

## Catch up: The campaigns hit the swing states; Israel launches raid into Syria



Donald Trump and Kamala Harris continued to criss-cross swing states on the last weekend before **America's presidential election** on Tuesday. **Mr Trump** began a rally in **Pennsylvania** asking the central question of his campaign: "Do you like it better now or four years ago?" He claimed that America was a "crooked country" and said he would usher in "a new golden age" if elected. Ms Harris headed to **Michigan**, where she started the day with a visit to a black church. While in the state she will hope to turn out the Democratic base—**her most likely paths** to the White House run the rust belt.

The **Israel Defence Forces** said that they carried out a raid in **Syria** and seized a Syrian with links to Iran. It is the first time in the current conflict in the Middle East that Israel has claimed to have sent troops across the border. The IDF said it had brought the man back to Israel to be questioned.

OPEC+ said that it would delay an increase in **oil output**, planned for December, by a month. The club of oil-producing countries had

been planning to increase supply, but weak demand, especially from China, and competition from other oil producers has kept prices low. A supply increase planned for October had already been delayed.

Angry crowds threw mud and shouted “murderer” at the king and queen of **Spain** during a visit to Paiporta, near Valencia, after the region was struck with heavy rain and [flash floods](#). At least 214 are dead and many more missing. Some 5,000 troops have been deployed to find survivors. It is the country’s biggest peacetime disaster-recovery operation ever.

Stanislav Secrieru, a national security adviser to **Moldova’s** president, accused Russia of “massive interference” in the country’s election, which is taking place on Sunday. His boss, Maia Sandu, faces Alexandr Stoianoglo, a [Russia-backed](#) former chief prosecutor. Mr Secrieru suggested that voters had been illegally bused in from Transdniestria, a pro-Russian breakaway region where there are no polling stations.

Bombers, sent by America to dissuade **Iran** from targeting its “personnel or interests in the region”, arrived in the Middle East. Ali Khamenei, Iran’s supreme leader, vowed on Saturday that Israel and America would receive a “crushing response to what they are doing to Iran”. His threat follows [Israeli air strikes](#) on Iran on October 26th, which reportedly killed four soldiers and damaged air-defence systems.

**Egypt’s** prime minister announced that the International Monetary Fund’s latest review of the country’s loan programme would begin on Tuesday. A decade of debt-fuelled spending pushed the country’s economy to the brink before it signed a [land-development deal](#) worth \$35bn with the United Arab Emirates in February. Shortly thereafter the IMF and the World Bank increased lending while the EU offered an aid package, delaying Egypt’s fiscal reckoning.

**Word of the week:** Galapagos syndrome, a term used to describe how many of the goods developed and sold in Japan do not get exported. [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.*

## Preparing for a Stop the Steal sequel



[Election day](#) in America is on Tuesday, but it may take days to know the result. In 2020 it took nearly four days until news outlets called the race for Joe Biden. Then Donald Trump alleged that it had been stolen and pressured state and local officials, as well as federal lawmakers, to reverse his defeat. If Mr Trump loses to Kamala Harris, expect a similar playbook: allegations of fraud, petitions for recounts and strong-arming of officials to withhold “certification”

Certification is the process by which local and state officials attest to the results’ accuracy. It is mandatory. State officeholders are unlikely to block certification should Mr Trump lose; no election deniers hold those jobs. But some rogue MAGA officials might do so at the county level. Courts would then intervene. If that scenario comes to pass, count on lawsuits until January 6th 2025, when Congress affirms the winner. The conspiracy theories and acrimony will persist beyond.

## All of America's other votes



The presidential race hogs the limelight. But Americans are also voting on nearly 150 ballot initiatives that could profoundly change policy in their states. More than \$1bn has been spent by supporters and opponents campaigning on them.

Ten states will vote on [abortion-related measures](#). Pro-abortion campaigners have been victorious in all such votes since *Roe v Wade*, which guaranteed access to the procedure, was overturned in 2022. Democrats hope referendums in the swing states of Arizona and Nevada may help lift Kamala Harris over Donald Trump. The outcome in Florida matters hugely for women in the South, where abortion is strictly regulated.

States will also decide on policies ranging from criminal justice to climate. [Two groups of initiatives](#) stand out: whether to tweak voting systems (by adopting ranked-choice voting), and whether to ban noncitizens from voting (which is already illegal in most elections). The referendums are a reminder that, no matter who wins the White House, changes in important areas of policy are increasingly driven by the states.



# Moldova's run-off for the presidency



Moldovans go to the polls on Sunday to choose their president in a second round of voting. The incumbent, [Maia Sandu](#), a pro-Western reformer and former economist at the World Bank, won 42% in the first round against ten other candidates. Most of them were backed by Russia, which was accused of an array of [dirty tricks](#) to defeat Ms Sandu, including disinformation, bribery and sabotage. She will face off against Alexandr Stoianoglo, a former chief prosecutor, who won 26%.

The first poll was held alongside a referendum on whether to enshrine Moldova's aspiration to join the European Union in its constitution. A wafer-thin majority voted in favour, with most of the country's Russian-speaking minority (of around 15% of the population) fiercely opposed to it. The run-off for the presidency may be close, with Russia determined to bolster Mr Stoianoglo. Even if Ms Sandu again prevails, a general election scheduled for next July will pose another tough challenge.

## A security scandal in Israel



An Israeli court is set to rule on Sunday whether to remove a gag order on the details of a scandal which has been roiling the political and security establishments. Despite the order, quite a lot has already been reported. They include the existence of an investigation into the apparent leaking of confidential documents to newspapers in Germany and Britain and the presence in sensitive meetings of a spokesperson employed by Binyamin Netanyahu who hadn't passed security vetting.

The prime minister, who might have gained most from the leaks, has sought to get ahead of the story by calling for the removal of the gag order. People close to him have started blaming “the deep state” for going after the prime minister instead of defence officials whom they accuse of leaking as well. In the background is growing tension between Mr Netanyahu and Israel's generals over who bears responsibility for the [failures](#) leading to Hamas's surprise attack on October 7th 2023. It is now bursting into the open.

# The cruelty of “Small Things Like These”

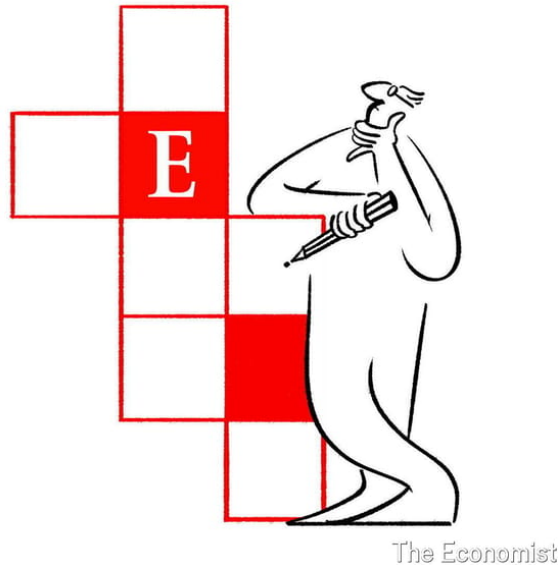


The film opens with the sound of church bells—for here, in New Ross, Ireland, in 1985, the Roman Catholic church is an integral part of the rhythms of everyday life. The winter has been bitterly cold and Bill Furlong (Cillian Murphy) is in demand as the town’s coal merchant. When he makes a delivery to the local convent, and finds a girl shivering in the storehouse, it prompts him to investigate the cruelties that are being inflicted there and to wrestle with his conscience.

“Small Things Like These”—released in Britain this week—is adapted from Claire Keegan’s prizewinning novella, and based on the true story of the church-run [Magdalene laundries](#) that forced “fallen women” to work for free. At least 10,000 women were confined in them between 1922 and 1996 (when the last laundry closed); some 1,600 died while inside. It is a grim episode in Ireland’s history. “Small Things Like These” shines a light on that darkness.



# Weekly crossword



Our crossword is designed for experienced cruciverbalists and newcomers alike. Both sets of clues give the same answers, all of which feature in articles in this week's edition of *The Economist*:

## Cryptic clues

- 1 down* Sculpting all hegemonic for artist (12)
- 1 across* Unknown among leaders of major economically independent country or state (6)
- 2 across* Little French one with odd aura on the moon (5)
- 3 across* Partially enjoys terrible seafood (6)

## Factual clues

- 1 down* Artistic beneficiary of the Medicis (12)
- 1 across* Where Netflix made its first foreign-language original (6)
- 2 across* A type of base that might be build underground in future, to shield them from radiation (5)
- 3 across* An indulgent food-stuff, normally slurped from its shell (6)

Email all four answers by 9am GMT on Monday to [crossword@economist.com](mailto:crossword@economist.com), along with your home city and country. 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:

**Jennifer Stapleton**, Cheltenham, England

**John-Mikal Stordal**, Oslo, Norway

**Greger Lindell**, Eemnes, Netherlands

They all gave the correct answers of Hawkeye Pierce, Steven Tyler, George Harrison, Garfield and Cleveland. The theme is 19th-century American presidents: Franklin Pierce, John Tyler, William and Benjamin Harrison, James Garfield and Grover Cleveland.

The questions were:

**Monday:** What was the name of the character played by Alan Alda in the long-running TV series "MASH"?

**Tuesday:** Steven Tallarico is the real name of which American rock singer, the lead vocalist of Aerosmith?

**Wednesday:** Which member of the Beatles was the youngest?

**Thursday:** Which cartoon cat was created by Jim Davis?

**Friday:** The baseball team of which city changed its name from the Indians to the Guardians?





# Galapagos syndrome

*A term used to describe how many of the goods developed and sold in Japan do not get exported.*

*Read the full story.*

**England and America are two countries  
separated by the same language.**

*George Bernard Shaw*