

Catch up: Floridians flee Hurricane Milton; Biden and Netanyahu speak



Hurricane Milton dipped to a [Category 3 storm](#) as it approached Florida's west coast. Around 28 Florida counties are under a [hurricane warning](#). Meteorologists expect that the storm will trigger severe thunderstorms and tornadoes. Ron DeSantis, the state's governor, has urged residents in its path to "get out now"; 5.5m people were issued with evacuation orders. President Joe Biden postponed visits to Angola and Germany. Some 5,000 members of the National Guard have been deployed, with another 3,000 standing by.

Mr Biden and Binyamin Netanyahu, **Israel's** prime minister, spoke by telephone, their first meeting since August. Yoav Gallant, Israel's defence minister, delayed a visit to the Pentagon in anticipation of Mr Netanyahu's call. On Wednesday he said that Israeli retaliation against **Iran's** [recent missile attack](#) would be "lethal, precise and especially surprising". Meanwhile, Israel and **Lebanon** continued to trade [missiles](#); ground troops reportedly clashed along the border.

North Korea announced that it would “permanently shut off and block” the border with **South Korea**. Its armed forces said that this was a “self-defensive measure” in response to the South’s “war exercises” and the presence of American nuclear “assets” in the region. On Tuesday South Korea’s defence minister suggested that they could strike sites where the North launches [trash balloons](#) from, “if circumstances warrant”.

GSK, a British drugmaker, agreed to pay up to \$2.2bn (£1.7bn) to settle around 80,000 cases in America related to **Zantac**, a heartburn medication. An independent laboratory filed a complaint against the company in 2019, alleging that the drug’s active ingredient, ranitidine, was carcinogenic; American regulators pulled ranitidine products from the market in 2020. GSK said the settlement was not an admission of liability.

The **Russian rouble** hit its weakest value since October 2023, at 97.20 against the dollar, according to data from the London Stock Exchange. This comes despite Russia selling off foreign exchange reserves to [support its currency](#). International sanctions and volatile oil prices continue to drag down the rouble.

Internet users in **Brazil** began regaining access to **X**, a social-media platform owned by Elon Musk. A [Supreme Court](#) judge ordered the site to shut down in August after it failed to respond to court orders and appoint a legal representative, prompting Mr Musk to accuse the country of [censorship](#). The ban was lifted on Tuesday after the platform ultimately complied with the court’s demands.

Paul Biya, Cameroon’s president, raised speculation about his health when he disappeared from public for over a month. But the country’s government insisted on Tuesday that the [world’s oldest leader](#) is not only alive, but in excellent form. The 91-year-old has missed several public appearances in recent weeks, including a UN General Assembly meeting in New York and a summit in Paris.

In the run-up to America's presidential election, we've launched [The US in brief](#)—a daily update to help you keep on top of the political stories that matter. [Sign up here](#) to receive it as a newsletter, each weekday, in your inbox.

Figure of the day: 1,400, the estimated number of children who have yet to be reunited with their families under Donald Trump's family-separation policy. [Read the full story.](#)

Florida braces for Hurricane Milton



Late on Wednesday [Hurricane Milton](#) is expected to make landfall in Florida as a Category 4 storm just south of Tampa—a region that is home to 3.3m people and has not had such a hit for a century. Milton is arriving just two weeks after Hurricane Helene thrashed the coastline, before becoming the [deadliest storm](#) in mainland America since Katrina in 2005.

Before Milton landed Florida's motorways were jammed and Joe Biden warned airlines against price-gouging as residents scrambled to travel north. Tampa's mayor had a dire message to locals choosing to stay in evacuation zones: "You're going to die." Florida's attorney-general, Ashley Moody, told those ignoring the orders to write their names on their arms in permanent ink.

Hotter oceans make storms more dangerous. Earlier this year experts predicted the [most active hurricane season ever](#). But the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the government's first responder, is strapped for cash. Officials say they have enough to cover "life-savings" needs from Helene and Milton. Funding recovery is another matter.

America's inflation worry



The world's biggest economy is motoring on, as last week's strong jobs data showed. But with that strength comes a nagging worry that inflation in America may prove stubborn. Over the past half year the pace of inflation has steadily slowed, giving the Federal Reserve the confidence to start cutting interest rates. Data for consumer prices in September, due on Thursday, will show whether this benign trend has continued.

The median forecast is for a 0.1% monthly rise in the headline price index, down a touch from August. Financial markets will, however, focus on the core price index, which strips out volatile food and energy costs. That is expected to have risen by 0.2% month on month, and some analysts think a tight housing-rental market may have nudged it even higher. Any evidence of persistent inflation will raise questions about how quickly the Fed can cut rates, unsettling investors around the world.

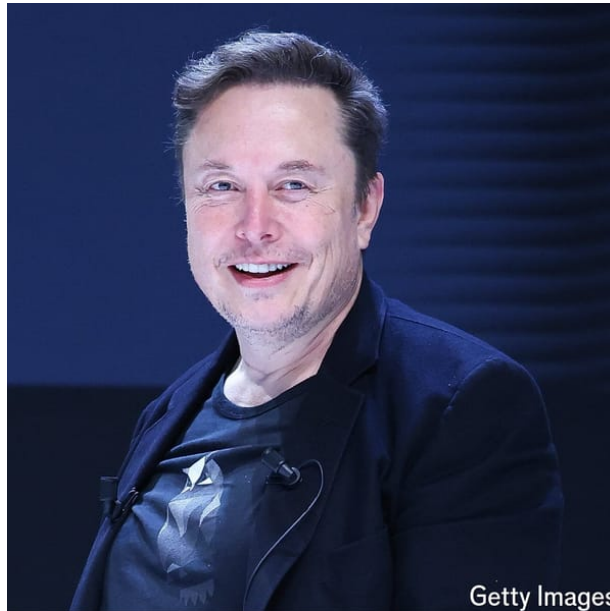
France needs to fix its finances



[Michel Barnier](#), France's new conservative prime minister, will present his budget for 2025 to his cabinet on Thursday. He is expected to unveil planned savings worth €60bn (\$66bn): two-thirds from spending cuts and one-third from tax increases. Among the proposed measures is a temporary super-tax on firms with a turnover exceeding €1bn and on individuals earning more than €250,000 a year.

Parliament must pass the budget by the end of the year. Mr Barnier's tax increases will make President Emmanuel Macron's centrists uneasy. But the opposition left and hard right will approve. Spending cuts will be much more difficult to get through. Yet France has little choice. The country is under scrutiny. Three ratings agencies are due soon to report on its creditworthiness. [Bond markets are wary](#). And France needs the European Commission's permission to postpone bringing down its budget deficit to the EU limit of 3% by 2029, instead of 2027.

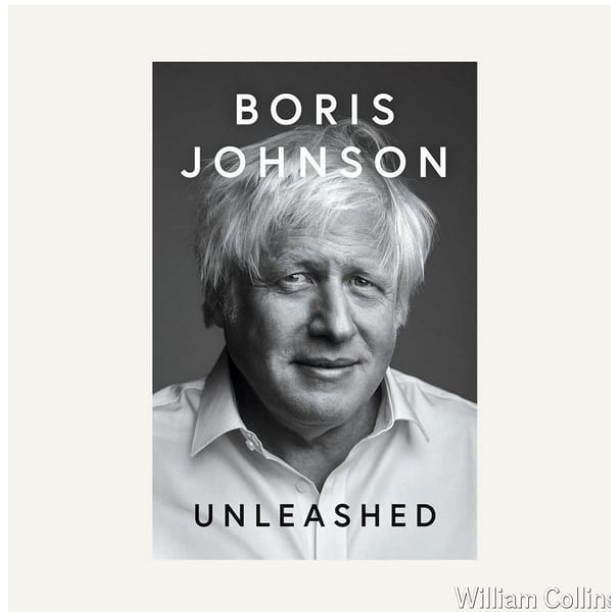
Tesla's robotaxi has arrived



Trying to hail a taxi can sometimes involve a long wait. So it is with [Tesla's](#) robotaxi. Elon Musk, the carmaker's boss, has been promising driverless cabs for years and once promised to have 1m on the roads by 2020. On Thursday, at last, he will reveal his plans for his Cybercab at an event at Warner Bros Studios in Hollywood.

The location suggests that there will be no shortage of pizazz. But what exactly the bumptious boss will disclose is uncertain. Alongside a purpose-built vehicle, Mr Musk may also reveal an app to order one up. He may also outline plans for trials of the new venture. Still, doubts remain over the maturity of Tesla's self-driving technology and whether it can catch up with the likes of Waymo, Baidu and other firms already testing and operating services. One thing is certain: Tesla fans will greet his announcement overenthusiastically.

How not to write a memoir, by Boris Johnson



“BIFF! POW! SOCKO!” Boris Johnson’s [punchy new memoir](#) goes on sale on Thursday. At over 700 pages long, it lands with a satisfying “thud” (or, to use a Borisism, a “THUDDEROO”) on the desk. And it is in many ways vintage Boris. It is rich in classical allusion (leaping onto a bus reminds him of Athena mounting Diomedes’s chariot); in puns (he claims to be able to tell his “SARS from his Ebola”); and, of course, in words such as “BIFF!”, “POW!” and, alas, “SOCKO!”.

But in another way it is entirely unexpected. Because it is really not very good at all. Far too much of it reads less like the work of a statesman than a schoolboy. This makes it worse than merely unamusing. It feels, for a former prime minister, embarrassingly inappropriate. David Cameron is a “girly swot”; a tricky moment is the “stickiest wicket”; he likens himself to “Evel Knievel”; and a chapter on international relations is titled “Gøing Gløbal”. Gød help us.

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

Thursday: Which was the only Genesis song to reach number 1 in the Billboard Hot 100 ranking?

Wednesday: In the early 1980s, which smokable and highly addictive drug saw an explosion in use in the US?

1,400

*The estimated number of children who have yet to be reunited with their families under Donald Trump's family-separation policy.
Read the full story.*

**History is a gallery of pictures in which
there are few originals and many copies.**

Alexis de Tocqueville