

Catch up: China vows to “fight to the end” on tariffs; Asian markets rebound



China vowed to “fight to the end” after **President Donald Trump** threatened an additional levy of 50% on Chinese goods. Mr Trump said he would impose the new measures unless China withdrew its [retaliatory tariffs](#) of 34% on American imports, which are due to take effect on Thursday. Meanwhile, Ursula von der Leyen, the president of the European Commission, said that the EU could scrap tariffs on American industrial goods if Mr Trump dropped the equivalent levies too.

Asian **stockmarkets** rebounded on Tuesday following steep declines the previous day. Japan led the surge, with the Nikkei and Topix increasing by 6.8% and 7.1% respectively. Indices in China, Hong Kong, and South Korea also rose. Earlier, after a volatile day of trading, America’s S&P 500 fell by 0.2% at market close on Monday.

Volodymyr Zelensky acknowledged for the first time that **Ukrainian** troops were active in the **Russian** region of Belgorod. The Ukrainian president said the “main objective” of operations in

Belgorod was to “ease the pressure” on the front line. Ukrainian forces have also been present in nearby Kursk, where they are holding a small area after a big offensive last year.

Mr Trump said that **America** will hold “high-level” nuclear talks with **Iran** on Saturday. The countries have not directly communicated since 2018, when Mr Trump pulled America out of a multilateral deal with Iran. He warned the country of “great danger” if the talks fail. The surprise announcement came during a meeting at the White House with [Binyamin Netanyahu](#), Israel’s prime minister.

The president also ordered a review of the potential purchase of **US Steel** by Japan’s **Nippon Steel** to determine whether further action “may be appropriate”. Both firms sued America’s government in January after Joe Biden [blocked the \\$14bn acquisition](#) on [national-security](#) grounds. Mr Trump had also opposed the purchase, but recently proposed that Nippon invest in US Steel.

Europe sweltered through its hottest March on record, according to Copernicus, a climate-monitoring agency. It was also both the “driest” and “wettest” month in half a century in different countries, thanks to heatwaves and torrential rains. Globally, average temperatures were 1.6°C hotter than pre-industrial times, making it the second-warmest March ever—just behind last year’s record.

A **Belgian prince** lost his attempt to claim **social-security benefits** on top of his annual royal allowance of €388,000 (\$425,000). Prince Laurent insisted his case against the Belgium state was about “principle”, arguing that his royal duties along with his charity work entitled him to benefits—much like a “migrant”. A court in Brussels dismissed the claim as “unfounded”.

Figure of the day: 55,000, the number of containers sent from China to Europe via the Caspian sea in 2024—up from around

25,000 in 2021. [Read the full story.](#)

Donald Trump has begun his second term at a blistering pace. Keep up with his executive orders, legal challenges against them and what Americans think about it all on [our presidential tracker](#).

The fallout from Trump's tariffs



Donald Trump's trade war has caused [global markets to nosedive](#) and sparked [fears of a global recession](#). Investors are panicking as “reciprocal” tariffs—which in fact seem designed not to match levies on American goods but to punish countries that sell to American consumers—are to go into force on April 9th. A baseline tax of 10% on almost all imports already went into effect over the weekend. Lawsuits have been filed to try to stop Mr Trump's tariff blitz.

Team Trump is under pressure to explain its plans. Jamieson Greer, Mr Trump's trade representative, will spend Tuesday and Wednesday testifying before Congress. The president has intimated that he is open to doing deals with countries affected by the levies. But it is unclear what concessions would satisfy him. Representatives may be conscious that they could put a stop to all of this. The constitution grants Congress, not the president, power over tariffs. They delegated it to him—and could take it back.

Japan and NATO get closer



“Ukraine today could be East Asia tomorrow,” warned Kishida Fumio, Japan’s then prime minister, in 2022. The fear was that Russia’s invasion could embolden China to conquer Taiwan. Breaking with a decades-long tradition of pacifism, that year Mr Kishida became the first Japanese leader to attend a NATO summit. He hosted the alliance’s then secretary-general in Tokyo in 2023. On Tuesday Mark Rutte, the current secretary-general, will arrive in Japan to visit a naval base and a defence factory. He will meet [Ishiba Shigeru](#), Mr Kishida’s successor, on Wednesday.

Under a partnership agreement signed in 2023, Japan has been working with NATO in various fields, including cyber-security, information-sharing and maritime security. The aim is to counter a growing threat from autocratic regimes. Donald Trump’s threats to weaken [America’s security commitments](#) add urgency. Both Japan—and NATO—may hedge against that by drawing closer together.

America's shadow over Australia's election



The leaders of Australia's [two largest parties](#) meet on Tuesday for their first election debate. A general election is scheduled for May 3rd. The centre-left Labor prime minister, Anthony Albanese, will try to convince Australians that their lives are improving after the country recorded one of the sharpest drops in living standards across the OECD in the five years since 2019. His combative Liberal rival, Peter Dutton, paints a grim picture of the country. He will rage against high energy prices and promise cheaper fuel costs. But he, like Mr Albanese, offers no real plan to lift low growth and productivity.

Donald Trump's policies hang over the election. Mr Dutton blames Mr Albanese for failing to negotiate a tariff deal. Labor points out that Mr Dutton's [complaints about "woke agendas"](#) and promises (now scrapped) to cut public-service jobs resemble Mr Trump's rhetoric. After sliding in polls, Labor is moving back up. Still, neither party looks popular enough to win a majority in the lower house of Parliament.

Death penalty: more executions, but fewer executioners



On Tuesday Amnesty International, a human-rights group, released its global report on the death penalty in 2024. Executions surged by 32% from the previous year to 1,518, the highest figure in a decade. But they occurred in just 15 countries, the fewest on record. Three nations accounted for 91% of all known killings. Iran executed 972 people, many of them opponents of the regime. Saudi Arabia doubled its number to 345. Iraq quadrupled executions to 63. [China](#), which is thought to execute thousands secretly, is excluded from the count. Executions for drug-related crimes constituted 42% of the global total, even though, under international law, states may impose the death penalty only on people who intentionally commit murder.

But more countries are [abolishing capital punishment](#). Zimbabwe did so in December 2024. Two-thirds of United Nations members now support a global moratorium. And in September Japan [overturned the conviction](#) of Hakamada Iwao, who had spent nearly half a century on death row—the longest ever in the world.

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.

Tuesday: Which singer won Grammy awards for “The Rose” and “Wind Beneath My Wings”?

Monday: Who won an Oscar for appearing in “The Hours” and Emmys for her roles as producer and actress in “Big Little Lies”?

**Lives of great men all remind us greatness
takes no easy way. All the heroes of
tomorrow are the heretics of today.**

Yip Harburg