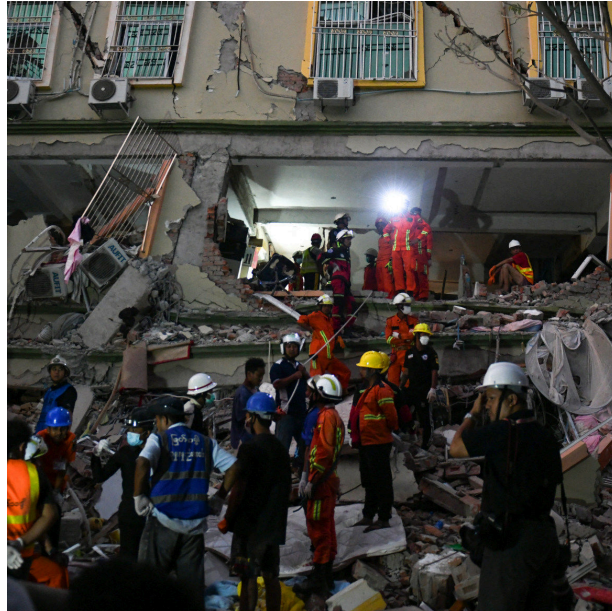


Catch up: air strikes in Myanmar during earthquake rescue; Syria's new government



Myanmar's junta continued air strikes on rebel groups across the country, even as the UN and neighbouring countries called for a ceasefire to allow the passage of humanitarian aid following [Friday's 7.7-magnitude earthquake](#). The junta said the death toll from the disaster had reached around 1,700 and appealed for international help. At least 18 people also died in neighbouring Thailand.

A transitional government in **Syria** was sworn in, with [President Ahmed al-Sharaa](#) appointing 23 people to his cabinet. The appointees, while loyal to the [former al-Qaeda leader turned statesman](#), included those from different religious sects, ethnic groups and a woman. Mr al-Sharaa became the country's de facto ruler in January, following the overthrow of Bashar al-Assad, Syria's long-time dictator.

Donald Trump said he would impose tariffs of 25-50% on countries that buy Russian oil if the Kremlin does not co-operate with his attempts to end the war in Ukraine. America's president added he was "pissed off" at **Vladimir Putin** for suggesting on Friday that a "transitional administration" be established in Ukraine. Mr Trump has generally struck a [friendlier tone towards Russia](#) since returning to office.

Israel's prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, vowed to maintain his country's offensive against Hamas, claiming that "cracks" were appearing in the militant group's negotiating position. He called on Hamas to disarm and said [Israel](#) would implement Mr Trump's "voluntary migration plan", which would essentially evict Palestinians from Gaza. On Saturday Hamas said it had agreed to a ceasefire proposal brought by Egyptian mediators.

America's defence secretary, Pete Hegseth, said the country's armed forces would develop a "war-fighting" command base in Japan to bolster deterrence against China in the Indo-Pacific. During a visit to Tokyo, Mr Hegseth emphasised the importance of America's alliance with Japan and said that Donald Trump's [America First](#) policy would not undermine military support for allies in the region.

Meanwhile **Japan, South Korea** and **China** agreed to "closely co-operate" and pursue "high-level" trade talks during a meeting between their trade ministers in Seoul. In a joint statement the ministers said trilateral economic collaboration was necessary "to effectively address emerging challenges", a probable reference to [Mr Trump's tariffs](#). It was the first such economic meeting in five years.

The head of the **Rapid Support Forces**, a Sudanese rebel group, vowed to continue its war against **Sudan's** national army, which began in 2023, despite [losing control of Khartoum](#), the capital. Muhammad Hamdan Dagalo, also known as Hemedti, admitted his

forces had withdrawn from the city in recent days but said they would return “more powerful”. The national army also suggested it would keep fighting.

Figure of the day: 18%, the decline in the budget for America’s Bureau of Labour Statistics in real terms over the past 15 years.

[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](#).

A momentous decision for France's hard-right leader



Marine Le Pen's political future hangs in the balance. On Monday judges at the criminal court in Paris will hand down their verdict to the leader of France's hard-right National Rally (RN), along with 24 of her party colleagues. The [trial](#) concerns the misuse of European Parliament funds, and the public prosecutors have asked for Ms Le Pen to be barred from running for public office for five years with immediate effect. She has denied any wrongdoing.

If judges do rule Ms Le Pen ineligible immediately, she can appeal. But such a sentence would block her bid for the presidency in 2027. That would upend French politics and elicit accusations of a stitch-up. Ms Le Pen is well ahead in early opinion polls for the first round of voting; Emmanuel Macron, the president, cannot run again. It would also throw the RN into turmoil. Ms Le Pen's protégé, Jordan Bardella, is only 29 years old. Even political centrists, whose own prospects would improve, might find such a sentence hard to defend.

Counting the cost of tariffs in China



Many of America's trading partners are waiting anxiously to find out what President Donald Trump has in store for them when he announces "reciprocal" tariffs on Wednesday. But for China, the new trade war has already begun. America added a tariff of 10% on Chinese goods on February 4th and doubled that figure a month later.

Is the damage starting to show? Not according to the latest surveys of China's purchasing managers, released on Monday. They showed a modest improvement in March, compared with the previous month, across manufacturing, services and construction. New export orders declined for manufacturers, but at a gentler pace than previously. Other parts of China's vast economy also strengthened. Infrastructure investment, for example, helped to boost construction. And services remain relatively insulated from external troubles. Compared with some of America's friends and allies, China is less surprised by the trade war, and may be less damaged by it.

Pakistan's expulsion of Afghan nationals



In 2023 Pakistan's government said all irregular migrants and refugees [would have to leave](#) the country, or risk expulsion. The plan largely affected Afghan nationals, around 4m of whom were living in Pakistan, many without the right papers. According to Amnesty International, Pakistan forcibly repatriated around 850,000 Afghans between September 2023 and February 2025. The campaign shows little sign of slowing. Monday is a deadline for Afghans to voluntarily leave the country, though the government has not released the details of its policy. (Some reports limit the deadline's scope to those living in Islamabad, the capital, and nearby Rawalpindi.)

Pakistan claims deportations are needed to keep [crime and terrorism](#) under control. But many Afghan refugees risk persecution by the Taliban government at home. The order to leave will affect even those Afghans waiting to be resettled in third countries. That could include some 15,000 people previously granted asylum by America but left in limbo by Donald Trump's pause of resettlement programmes.

The shadow over Iran



Is it still a holiday with nothing to celebrate? On Monday Iran marks “Republic Day”, which commemorates the 1979 referendum in favour of an Islamic republic. Now, 46 years later, the republic is struggling. On March 25th Iran’s currency, the rial, sank below 1m to the dollar, a symbolic threshold and an all-time low. Annual inflation was above 35% in February. A decades-long strategy of arming proxy militias has misfired: Israel has mauled several of Iran’s allies.

Looming over all this is Donald Trump. On Sunday America’s president threatened bombing “the likes of which they have never seen before” and secondary tariffs unless Iran quickly comes to an agreement with his administration over its nuclear programme. But the country said last week that it would only negotiate indirectly, rather than face-to-face. That makes a swift deal unlikely.

A starry revival of “Glengarry Glen Ross”



Few playwrights have captured the ruthlessness of American businessmen like David Mamet—or left such a mark on the industry they portrayed. His 1983 play, “Glengarry Glen Ross”, follows four desperate estate agents and their craven attempts to swindle renters in Chicago. Mr Mamet adapted it into an Oscar-nominated film in 1992. Alec Baldwin, playing a hard-charging salesman in a role created for the movie, exhorts his colleagues to practice their ABCs: “Always be closing!” The line became synonymous with aggressive dealmaking.

On Monday the pitch-black comedy returns to Broadway. The revival features Bill Burr, Bob Odenkirk and Kieran Culkin, who won an Academy Award for “[A Real Pain](#)” earlier this month. The play—which critiques unbridled capitalism and toxic masculinity—remains fresh and relevant, even were it not for the starry cast. But the hot talent will surely help close [ticket sales](#): a weeknight seat in the back row of the mezzanine will run you \$699 (before fees).

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.

Monday: Which acting twins later set up a fashion studio called “The Row”?

Better to be without logic than without feeling.

Charlotte Brontë