rich Asians”, a flashy rom-com, spent \$145m on the reinvention. Some film-industry-watchers estimate it will take in \$100m on its opening weekend in America. Musicals, long derided as uncool, have recently [been given a boost](#) by “Barbie”, which wasn’t a musical but was partly inspired by the technicolour musicals of the mid-20th century. “Wicked” might benefit from the fact that escapism is popular in a worrisome world.

## 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.

**Friday:** For what words does the acronym SWALK stand?

**Thursday:** Which hit song by Pharrell Williams came from the soundtrack of the film "Despicable Me 2"?



# The winners of last week's crossword



Thank you to everyone who took part in our weekly crossword, published in the weekend edition of Espresso. The winners, chosen at random, were:

**Tom Kestner**, Tokyo, Japan

**Rebecca Clements**, Toronto, Canada

**Rico del Rosario**, San Juan City, Philippines

They all gave the correct answers of [Pete Hegseth](#), [Poland](#), [Earth](#), and [hubris](#). Check back tomorrow for this week's crossword.

**What do we live for, if it is not to make life  
less difficult to each other?**

*George Eliot*