

## Catch up: Trump nominates RFK Jr. for health secretary; Hyundai's new boss



**Donald Trump** nominated **Robert F. Kennedy junior**, a [vaccine-sceptic and conspiracy-theorist](#), to be America's health secretary. In a social-media post, Mr Trump accused America's "industrial food complex and drug companies" of peddling "disinformation". He vowed that Mr Kennedy would "[Make America Great and Healthy Again](#)". Mr Kennedy joined the Trump campaign in August, after dropping out as an independent presidential candidate.

The coalition led by Anura Kumara Dissanayake, **Sri Lanka's** new president, swept to victory in a snap general election. With counting nearly complete, the National People's Power, a leftist alliance, was on track to secure the 113 seats needed for a majority in parliament. Mr Dissanayake, who was [elected as president](#) in September, has promised to tackle corruption and revive economic growth.

**Hyundai Motors** appointed Jose Munoz as its new boss in a reshuffle that hopes to prepare the carmaker for "uncertainties in the global business environment". Mr Munoz currently heads the

South Korean firm's operations in North America. Hyundai is [bracing for tariffs](#) on cars imported to America, which was one of Mr Trump's campaign promises.

Officials in **Delhi** shut down primary schools as **smog** engulfed India's capital. On Thursday the amount of PM2.5 (fine particulate matter) in [Delhi's air](#) was more than 50 times above the level deemed safe by the World Health Organisation. A study published earlier this year found that around 7% of daily deaths in the city could be attributed to its filthy air.

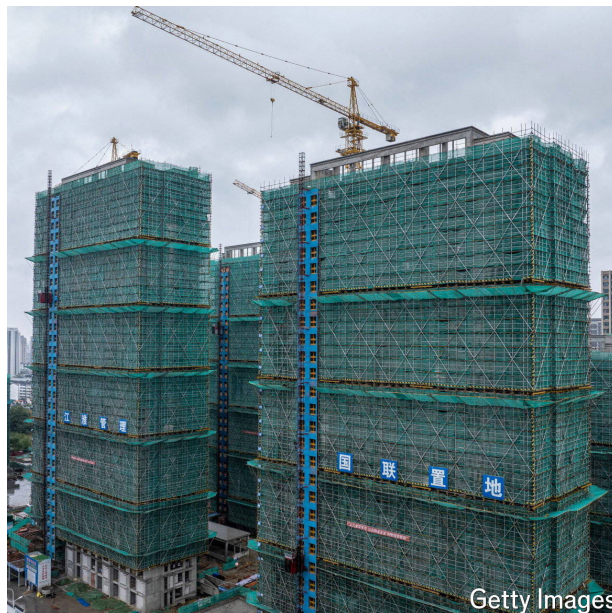
**America's** [competition watchdog](#) will soon launch an investigation into **Microsoft's** cloud-computing business. According to the *Financial Times*, the Federal Trade Commission will investigate if Microsoft imposed punitive licensing terms to prevent users moving to competitors. Separately, the European Union fined Meta €798m (\$842m) for antitrust violations, accusing the firm of unfairly linking Facebook, its social-media platform, with its classified-ad service, Marketplace.

**Israel** struck two residential buildings near **Damascus**, Syria's capital, killing at least 15 people, according to local media. Israel said the attacks targeted military sites and the headquarters of Islamic Jihad, a militant group. The country has carried out hundreds of strikes in Syria since the October 7th attacks. Israeli forces also said they hit 30 "terror targets" in [Lebanon](#) over the past two days.

**The Onion**, a [satirical media outlet](#), won a bankruptcy auction for Infowars, a website founded by **Alex Jones**, a right-wing conspiracy-theorist. Families of the Sandy Hook massacre supported the bid. In 2022 they [won a \\$1.4bn defamation lawsuit](#) against Mr Jones for spreading false claims that the school shooting was staged. The Onion will relaunch Infowars as a self-parody, mocking conspiracy theories.

**Figure of the day:** 2%, the rise in the price of shares in German companies since the start of 2022, compared with 16% for those in rich countries as a whole. [Read the full story.](#)

# A glimmer of hope for Chinese property?



Western analysts once described [Chinese property](#) as “the most important sector in the universe”. It accounted for over a fifth of China’s GDP by some measures and drove global demand for steel, glass, copper and other materials. But after peaking in mid-2021, property sales have shrunk by about half. The slump has hobbled property developers, dented home prices and damaged consumer confidence.

There are, however, glimmers of hope. Figures released on Friday showed that developers sold almost 76.5m square metres of new floorspace in October. Although that was less than a year earlier, the decline was small (1.6%) compared with September, when sales fell by 11%. The data suggest homebuyers are responding to the government’s recent efforts to reduce the cost of mortgages and relax restrictions on purchases. It is too soon to declare an end to China’s property slump: previous rallies have faded quickly and other indicators, such as property investment, are still deteriorating. But a stabilisation of sales would be an important development for this most important sector.

# Dim prospects for a Palestinian state



On the calendar, Friday is Palestine's independence day. The date is the anniversary of the declaration of statehood by Yasser Arafat, the then Palestinian leader, in 1988. But on the ground [statehood](#) has never seemed so far away. Up to 75,000 Palestinians in northern Gaza are under siege by Israel, short of food and medicine. Aid deliveries to Gaza are at their lowest level since the war began. A senior official at the United Nations calls the territory "unfit for human survival".

Meanwhile some Israeli politicians see Donald Trump's election as a chance to snuff out Palestinian aspirations in the West Bank. On Monday Bezalel Smotrich, the far-right finance minister, told a defence-ministry agency (which he also oversees) to prepare to annex Jewish settlements in the territory. He was no doubt heartened that Mr Trump tapped Mike Huckabee, a supporter of settlements, to be America's ambassador to Israel. It has been a bleak year for Palestinians; next year may be worse.



## Javier Milei embraces Trump



Javier Milei, Argentina's president, reportedly met Donald Trump at Mar-a-Lago, the president-elect's residence in Florida on the margins of a conservative fundraising event. Mr Milei was rooting for Mr Trump's victory; he sees in him [another right-wing firebrand](#). He also wants the president-elect to push the International Monetary Fund to lend more to Argentina to support his reforms. Mr Milei also met Elon Musk, now a central figure in Mr Trump's administration-in-waiting and a passionate advocate of Mr Milei's libertarian agenda. Mr Milei hopes Messrs Trump and Musk will encourage American investment in Argentina.

Yet the tariffs that Mr Trump wants to levy are at odds with Mr Milei's libertarian principles. Worse, they could hurt Argentine exports. Meanwhile a surging dollar, a real possibility under Mr Trump's proposed policies, could eventually create heavy pressure to devalue the peso, pushing up inflation in Argentina. That would undo some of Mr Milei's economic successes and damage him politically.

# Britain's economy faces a slowdown



After a strong first half of 2024, Britain's economy has slowed. Month-over-month GDP growth was flat in June and July, although it hit a decent rate of 0.2% in August. September's growth numbers will be released on Friday; economists are forecasting another 0.2% gain. But such growth is still weaker than during the spring, and a prolonged slump would be a big problem. It is difficult to imagine [wages](#) rising faster without a boost to the economy. Government borrowing—which the budget on October 30th raised by about 1% of GDP each year until 2030—will also be harder to repay if weak growth dampens tax receipts.

Monthly growth numbers are volatile and subject to revision. The Bank of England's recent interest-rate cuts may give growth a fillip in 2025. And the extra spending announced in the budget could also boost the economy. Still, another weak showing in Britain's GDP figures could start to look worryingly like a trend.

# Kid Dynamite v the Problem Child



Jake Paul wants to be taken seriously. The YouTuber is a big figure in the trend for “[influencer boxing](#)”, which typically sees amateurs face off against each other. Mr Paul—who went pro in 2020—has won all but one of his 11 professional bouts, but has faced criticism for picking weak opponents. So on Friday he will fight Mike Tyson, a 58-year-old former world heavyweight champion. Aged 27, Mr Paul has power but lacks technique. Bookies price him as the favourite—though were it not for the age gap, they would probably expect Mr Tyson to repeat his 30-second knock-out of Marvis Fraizer in 1986.

Beating the former champ twenty years after his retirement would win Mr Paul little respect from serious boxing fans. But the spectacle does prove that Mr Paul is a media heavyweight. Some 80,000 fans are expected to attend; Netflix will broadcast the fight. Reportedly, Mr Paul will get \$40m and Mr Tyson \$20m. Not bad for eight two-minute rounds.



## Daily quiz



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](mailto:QuizEspresso@economist.com). We'll pick randomly from those with the right answers and crown three winners on Saturday.

**Friday:** What meteorological feature did Adele set fire to and Prince describe as purple?

**Thursday:** Which is the largest island in the contiguous USA?

# 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:

Selina Ranzenberger, Engen, **Germany**

John Young, Lower Hutt, **New Zealand**

Kobchai Kingchatchaval , Bangkok, **Thailand**

They all gave the correct answers of [Donald Trump](#), [Delhi](#), [lipid](#), and [poppy](#). Check back tomorrow for this week's crossword.

**To create one's own world takes courage.**

*Georgia O'Keeffe*