

## Catch up: Trump's cabinet picks; markets continue to rally



**Donald Trump** picked **Elise Stefanik**, a congresswoman from New York, as his ambassador to the United Nations. A prominent critic of the UN, Ms Stefanik has been one of [Mr Trump's](#) most vocal supporters in Congress. Earlier the president-elect appointed **Tom Homan**, an immigration hard-liner, as his “border tsar”. Mr Homan served as the director of Immigration and Customs Enforcement during Mr Trump's first term.

Markets [continued to rally](#) following Mr Trump's election win. The dollar rose by 0.3% against a basket of currencies on Monday. Meanwhile **Bitcoin** surged past \$82,000 for the first time. The president-elect extolled Bitcoin throughout his campaign and is expected to roll out favourable crypto regulation.

The Kremlin denied claims that **Mr Trump** discussed the war in Ukraine with **Vladimir Putin** over the weekend. The *Washington Post* reported that Mr Trump advised Russia's president not to [escalate the conflict](#). Mr Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, called

the reports “false information” and said that his boss has no definite plans to speak to America’s president-elect.

**FTX**, a defunct crypto exchange, sued **Binance** and its former boss, Changpeng Zhao, for \$1.8bn. In 2021 the rival crypto-exchange sold a 20% stake to FTX. The company argues that Sam Bankman-Fried, the co-founder who is now in jail, made the transaction fraudulently, as FTX was insolvent at the time. The row will compound Mr Zhao’s troubles; he [pleaded guilty](#) to money-laundering last November.

**Ishiba Shigeru** was re-elected as **Japan’s** prime minister in a parliamentary vote. In October his party, the Liberal Democratic Party, and its coalition [lost their majority](#) for the first time since 2009. Mr Ishiba, who took over as leader in September, resisted calls to step down after the result. As the leader of a minority government, he will struggle to implement much-needed economic reforms.

**Britain’s** prime minister, Sir Keir Starmer, met France’s president, Emmanuel Macron, in Paris. The pair pledged “to support Ukraine unwaveringly”. The re-election of Mr Trump has cast [significant doubt](#) over America’s commitment to maintaining European security. The main purpose of the trip was to attend Armistice Day commemorations in the French capital.

**Haiti’s** ruling council fired Garry Conille, the prime minister, less than six months after he took office [amid a gang-led political crisis](#). Mr Conille and the executive council were brought in to restore order and help organise the country’s first presidential election since 2016. Alix Didier Fils-Aime, a businessman, was named as his replacement. Mr Conille said his ousting was illegal.

**Figure of the day:** 5%, the share of American businesses that say they are using generative AI to produce goods or services. [Read the full story](#).

## COP29 kicks off



Representatives from around the world will spend the next fortnight in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, for COP29, the annual United Nations climate summit. Some have dismissed this year's COP as merely a procedural meeting, partly owing to concerns over the appropriateness of the hosts, whose economy is almost entirely dependent on fossil-fuel production. But the decisions made at the summit will matter—not least because attendees must agree on a new target for the annual pot of cash that rich countries should provide poor ones to help them mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Other important issues are at stake, too. In 2022 COP delegates agreed that the most polluting countries would pay developing ones for the costs of climate change, setting up a so-called “[loss and damage](#)” fund. Yet the details of how this will work still need to be hammered out. Meanwhile all parties are also supposed to ratchet up their ambitions to cut emissions.

# Republicans prepare for a trifecta



During his first presidential term, Donald Trump sometimes struggled to impose his will. Paul Ryan and Mitch McConnell, then the top Republicans in each chamber of Congress, did not belong to Mr Trump's wing of the party. In the second half of his presidency, the Democratic Party controlled the House of Representatives.

Mr Trump's [second term](#) will begin with [fewer constraints](#). Some congressional races are yet to be called, but the Republicans look set to control [both chambers](#). The party will have 53 seats in the Senate should it flip one in Pennsylvania, as seems all but assured. That is a big enough majority to confirm federal judges and Mr Trump's cabinet appointments. The Republicans will probably eke out a narrow majority in the House, too. Its speaker, Mike Johnson, enjoys Mr Trump's support. None of this will stop legislation from becoming entangled in party factionalism. But it will give the president a firm basis from which to pursue his agenda.



## The Middle East's grim status quo



They can do little more than talk. Saudi Arabia has called a joint Arab-Islamic summit in Riyadh on Monday where leaders from dozens of countries will discuss the [worsening wars](#) in the Middle East. It follows a similar gabfest in 2023, which ended with a toothless communiqué. The sequel is unlikely to be more productive: Arab rulers have little leverage over the combatants.

On the ground, those wars rage on. Over the weekend Israel reportedly killed dozens of people in air strikes both in Jabalia, in northern Gaza, and in a village north of Beirut in Lebanon. There are growing fears that Iran might strike Israel in the coming days, perhaps via proxies in Iraq. Qatar has suspended its role as mediator between Israel and Hamas, saying neither side is serious. Diplomats doubt Joe Biden will make another push for a ceasefire during the waning days of his presidency. The chances of change are slim [at least until January](#).

# Japan's prime minister clings on



In Japan's [recent snap election](#), the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and its coalition lost their majority in parliament for the first time since 2009. That result has made the political fate of [Ishiba Shigeru](#), who became Japan's prime minister in October having won the LDP's leadership contest, far from certain. On Monday Japan's parliament convened for a special session, in which Mr Ishiba was re-elected after a run-off. It was the first such parliamentary vote in three decades. The Constitutional Democratic Party, the main opposition, failed to co-ordinate with smaller parties to form a unified front.

But despite the victory, Mr Ishiba's political standing remains weak. His cabinet approval rating has plummeted from 51% to 32% over the past month, according to Kyodo, a newswire. That will make it hard for him to implement urgent but unpopular policies, such as raising taxes in order to boost defence spending.

# China's flagging consumer sentiment



Not long ago Singles Day, the online-shopping holiday that culminates on November 11th each year, was one of the best gauges of China's rising consumer class. Alibaba and JD.com, the two main e-commerce groups behind the country's version of Black Friday, often gleefully pronounced their transaction figures once the event wrapped up. Usually sales far outstripped those of the year before.

Things have changed since China's covid years. Consumer sentiment slowed severely in 2022 and has [never fully recovered](#). Retail sales have been weak. Most companies no longer disclose their Singles Day transactions, probably because they have been shrinking. Hoping to revive their numbers, this year e-commerce groups started the extravaganza on October 14th, a week earlier than in 2023. A private research firm says gross merchandise value had reached 845bn yuan (\$119bn) by October 30th, which might be a promising sign. As the festival ends, analysts will be waiting to see if the companies themselves have anything to say.

## 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.

**Monday:** The life of which mediaeval Spanish warrior was made into a 1961 film, starring Charlton Heston?



**5%**

*The share of American businesses that say they are using generative AI to produce goods or services.*

*Read the full story.*

**We are what we pretend to be, so we must  
be careful about what we pretend to be.**

*Kurt Vonnegut*