

A calamitous week for Truss, Putin's reality check and why streaming makes us lazy listeners

Two weeks ago Britain's new chancellor, Kwasi Kwarteng, was in the pub with his advisers, celebrating the delivery of his flagship policy. His radical "mini-budget", hatched with prime minister Liz Truss, was aimed at turbocharging the British economy by cutting taxes for the rich and borrowing to pay for them. Now the government's new economic agenda is in tatters after a fortnight that saw sterling sink to a record low against the dollar, soaring inflation, emergency Bank of England market intervention and a 33-point lead for Labour in the polls.

Before a stunned Tory party conference and a threatened mutiny of MPs, Truss and Kwarteng were forced to ditch a tax cut for higher earners and bring forward plans in order to pacify financial markets. How did they get it so wrong? Heather Stewart, Peter Walker and Gaby Hinsliff report on one of the most catastrophic weeks suffered by any British government.

The big story [Page 10](#) →

After a week of hastily arranged sham "referendums", Vladimir Putin announced the annexation of four regions of Ukraine, but his grip on the

war - and perhaps on power in Moscow - is looking increasingly tenuous. Amid more sweeping Ukrainian gains in regions the president had tried to claim for Russia, the realities of his disastrous special military operation are proving increasingly hard to conceal from Russia's people, as Andrew Roth, Shaun Walker and Luke Harding explain.

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In Brazil, hopes were dashed that Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva would oust the populist Jair Bolsonaro in the first round of the presidential election and the outcome now rests on a run-off later this month. Tom Phillips reports from São Paulo on a crucial contest where the result could go either way.

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Much dissected by free speech advocates, civil rights supporters and firearms enthusiasts, the United States constitution has proved remarkably robust over its 233 years. But what happened when AJ Jacobs tried to live by America's founding text as literally as possible? Carrying a musket was just the beginning ...

Party like it's 1789 [Page 40](#) →

From Spotify to Apple Music, streaming services have transformed the way we listen to music. But while these apps can dish up almost limitless musical choice, their algorithms often direct us back towards the same tracks, argues the Guardian's chief music critic Alexis Petridis. How can we become less lazy listeners and rekindle our appetite for musical discovery?

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