

Catch up: Macron's next steps; Syrian rebels capture strategic city



In an address to the nation **Emmanuel Macron** vowed to remain France's president "until the very end" of his mandate in 2027 and said he would appoint [a new prime minister](#) "in the coming days". **Michel Barnier** resigned from the job after parliament [toppled his minority government](#) in a vote of no-confidence sparked by a [budget debacle](#). Mr Macron accused his political opponents of choosing "chaos".

Syrian rebels captured **Hama**, a city strategically located between Aleppo, Syria's second-largest city, and the capital, Damascus. After five days of fighting around the city, the Islamist militants entered from the east. The Syrian army confirmed that it had retreated, cementing the second major victory for the insurgents since the start of their [lightning advance](#) across the country's northwest last week.

A strong **earthquake**, with an initial magnitude of 7.0, struck off the coast of northern **California**. Tremors were felt in San Francisco, more than 200 miles south of the epicentre. Officials

issued a brief tsunami warning in parts of California and Oregon, but cancelled it after about an hour.

A federal judge rejected a plea deal that **Boeing** struck with **America's** justice department over its role in two 737 Max jet crashes in 2018 and 2019. The judge objected to the agreement's diversity requirements. Under the deal, the [aerospace company](#) and the government would be required to consider race when choosing a monitor who would ensure that Boeing complies with regulations in future.

Police are [hunting a gunman](#) who killed **Brian Thompson**, the boss of UnitedHealthcare, an American health insurer, in Midtown Manhattan. The words “deny”, “defend” and “depose”—possibly expressing anger at a denial of coverage by the health-insurance industry—were reportedly written on bullet casings found at the scene. [UnitedHealth Group](#), UnitedHealthcare's parent company, is the country's largest private health insurer.

Kenya's central bank cut its benchmark interest rate by three-quarters of a percentage point, to 11.25%. The larger-than-expected loosening reflects a shifting focus from fighting inflation—which stood at 2.8% in November, at the lower end of the bank's target range—to spurring [economic activity](#). Kenya's GDP grew at an annual rate of 4.8% in the first half of 2024, compared with 5.5% last year.

Muhammad became [Britain's most popular name](#) for boys, given to 4,661 babies in 2023, according to figures from the Office for National Statistics. Noah dropped to second place. For girls, Olivia was the most popular name for an eighth year running. Pop culture remained a source of inspiration for parents, giving Britain a growing number of Billies, Lanas, Mileys, Rihannas, Kendricks and Eltons.

Figure of the day: 71%, the increase in border-crossing attempts between 2018 and 2019, when Donald Trump was president. [Read the full story.](#)

Correction: In yesterday's Figure of the day, we misspelt Yoon Suk Yeol, the president of South Korea. Sorry for the error.

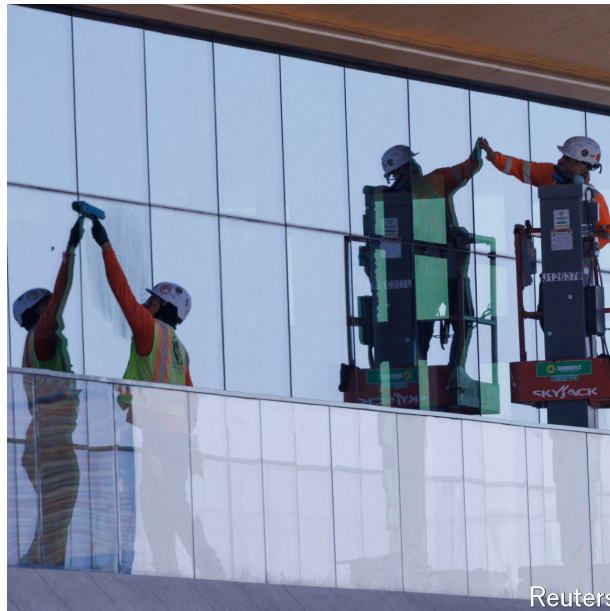
What next for South Korea?



Yoon Suk Yeol's unexpected declaration of martial law late on Tuesday—and his swift reversal the following morning—have [plunged South Korea into chaos](#) and tested the strength of its democracy. By sending the armed forces to seize the National Assembly, the president may have thought he could outmanoeuvre his opponents from the Democratic Party, which controls the legislature and had threatened investigations into the president and his wife. Instead, his failed gambit has almost certainly sealed his downfall.

Impeachment proceedings against Mr Yoon are set to begin on Saturday, unless he resigns first. The impeachment motion requires a two-thirds majority vote in parliament. Mr Yoon's party controls 108 seats, so just eight would need to defy him. An affirmative vote would trigger a trial by the constitutional court. The process could drag out for months, leaving the political system in limbo. Once new elections are held, the DP candidate will probably win. The drama has only just begun.

America's big jobs jump



At first November may look like a banner month for [America's job market](#). Analysts forecast that data released on Friday will show a gain of 210,000 jobs—a sharp rise from just 12,000 in October. But this will mainly reflect a return to normality. In October Hurricane Milton struck Florida and Boeing's workforce went on strike. In the following month people went back to work.

An average of the two months' data will give a more accurate picture of the jobs market. If the forecasts are correct, the economy added 110,000 jobs a month, which suggests that it is weakening slightly. Indeed, analysts think the unemployment rate ticked up to 4.2% last month, from 4.1%. That would probably confirm the Federal Reserve's inclination to cut interest rates by another quarter-point this month as it tries to guide [the economy](#) to a soft landing.

Putin's big bet



Vladimir Putin will be in an upbeat mood when he meets Alexander Lukashenko, the president of Belarus, in Minsk on Friday to sign a new security pact, the latest indication of their countries' ever-deepening union. Russian forces are making gains—albeit slow and costly ones—on multiple fronts in eastern Ukraine (in a war that [Belarus supports](#)). Meanwhile Russian missile and drone attacks on Ukrainian cities and infrastructure continue relentlessly. Mr Putin appears to be betting that convincing Donald Trump's incoming administration of his eventual victory, while undermining Ukrainian morale, will force a ceasefire on the Kremlin's terms.

Mr Putin's strategy, however, hinges on Ukraine being abandoned by its allies—a risky assumption. And Russia's problems are mounting. Its forces are sustaining nearly 2,000 casualties a day, putting their ability to maintain the current level of operational intensity in doubt. Russia's economy and society are [showing increasing signs of strain](#). But for Ukraine, European support is more critical than ever.

A dilemma for India's central bank



The Reserve Bank of India has left interest rates unchanged since February 2023. It has had little reason to make a change: [the economy was purring along](#) and inflation was easing. But ahead of its latest monetary-policy decision, due on Friday, India's central bank has faced a trickier choice.

Data published last week showed that India's year-on-year rate of [GDP growth](#) had fallen to 5.4% between July and September, a seven-quarter low. That has increased calls for the RBI to begin cutting rates. At the same time, rising inflation—the annual rate rose to 6.2% in October, the highest in more than a year—has strengthened arguments for a hike. Most economists still expect the RBI to leave rates unchanged for now. But it will not be idle. The central bank is expected to introduce measures to support growth, such as injecting liquidity into the banking system. The days of easy decisions may be over.

A G7 summit like no other



Seven world leaders meet to discuss a global crisis. They start to draft an anodyne statement to release to the world. Then things get weird. Onanistic “bog bodies”, mummified in mud in the Iron Age, rise up to spawn a new civilisation. “Rumours”, co-written and directed by Guy Maddin, a Canadian film-maker, opens in British cinemas on Friday. The film is completely bonkers. As the bawdy mud men stagger about, the president of the European Commission becomes enamoured with a car-sized brain.

Yet it is also a riotous political satire. The sultry leader of Canada (Roy Dupuis) gets it on with the German chancellor (Cate Blanchett). Italy’s prime minister (Rolando Ravello) admits his biggest regret is going to a party dressed as Mussolini. And the G7 gift-bags include a cyanide pill with IKEA-style instructions. Beneath the absurdity, Mr Maddin’s film is bracingly cynical.

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 state has borders with Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky and Illinois?

Thursday: The regime which ruled France from 1852 to 1870 is generally known by which title?

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:

Xiaochen Su, St. Paul's Bay, Malta

Timothy Hagan, Honolulu, Hawaii

Michael Williams, Penang, Malaysia

They all gave the correct answers of [Javier Milei](#), [Japan](#), [Earth](#) and [Idaho](#). Check back tomorrow for this week's crossword.

**If people never did silly things nothing
intelligent would ever get done.**

Ludwig Wittgenstein