

Catch up: Hurricane Milton pummels Florida; Israel strikes Lebanon and Syria



Hurricane Milton made [landfall](#) as a category-three storm on Florida's west coast, with winds of 120mph. It has since been downgraded to a category-one storm but is still causing severe damage in the region. More than 3m homes and businesses have lost power. Residents of St. Petersburg, a city on Florida's gulf coast, have no drinking water. Several deaths have also been confirmed. Ron DeSantis, the state's governor, said it was too late to "evacuate safely" and urged people to "just hunker down".

Israel said it launched new strikes on southern **Lebanon** and **Syria** overnight, targeting Hizbullah's weapons storage facilities. According to the Israel Defence Forces, its attack "eliminated" two of the Iran-backed militia's commanders responsible for [missile attacks on Israel](#) on October 1st.

Uniqlo's parent company, Fast Retailing, announced record earnings for the financial year to August 2024. Net profit jumped 26% from the previous year to ¥371bn (\$2.5bn). Fast Retailing attributed the impressive results to diversified revenue streams, a

[tourism](#) boom in Japan and greater awareness of the [Uniqlo brand](#) worldwide.

GSK, a British [drugmaker](#), agreed to pay up to £1.7bn (\$2.2bn) 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.

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 to appoint a legal representative, prompting Mr Musk to accuse Brazil of [censorship](#). The ban was lifted on Tuesday after the platform complied with the court's demands.

Portugal plans to offer a series of tax breaks to young people throughout the first decade of their careers. The [centre-right minority government](#) is hoping the policy will stem the growing number of [young workers leaving](#) for better-paid jobs abroad. The proposal will need to be approved by parliament when it is unveiled as part of the budget on Thursday.

Global **wildlife** populations shrunk by around 73% between 1970 and 2020, according to a new report by the World Wide Fund for Nature. The environmental NGO blamed human activity for the “catastrophic” losses which are “putting many [ecosystems on the brink](#)”. [Elephants](#), pink river dolphins and hawksbill turtles are among the species whose populations have plummeted.

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.](#)

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.

Hurricane Milton slams into Florida

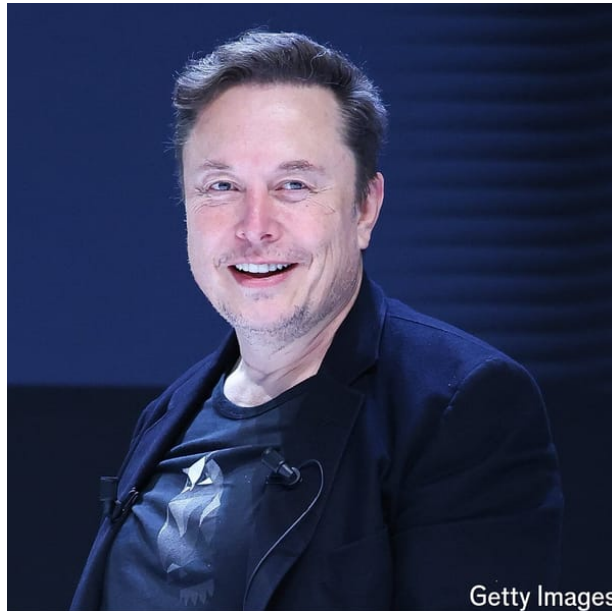


Late on Wednesday [Hurricane Milton](#) made landfall in Florida as a category 3 storm just south of Tampa—a region that is home to 3.3m people and has not had such a hit for a century. Milton is arriving just two weeks after Hurricane Helene thrashed the coastline, before becoming the [deadliest storm](#) 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.

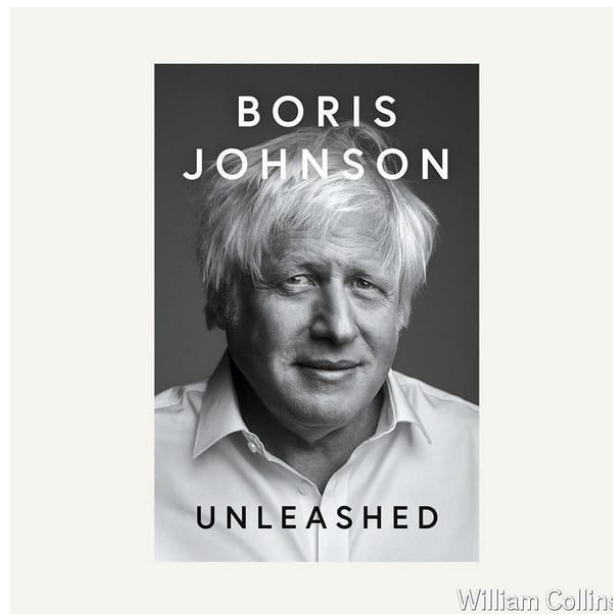
Tesla's robotaxi has arrived



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](#) went 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