

Catch up: Myanmar's search for survivors; Syria's new government



Rescue teams in **Myanmar** continued to search for survivors following Friday's [7.7-magnitude earthquake](#). The United Nations said efforts were being hampered by a severe lack of medical supplies. The country's junta said the death toll had reached nearly 1,650, but even as it appealed for humanitarian aid, it resumed air strikes against rebels in parts of the country. The UN called that "completely outrageous".

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.

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 Muhammad Hamdan Dagalo, also known as Hemedti, admitted his forces had withdrawn from the city in recent days but said they would return “more powerful”.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.

Hamas reportedly agreed to a ceasefire proposal brought by Egyptian mediators, including hostage releases. **Israel** said it submitted a counter-offer. Earlier the [Israel Defence Forces](#) began ground operations in a neighbourhood in Rafah “to expand the security zone” in southern Gaza. Palestinians in the enclave will observe the first day of Eid al-Fitr, marking the end of Ramadan, on Sunday.

A judge in **Wisconsin** allowed [Elon Musk](#) to proceed with his plan to give \$1m to two people who sign his petition opposing “activist” judges. Wisconsin's attorney-general had sued to block the prize ahead of the state's supreme-court election on Tuesday. He has appealed the ruling. The race for the judicial seat, currently held by a liberal, has broken spending records.

Word of the week: *Hatarakanai ojisan*, a Japanese term meaning “older men who don’t work”, used by younger employees to describe senior colleagues who contribute little. [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.](#)

Trump's crackdown on campus protests



In recent weeks the Trump administration has [detained several people](#) who took part in pro-Palestinian demonstrations at American universities last year. It is trying to deport them, even though they hold green cards or student visas. Videos of the arrests, by plain-clothes immigration officers, have shocked free-speech advocates. But the administration broadcast its plans in January, when Donald Trump signed an executive order to combat antisemitism. The White House warned “ Hamas sympathisers” that “we will find you, and we will deport you.”

On Sunday the heads of executive agencies are due to report on the actions they have taken to comply. The Department of Education, accusing Columbia University of failing to protect civil rights, cancelled \$400m in federal grants to the school. (Columbia agreed to the government’s demands in a bid to regain the funds.) To deport legal residents, the administration is relying on an obscure law that allows the secretary of state to deem non-citizens to be risks to America’s foreign policy. Marco Rubio said his department has canceled at least 300 student visas.

South Korea's wobbly economy



South Korea's economy had a shaky start to 2025. In January industrial output—which makes up a big share of South Korea's GDP—fell by 2.7% from its level in December, the steepest fall since the pandemic. The figures were a turnaround from those one month earlier, when output rose by 2.3%. On Monday the government releases industrial-production data for February, which will show whether January's decline continued.

Exports of semiconductors, South Korea's largest export, fell in February, according to ING, a bank. That slowdown will weigh on February's output figures. Waning demand for Korean cars in some markets could also hurt output. Exports rose in February by 17.7% year on year, probably because carmakers were rushing shipments to avoid [tariffs that Donald Trump plans to impose](#). The outlook for the economy is increasingly dark. Last month the Bank of Korea lowered its GDP growth forecast for 2025 from 1.9% to 1.5%.

Muslims celebrate Eid al-Fitr



Breakfast is back. This weekend Muslims will celebrate Eid al-Fitr, which marks the end of the month-long Ramadan fast. The holiday will probably begin at sunset on Saturday in some countries, and sunset on Sunday in others (depending on when locals spot the crescent moon). Muslims typically dress up for early-morning prayers and then spend the day visiting friends and relatives. The holiday draws a line under four weeks of dusk-to-dawn denial: fasting is forbidden on the first day of Eid.

Across the Arab world, the holiday will bring a range of emotions. During the Syrian civil war, Eid was often a time when Bashar al-Assad made one of his rare public appearances. He fled the country in December; Syrians will now celebrate the holiday for the first time since the [end of his dictatorship](#). In [Gaza](#), meanwhile, this will be another sombre Eid: Israel has resumed its war against Hamas and cut off the supply of humanitarian aid into the besieged territory.

Pain and pirouettes at figure skating's big contest



In January a collision between a passenger aeroplane and an American military helicopter in Washington, DC killed 67 people, 28 of whom were skaters, coaches and family members returning from a competition in Wichita, Kansas. Their lives were commemorated at a ceremony to mark the opening of the world championships in Boston on Wednesday. The tragedy added to the complex mix of feelings surrounding this year's event, which concludes on Sunday.

For these are also the third consecutive championships without any Russian competitors, who were banned from competing after Russia invaded Ukraine. While some skaters who previously represented Russia now compete for other nations, the absence of the sport's most successful team has created opportunities for American, Japanese and South Korean skaters. It is still unclear whether the ban will be lifted for the 2026 Winter Olympics. That the world championships are a qualification event for the Games creates additional difficulties for the Russians' potential return.

Lock, stock and ten clichés in “MobLand”

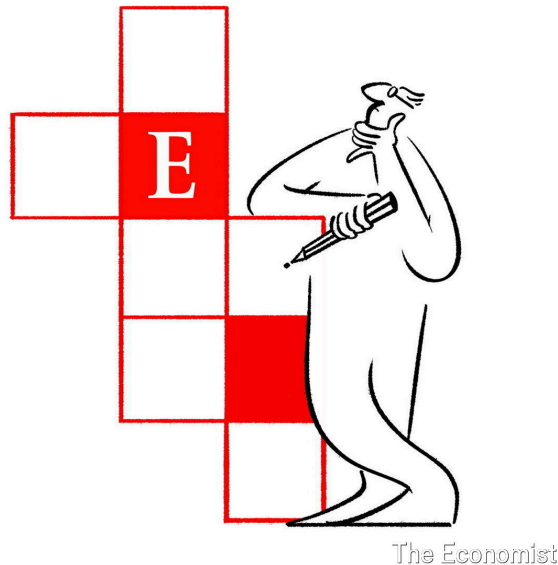


Luke Varley/Paramount+

Audiences have not rushed to see Guy Ritchie’s films in cinemas lately, but they have been more than happy to watch his television series at home. “The Gentlemen”, a Netflix spin-off of his film of the same name, was a hit last year. Now the director of “Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels”, a British gangster caper from 1998, is part of the team behind another series. “MobLand”, a collaboration between Mr Ritchie and Ronan Bennett, a screenwriter, streams on [Paramount+](#) from Sunday.

Pierce Brosnan and Helen Mirren enjoy themselves as the heads of an Irish crime family in London. Tom Hardy plays the fixer who cleans up their messes—the latest involving the disappearance of a rival gangster’s son. “MobLand” is as familiar as its generic title suggests, but its similarity to Mr Ritchie’s other violent romps should appeal to his fans. If you enjoy seeing sweary geezers stabbing each other in East End pubs, Mr Ritchie is still the guy for you.

Weekly crossword



We now publish an interactive edition of our crossword, allowing you to enter and check the answers, and see explanations, instantly. Try it [here](#). Or, if you prefer to do things the old-fashioned way, use the grid below.

Our crossword has two sets of clues, one for seasoned cruciverbalists and the other for less experienced solvers. Both give the same answers, all of which feature in articles in this week's edition of *The Economist*:

Cryptic clues

1 down Employer of unexpected guest let in chat at fault? (3,8)

1 across Take thanks first for duty (6)

2 across Little penal enclosure for politician (2,3)

3 across Carney announced national approval date at first here (6)

Factual clues

1 down Publication whose editor-in-chief was added to a surprising group chat (3,8)

1 across Levy on imports, frequently imposed and rescinded by Donald Trump (6)

2 across Leader of hard-right party, perhaps disappointed by America's disregard for Europe (2,3)

3 across Country whose impending election has recently become a lot more interesting (6)

Email all four answers, along with your home city and country, by 9am BST on Monday to crossword@economist.com. We will pick randomly from those with the right answers and crown three winners in next week's edition.

The winners of this week's quiz



The Economist

Thank you to everyone who took part in this week's quiz. The winners, chosen at random, were:

Yuval Gazit, Newton, Massachusetts, America

Anneli Hildeman, Stockholm, Sweden

Katarzyna Samocka, Warsaw, Poland

They all gave the correct answers of: Venice, Richard Rogers, Henry Ford, Windsor, Edward Lear. The theme is Shakespeare plays: The Merchant of Venice, Richard II (and III), Henry IV (and V and VI), The Merry Wives of Windsor and King Lear

The questions were:

Monday: The acronym DOGE is much in the news. But which Italian city was ruled by a Doge until 1797?

Tuesday: Which composer wrote musicals such as Carousel and South Pacific with Oscar Hammerstein II as the lyricist?

Wednesday: Which American car magnate was a notorious antisemite and was awarded the “Grand Cross of the German Eagle” by the Nazis?

Thursday: In 1917, the British royal house changed its name from Saxe-Coburg and Gotha to what?

Friday: Which Victorian poet wrote “The Owl and the Pussycat”?

Fantasy, abandoned by reason, produces impossible monsters; united with it, she is the mother of the arts and the origin of marvels.

Francisco Goya