

## Catch up: earthquake hits Myanmar; America's inflation worries



**Myanmar's** government said that at least 144 people were killed and hundreds injured after a [7.7-magnitude earthquake](#) struck the country. Mandalay, in the centre of the war-torn country, suffered widespread damage. It was also strongly felt in Bangkok in neighbouring Thailand, where a skyscraper collapsed and over 90 people are trapped under rubble. Thai authorities declared a state of emergency in the city.

The **Federal Reserve's** preferred inflation gauge, the core personal consumption expenditures price index, rose 0.4% month on month in February, the biggest jump in a year. The annual inflation rate ticked up to 2.8%, from 2.7% in January. Consumer spending rose just 0.1% in real terms from the previous month. The data come as [concerns mount](#) that Mr Trump's tariffs could stoke inflation.

**Ukraine** said a proposed minerals deal with **America** is not final, after a leaked summary showed the country demanding all resource income until wartime aid is repaid, with no future security guarantees. Mr Zelensky warned that he would not sign a deal that

impoverishes [Ukraine](#). Earlier Vladimir Putin called for Ukraine's government to be replaced by a "transitional administration" under the United Nations' supervision.

**Israel** launched a drone strike in **Beirut's** southern suburbs after issuing an evacuation warning—the first since it agreed a ceasefire in November with Hizbullah. The strike targeted a building linked to the militant group. [Israel](#) also hit targets in south Lebanon after intercepting a rocket, though Hizbullah denied firing it.

**Novo Nordisk**, a Danish drugmaker, will license an experimental obesity drug from Lexicon Pharmaceuticals, an American biotech firm, in a deal worth up to \$1bn. It gains global rights to develop and sell the oral treatment. The move follows Novo's \$2bn deal for a Chinese [weight-loss drug](#) earlier this week. Lexicon's shares doubled after the announcement.

**Xi Jinping**, China's president, met more than 40 foreign chief executives in Beijing. He urged them to resist "regressive" trade actions and help stabilise global supply chains. Mr Xi pitched China as a champion of open markets and promised better treatment for [foreign firms](#) operating in the country. Tensions are rising between China and America, which plans new tariffs in April.

Turkish authorities detained a lawyer for **Ekrem Imamoglu**, a popular opposition leader who was jailed on Sunday. Mr Imamoglu condemned the arrest and demanded his lawyer's immediate release. More than 1,800 people have been detained since [mass protests](#) erupted last week. **Marco Rubio**, America's secretary of state, said he had raised concerns about the crackdown with Turkey's foreign minister.

**Figure of the day:** 458, the number of elephant statues in the opulent Eisenhower Lounge of the Capitol Hill Club, a gathering spot for Washington's Republican elite. [Read the full story.](#)

*How closely have you followed the week's news? Play our [pint-sized news quiz](#) to test your knowledge and reveal the headlines you might have missed.*

## J.D. Vance's neighbourly visit to Greenland



The cargo planes that landed in Nuuk on Sunday were not the opening wave of an American invasion. Instead they unloaded four bulletproof cars in preparation for a visit. On Friday America's vice-president, J.D. Vance, and his wife, Usha, arrived in Greenland. Ms Vance had initially planned a cultural visit to "learn about Greenlandic heritage" and attend a dogsled race. But following the last-minute addition of Mr Vance to the party, and uproar in [Greenland](#) and Denmark, of which the vast island is an autonomous territory, the itinerary has been scaled back. Instead of visiting Nuuk, the capital, the Vances will make a visit to America's Pituffik Space Base.

Greenland's political parties are in the middle of coalition talks following an election earlier this month. The prime minister criticised the visit as a "demonstration of power". Donald Trump insisted that the visit was a gesture of "friendliness", but on Thursday reiterated his designs on the island: "We're going to have to have it."

## A flicker of hope for Gaza's ceasefire



Ten days ago [Israel](#) ended the ceasefire in Gaza, launching air strikes against Hamas that killed around 700 people. Israeli forces are poised to begin a large-scale ground offensive too. Israeli units have made limited advances in a number of places in the territory. But Israeli security officials said the decision to embark on a broader campaign has yet to be made.

One reason for delay is concern within the [Israel Defence Forces](#) that it will struggle to mobilise enough reservists to carry out a large operation. Another is that Hamas has indicated that it is prepared to extend the first stage of the ceasefire agreement and release a small number of Israeli hostages. (Some 24 are still thought to be alive, according to Israel.) Hamas originally insisted on moving to the second stage of the ceasefire, in which Israel was to withdraw from all of the strip. But a rare outbreak of protests by Gazans could force the group to back down.

## Calmer politics aid France's economy



The French economy, the second-biggest in the euro zone, has been sluggish. GDP is expected to be flat in the first quarter of the year, after a slight contraction of -0.1% in the last quarter of 2024. But there should be good news on inflation when figures for March are published on Friday. The Bank of France forecasts an annual rate of just 1.3% in 2025.

The government hopes that this will revive consumption. After a boost from the [Olympic Games last summer](#), French consumers and businesses put their spending plans on hold. Their wait-and-see approach was partly down to political instability and a lack of clarity on fiscal policy. A minority government, led by Michel Barnier, was toppled by parliament last December and failed to pass a budget for 2025. Now under a new prime minister, François Bayrou, France's government has passed a budget. A more stable politics could help the country's economy—for now.



# The family feud shaping the Philippines



On Friday candidates began campaigning for election to the Philippine congress and local governments. The vote will be held on May 12th. One candidate unable to hit the trail is [Rodrigo Duterte](#), the former president. Mr Duterte is in the custody of the International Criminal Court, accused of mass murder of suspected criminals. Even so, he is sure to be elected mayor of the southern city of Davao, his stronghold. In the Philippines personality and pedigree, rather than policies, tend to earn politicians their popularity.

The campaign will be defined by the feud between the governing Marcos dynasty and their rivals, the Dutertes. Ferdinand Marcos, the president (pictured), allowed Mr Duterte to be jailed abroad and the impeachment of his daughter, Sara, who is the vice-president. Still, Ms Duterte's family may hold on to enough support for her to win the next presidential election, in 2028. With that in mind, many candidates will try to balance their support between the two clans.

# Mumford and Sons rediscover their roots



Mumford and Sons enjoyed a decade of success after the release of their debut album, “Sigh No More” (2009). Then the British folk-rock band ran into a rough patch. Their poppy fourth album, “Delta” (2018), broke with the band’s anthemic style, undersold its predecessors and underwhelmed critics. Then, in 2021, one of the group’s founding members left and became a [right-wing podcaster](#). Winston Marshall, whose banjo and guitar were key to the band’s early sound, has been accused of making statements sympathetic to the hard-right (which he denies). His departure has cast a shadow over the group.

Still, the remaining trio have now gone back to basics with their fifth album, “Rushmere”, released on Friday. Named after a pond in Wimbledon, an area of south-west London, near where the group came together, the album reflects their wish to return to where they started. Listeners drawn by air-punching early hits such as “Little Lion Man” will find plenty to enjoy.



## Daily quiz



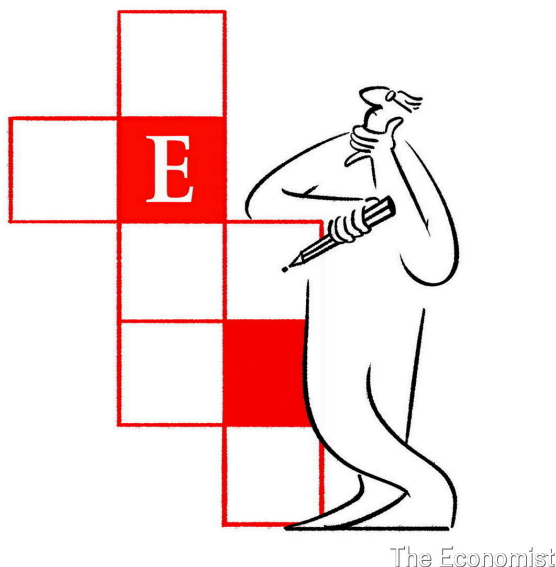
*The Economist*

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 GMT on Friday to [QuizEspresso@economist.com](mailto:QuizEspresso@economist.com). We'll pick randomly from those with the right answers and crown three winners on Saturday.

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

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

# The winners of this week's crossword



Thank you to everyone who took part in our weekly crossword, published in the weekend edition of Espresso. The winners, chosen at random, were:

**Tor Alloway**, London, Britain

**Soren Porskrog**, Copenhagen, Denmark

**Stephen Phillips**, Perth, Australia

They all gave the correct answers of [deportations](#), [debts](#), [Texas](#) and [steel](#). Check back tomorrow for this week's crossword.

*The number of elephant statues in the opulent Eisenhower Lounge of the Capitol Hill Club, a gathering spot for Washington's Republican elite.*

*Read the full story.*

**A leader must have the courage to act  
against an expert's advice.**

*James Callaghan*