

Catch up: British MPs vote for assisted dying; Syrian rebels attack Aleppo



British MPs passed a bill that would [legalise assisted dying](#) for terminally ill people in England and Wales. After a heated debate, 330 MPs voted in favour of the reform and 275 voted against it. Surveys suggest that a majority of Britons support the idea. The bill will face further scrutiny from lawmakers before it becomes law.

Rebels in **Syria** attacked Aleppo, the country's second-biggest city. More than 180 fighters have been killed and some 14,000 people have been forced to flee, according to reports. It is the first time Syria's opposition has captured territory from the regime in years. The fighters are part of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, an Islamist group with a stronghold in [Idlib](#), a north-western province.

Chad said it was leaving a defence pact with **France**, five years after signing a revised version of the deal because of growing threats from Islamic extremists. Some 1,000 French soldiers in Chad may soon be required to leave. The announcement is a blow to [Western influence in the Sahel](#) as other powers such as [Russia](#) grow their interests in the region.

The [euro zone's](#) annual **inflation rate** was 2.3% in November, up from 2% in October. It is the first time since August that inflation has exceeded the European Central Bank's target rate of 2%. Still, the relatively modest rise probably won't stop the ECB from cutting interest rates again at its monetary-policy meeting on December 12th.

France's president, Emmanuel Macron, visited **Notre Dame** in Paris [ahead of its official re-opening](#) on December 7th. In 2019 a fire tore through the gothic cathedral, destroying much of its wooden roof and toppling its 19th-century spire. France has restored the building and its interior at a cost of €700m (\$739m), much of which came from small donations.

Romania began a recount of ballots cast in the first round of its presidential election on November 24th. Calin Georgescu, a [hard-right candidate](#), unexpectedly topped the poll; Elena Lasconi, of the centre-right, came second. Romania's constitutional court ordered the recount after reports of irregularities, including cyber-attacks. It set a deadline for the recount to be completed by Sunday.

Shares in [HYBE](#), **South Korea's** biggest music company, plunged by 7% after NewJeans, a chart-topping K-pop girl group, ended their partnership with Ador, one of HYBE's affiliates. The artists announced the shock termination in response to Ador's refusal to reinstate Min Hee-jin, NewJeans's manager, who was accused of trying to take control of the sublabel. A legal battle will probably ensue.

Figure of the day: 2%, the proportion of the world's green-energy projects that have been built in Africa over the past decade. [Read the full story.](#)

A matter of life and death in Westminster



On Friday British MPs voted on the most consequential private member's bill (ie, one not introduced by government ministers) for more than 50 years. The proposal—put forward by [Kim Leadbeater](#), a Labour backbencher—seeks to [legalise assisted dying](#) for the terminally ill in England and Wales. Ahead of the vote, the result seemed highly uncertain. In the end, 330 MPs voted in favour of the bill, with 275 voting against it. The legislation will now face further scrutiny from lawmakers.

In a fierce public debate, critics of the bill seemed to have the momentum. The health secretary, Wes Streeting, argued that palliative care in the health system he runs is too poor to offer patients a genuine choice. Others questioned whether the bill's many safeguards—including that a High Court judge must approve requests to die—could protect vulnerable people from coercion. Still, at least two-thirds of the public continued to support the principle of assisted dying. Parliament has now signalled its intent to implement that reform.

The rise of social commerce



A festive shopping frenzy goes into top gear on Black Friday. Retailers will offer steep discounts to lure customers into their stores and online shops. But this year more customers will also be shopping for deals on social-media apps. Online purchases that originate on [social media](#) will reach \$72bn in America in 2024, according to eMarketer, a research firm, accounting for 6% of online sales. The figure is up from \$47bn in 2022, and is expected to reach \$100bn in 2026.

Still, Western consumers have been slower than their Chinese counterparts to embrace social media as a marketplace. Social commerce is expected to represent almost 30% of all online sales in the country this year. TikTok Shop, a feature on the Chinese-owned video-sharing app, is designed to encourage impulse shopping: users scroll through posts about products and buy items with just a few clicks. Some companies and brands balk at the feature's emphasis on selling products at deep discounts.

The fragile calm of Irish politics



Irish voters head to the polls on Friday. Surveys suggest that the two centre-right factions that have long dominated [Ireland's](#) politics will remain in power. Fine Gael, led by the prime minister, Simon Harris, has had a bad campaign. But it will probably return to office in coalition with its current partner, Fianna Fáil, and at least one other party. Should Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil achieve equal levels of support, they may repeat their current arrangement, taking turns with the premiership.

Two years ago the leftist Sinn Féin party, formerly the political wing of the Irish Republican Army, looked set to be involved in government. Discontent over a housing crisis and the cost of living pushed it to 37% in polls. But the party's support has since dropped: some believe it has not pandered sufficiently to anti-immigrant sentiment among working-class and rural voters. If that sentiment continues to grow, the next election might not be so smooth.

Talk of political murder in the Philippines



On Friday Sara Duterte, vice-president of the Philippines, defied a summons by police to answer questions about her apparent threat to kill members of the Marcos dynasty, to which the current president, Ferdinand Marcos, belongs. Detectives postponed the interrogation until December 11th.

Ms Duterte is the leading contender to succeed Mr Marcos in elections due in 2028. Yet she fears that the dynasty, [formerly her allies](#), will do anything to stop her, perhaps even kill her. Should that happen, she appeared to warn in an online press conference, she had arranged for the assassinations of Mr Marcos, his wife and the speaker of Congress, his cousin. She later denied making threats.

Ms Duterte's popularity is declining. Her hints of violence against the Marcoses may be a way of signalling to voters that she will be as tough as her father, Rodrigo Duterte. As president between 2016 and 2022 he gained popularity by overseeing a crackdown on drug-dealers in which thousands died.

The Beatles, so much younger than today



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When the Beatles arrived in America in early 1964 they were shadowed by Albert and David Maysles, siblings who pioneered the fly-on-the-wall documentary technique. The pair's footage, much of it rarely seen since, underpins "Beatles 64", the latest of a seemingly endless succession of documentaries about the British band.

The film, released on Disney+ on Friday, is a hotch-potch of what might have remained three separate concepts. The Maysleses' clips capture the band's cheek and charm as fan and media hysteria envelops them. Alongside those segments are recent interviews with Beatles fans and deftly choreographed strolls down memory lane with the surviving band members. The archive quotes from the Beatles are more interesting. A young Paul McCartney, caught up in the whirlwind of the group's rise, quips: "Culture? It's not culture! It's a good laugh." Decades later, everybody seems to take it a great deal more seriously.

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.

Friday: Which Chinese waterway, more than 1,000 miles long, has sections that were built as far back as the 5th century BC?

Thursday: Which Beatles album has a cover featuring a montage of people the group admired? (Hint: the full title is needed to guess the theme.)

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:

John Groves, Brockville, Canada

Nicky Patchett, Cape Town, South Africa

Tor Alloway, London, Britain

They all gave the correct answers of [Friedrich Merz](#), [France](#), [index](#) and [Zurich](#). Check back tomorrow for this week's crossword.

All that is not eternal is eternally out of date.

C.S. Lewis