

Catch up: Ukraine's growing arsenal; America vetoes UN ceasefire resolution



America agreed to supply **Ukraine** with anti-personnel landmines to slow its advance into the country. It had previously provided only mines that target armed vehicles, to reduce the [risk to civilians](#). But as Russia deploys more ground troops, Ukraine needs the weapons to “slow down that effort”, said Lloyd Austin, the defence secretary. The decision follows one on Sunday lifting restrictions on [long-range missiles](#).

America vetoed a UN resolution calling for a ceasefire between **Israel** and **Hamas**, on the basis that it did not include the release of Israeli hostages as a precondition. Khalil al-Hayya, [Hamas's](#) acting chief in Gaza, said there would be no hostage deal with Israel “without an end to the war”. Meanwhile American officials said that ceasefire negotiations between [Israel and Hizbullah](#) were progressing.

Donald Trump tapped **Matthew Whitaker** as America's next ambassador to NATO. Mr Whitaker served as the president-elect's acting attorney-general in his previous administration. If limited in

foreign experience, Mr Trump said his pick was a “strong warrior and loyal patriot”. Earlier this week the president-elect nominated transition co-chairs **Linda McMahon** to be education secretary and [Howard Lutnick](#) for commerce secretary.

Ford said it will reduce its European workforce by 14% by the end of 2027, blaming economic headwinds and [competition from China](#). The American carmaker has struggled in Europe for years. It cut production of some models and jobs last year. But demand for its electric cars has been further weakened as governments, including in Germany, curtailed EV subsidies.

Britain's inflation rate rose faster than expected, to 2.3% year on year in October, up from 1.7% in September. Energy prices helped drive the increase. The figures will influence the Bank of England's interest-rate decision next month. The bank lowered rates by a quarter point in November, to 4.75%, but said it favoured a “gradual” approach towards [further cuts](#).

Jimmy Lai testified for the first time in his long-running national-security trial in **Hong Kong**. Mr Lai, the territory's [most famous prisoner](#), is charged with sedition and colluding with foreign forces. The 76-year-old former media mogul, who has been kept in solitary confinement for nearly four years, said his newspapers always supported “movements for freedom”. On Tuesday judges [sentenced 45 pro-democracy activists](#).

Hundreds of workers at **Hennessy's** plant in France went on strike for a second day, protesting plans to relocate some bottling to China. The LVMH-owned firm is reportedly exploring options to circumvent steep Chinese tariffs on European brandy, imposed in retaliation to the European Union introducing tariffs of [up to 45.3% on Chinese EVs](#).

Figure of the day: \$50bn, Shein's forecast global revenue this year. But how Chinese is the fast-fashion giant? [Read the full story](#).

American firms in Mexico in the crosshairs



Deere, an American farm-equipment manufacturer, reports quarterly earnings for August-October on Thursday. Net income fell due to slowing sales during the previous three months. Donald Trump's re-election has further dimmed its prospects. The president-elect, unhappy at Deere's plans to build a factory in Mexico, has threatened to apply tariffs of 200% on any of its Mexican-made goods exported to America.

Mr Trump's threats could well come to nothing. During his first presidency he threatened many tariffs that never came to pass. And [Mexico is an important partner](#) in America's trade war with China because it provides an alternate location for American companies to build factories.

Still, companies and Mexico's government are worried. Tariffs would lead to higher costs; the threat of them causes uncertainty. Some American companies are pausing plans to invest south of the border. Deere, however, says it will proceed. Who will blink first?

Italy's migration quagmire

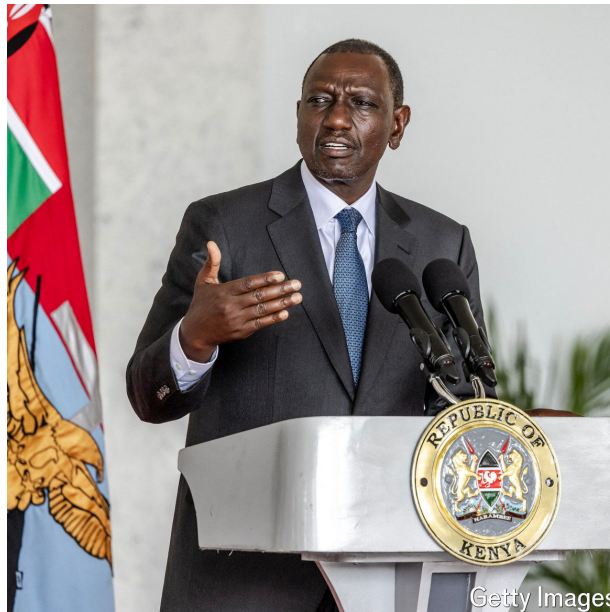


On Thursday Italy's lower house will discuss a proposal by Giorgia Meloni's conservative government to tackle judicial roadblocks to its plan to send asylum seekers to Albania. The discussion follows a ruling last week by judges in Rome—upholding a previous decision—that [migrants sent to Albania](#), a non-EU country, must be returned to Italy.

Elon Musk, the American billionaire now best friends with Donald Trump, wrote on X that the judges “need to go”. The government now proposes to bypass them. Dubbed the “Musk amendment” by the Italian opposition, the new measure would divert legal challenges from lower courts to the appeals court. Appeals judges say they will be overburdened; the government disagrees.

The controversy highlights the challenges of balancing national sovereignty and international migration law. Similar struggles have entangled other European leaders, including Rishi Sunak when he was Britain's prime minister. Whether Ms Meloni's government can avoid a legal quagmire remains to be seen. For now, expect sparks to fly.

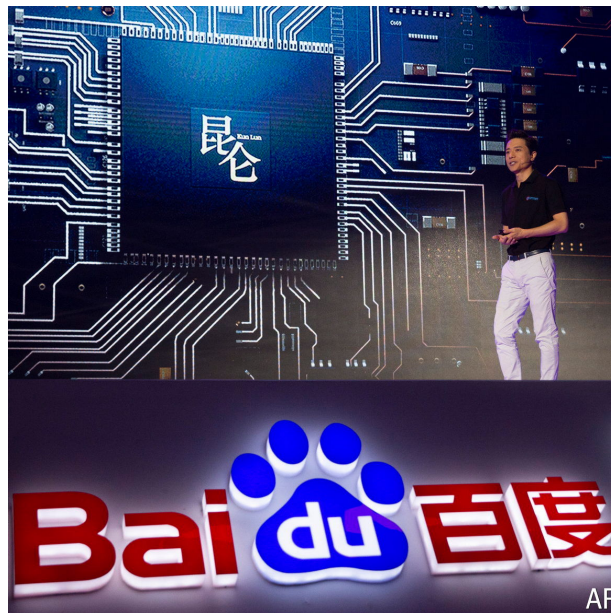
Kenya's embattled president walks a tightrope



Kenya's president, William Ruto, will deliver his annual state of the nation address to parliament on Thursday. Despite his unpopularity, his position has been bolstered by recent events. Mass protests, which began over the summer as a revolt against tax rises, and quickly morphed into a [campaign to oust him](#), have quietened. By giving cabinet jobs to several opposition members, including allies of Raila Odinga, his main rival, he has mollified some of his more powerful critics. And last month the IMF approved a \$606m loan tranche, which will help ease fiscal pressures.

But the risk of a default on Kenya's \$80bn public debt—equivalent to 68% of GDP—has been delayed, not resolved. To fill the fiscal hole, Mr Ruto needs to raise taxes. Thus, elements of the [controversial finance bill](#) which sparked the protests (and was subsequently scrapped) will inevitably return to parliament. Mr Ruto's already low approval ratings may fall further still.

Baidu's rollout of AI



Baidu, a Chinese internet giant, will announce third-quarter earnings on Thursday. Robin Li, its boss, hopes that its newly unveiled “smart glasses” will help investors see the company in a new light. Baidu is betting that they will do better than their rival, Meta’s smart glasses, released in 2021. The big difference is that Baidu’s glasses are infused with artificial intelligence. They are equipped with cameras and linked to the company’s generative AI platform, [Ernie](#), allowing users to give voice commands.

The new smart glasses showcase Mr Li’s determination to unlock any potential AI application. In recent years, Baidu has struggled to transition from China’s leading search engine to a frontrunner in AI. Ernie is heavily constrained by China’s strict censorship laws, limiting its potential. Meanwhile, its [driverless taxi service](#) has seen only modest success. Whether the smart glasses can succeed where other projects have stumbled will be a key test of Baidu’s AI ambitions—and investors’ faith in its future.

No quick vins in wine country



Fireworks, music and festivals will welcome France's first wines of the season—known as *Beaujolais nouveau*—on Thursday. The early-ferment offers a glimpse of this year's harvest. It may be a disappointing one. The soggiest September in 25 years has hit France's prized wine regions of [Champagne](#), Beaujolais and neighbouring Burgundy particularly hard. Germany and Portugal will also see a slump, which will not be offset by higher yields from the continent's two largest producers, Italy and Spain. Europe will make 3% less wine this year than in 2023, according to Copa Cogeca, a farm lobby.

Supply chain disruptions and high energy costs have pushed up prices and hurt sales, especially in export markets. And high prices have dampened sales. Last year global [wine consumption fell](#) to its lowest level since 1996, according to the International Organisation for Vine and Wine. The World Spirits Alliance predicts that spirit sales could overtake wine in 2024 as drinkers favour fewer, if [fancier, drinks](#).

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 BST on Friday to QuizEspresso@economist.com. We'll pick randomly from those with the right answers and crown three winners on Saturday.

Thursday: Which hit song by Pharrell Williams came from the soundtrack of the film “Despicable Me 2”?

Wednesday: Which novel by Alice Sebold is narrated by a 14-year-old girl who is murdered in the first chapter?

**Fame is something which must be won;
honour is something which must not be
lost.**

Arthur Schopenhauer