

The Future

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This newsletter aims to chronicle the major events and developments in the societies of emerging nations with the potential to impact their future. This publication offers snippets of news analysis that might be advantageous to academics, policymakers, social and political workers, students and various organisations.

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Israel Violates Gaza Ceasefire Amid Rising Civilian Casualties

Israel unilaterally violated the Gaza ceasefire on 18 March after refusing to proceed to the second phase, which would have secured the release of all remaining Israeli hostages, as well as ensured the withdrawal of ground troops from the enclave. However, Israeli PM Netanyahu, in order to save himself from prosecution and the collapse of his coalition, repeatedly rejected offers from Hamas for the release of the hostages and commenced the violation of the ceasefire with a bombing campaign that led to the deaths of 400 Palestinian civilians in less than 24 hours. Moreover, since the ceasefire in Gaza had earlier gone into force on 19 January and until the March 18 surprise attack, Israel had killed 155 Palestinians in sporadic strikes and attacks on the enclave, according to Gaza's government media office. Following Hamas's refusal to extend the first phase of the ceasefire, Israel had blocked all humanitarian aid from entering the Gaza Strip on 2 March. The blockade was heavily condemned by mediating states Egypt and Qatar, as well as the United Nations, as one of the ceasefire's key objectives was to increase much-needed flows of aid for the two million Palestinians living in the enclave. Qatar said Israel was committing "a clear violation of the ceasefire agreement" and international humanitarian law. Acts of ethnic cleansing and daily genocidal attacks have continued throughout the holy month of Ramadan, as well as Eid-al-Fitr, where a majority of victims were children, and many of those targeted included children, prominent journalists as well as medical professionals.



While every day, social media posts from Palestinian victims and journalists provided the world with gruesome pictures of headless babies and lifeless bodies of very young children, one incident that has particularly caught headlines is Israel's execution of 15 Palestinian medics and trying to hide their remains in a mass grave. While for weeks Israel denied any responsibility or knowledge, UN led rescue teams discovered the mass graves, remains of the slain paramedics and their vehicles, as well as incriminating audio and video evidence recorded by the executed paramedics themselves from the mass grave site that proved Israeli soldiers had carried out war crimes in executing teams of paramedics who had been sent to extract victims of Israeli aggression in Gaza.

Meanwhile, as starvation and genocide continue unabated in Gaza, the Israeli government has decided to create more population-free buffer zones, colloquially labelled killing zones, towards the southern part of Gaza, announcing new displacement plans, further dividing it and effectively bringing 50 percent of Gaza under Israeli military occupation. Globally, protests for Palestine have slowly picked up, and there has been a fatwa by the International Union of Muslim scholars that called it obligatory on Muslims and Muslim countries to wage jihad on behalf of Palestine against Israel, but these have been touted as too little too late. In the absence of the political will to implement a ceasefire, the flow of humanitarian supplies, and a timeline for Israeli withdrawal, there is little hope that this ends well for the people of Gaza.



As Gaza faces hunger, Muslims observe a somber Eid around the world

As the month of Ramadan ended, Muslims around the globe marked an Eid al-Fitr shaped, among other things, by prevailing economic hardships and geopolitical tensions. Traditionally, a festival of joy, Eid this year was called the “Eid of Sadness” in Gaza. Palestinians in the Gaza Strip had little to celebrate as they marked Eid al-Fitr with rapidly dwindling food supplies and no end in sight to the Israeli bombardment. Many held prayers outside demolished mosques on the day marking the end of the fasting month of Ramadan, as at least 20 Palestinians were killed on the first day of Eid, most of them women and children. This followed from Israel’s abrupt ending of a fragile two-month ceasefire on March 18 - Israel has since killed hundreds of Palestinian civilians and has allowed no food, fuel or humanitarian aid to enter for more than a month. As talks abound of a global recession in the works following careless first-world fiscal policies, in countries like Indonesia and India, soaring prices and economic strains have subdued Eid celebrations. Families faced difficulties in upholding traditions such as purchasing new attire and preparing special dishes, reflecting broader economic challenges.

On the other hand, in what many feel plays out as a cruel countdown, Pakistan has delayed its deadline to deport hundreds of thousands of Afghans due to the Eid holidays, after initially setting a deadline of March 31 for deporting Afghans who have Afghan Citizen Cards (ACC), numbering around 800,000 people, according to the United Nations. In addition, over 1.3 million Afghans carrying Proof of Registration (PoR) cards issued by the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) will be moved outside Islamabad and Rawalpindi. In another instance, Muslims in India have a lot to fear after the Indian parliament passed a controversial bill on Muslim waqf properties despite facing fierce opposition right after Eid. The waqf amendment bill gives the government more control over the management of waqf boards, including having final say in cases of arbitration, as well as the inclusion of non-Muslims in the management of such boards. Muslim leaders and opposition parties say the bill is “unconstitutional” and infringes on the rights of India’s Muslim-minority community, handing over the control of millions of dollars-worth property and assets, incurred over centuries of Muslim donations over to the hands of a Hindu nationalist government that has been vehemently Islamophobic as well as corrupt.



Trump tariffs shake global markets and elicit fears of impending global recession

On April 2, 2025, at a function in the Rose Garden at the White House dubbed “Liberation Day,” President Donald Trump announced the implementation of sweeping tariffs, including a baseline 10% tax on all U.S. imports and significantly higher rates targeting specific nations such as China, its south-East Asian neighbours such as Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, and close allies such as the European Union. This blanket tariff announcement by the Trump administration, aimed at addressing alleged trade imbalances and promoting domestic manufacturing in the US, has elicited sharp criticism and strong reactions from global markets and international leaders.

In response to the 34 percent US tariffs against China by Trump, China imposed retaliatory tariffs of 34 percent on all US goods and imposed restrictions on the export of rare-earth minerals to the US. While Trump has threatened to slap 50 percent tariffs on China if it did not withdraw the 34 percent tariffs, Chinese officials stated that they would not stand by to take US economic bullying and would retaliate in kind.

Meanwhile, the 27-nation EU bloc, which faces 25% import tariffs on steel and aluminium and cars and broader tariffs of 20% from the US, announced that it would be imposing tariffs on selected goods, but would prefer negotiations leading to zero-to-zero tariffs for both sides. Some of the poorer nations, such as India, Vietnam and Bangladesh, have been hit by high tariffs, questioning the logic and the math behind such measures.

In a post to X that spread fast across social media, finance journalist James Surowiecki said that the new reciprocal rates appeared to have been reached by taking the trade deficit the US has with each country and dividing it by the amount the country exports to the US. While President Trump defended the tariffs as necessary economic measures, stating they would correct longstanding trade imbalances and benefit American industries, stock markets in the US and in major financial centres around the world, such as Japan, China, UK and Germany, have begun to freefall, triggering fears of an impending global recession. Trump, however, has dismissed any concerns over market volatility and inflation, instead asserting that the tariffs would generate substantial revenue and that about 50 countries had already contacted him to enter into tariff negotiations following the announcements.



Crackdown on pro-Palestinian activists intensifies in US

Since last month, the United States has witnessed a significant intensification in the detention and deportation of pro-Palestinian activists, particularly on university campuses. This follows on from similar actions during the Biden administration and has ignited a nationwide debate on free speech, academic freedom, and the rights of non-citizen residents. The issue came to light after Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents detained Mahmoud Khalil, a Palestinian activist and recent Columbia University graduate, on March 8, 2025 from in front of his pregnant wife. Despite holding a green card and lacking any criminal charges, he was detained and faces potential deportation. Similarly, Rümeyşa Öztürk, a Turkish doctoral student at Tufts University, was detained without charge after co-authoring an anti-Israel op-ed. Momodou Taal, a dual citizen of the United Kingdom and Gambia, a Cornell University graduate student whose visa was revoked after he was involved in a lawsuit against the Trump administration over its actions against pro-Palestinian student protesters, informed that he had voluntarily left the US after fearing for his safety and dignity in ICE detention.

To date, the Trump administration has revoked at least 300 student visas of foreign-born people, most of whom were part of the pro-Palestinian movement that swept campuses last year, which has heightened anxieties among international students, particularly those engaged in Palestine activism, leading to a chilling effect on campus discourse. Moreover, the federal government has also threatened to cut off federal funding to universities such as Harvard and Columbia, among others, if they do not do more to curb anti-Israel content in their courses and anti-genocide activism on their campuses. The threats have led to some universities expelling protesting students and others taking retaliatory measures against eminent staff. For example, Columbia University has expelled, suspended and revoked the degrees of 22 students for participating in last year's Hamilton Hall protest, fulfilling one of the nine demands issued in a letter from the Trump administration to Columbia. Harvard University, on the other hand, has dismissed faculty leaders at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES), namely CMES Director, professor of Turkish Studies Cemal Kafadar, and associate director, history professor Rosie Bsheer in an effort to distance itself from programmes under scrutiny for alleged bias or criticism of Israel.



Liberal world more outraged about Signal-gate in US while Yemeni lives are just a footnote

The recent "Signal-Gate" scandal, involving the inadvertent inclusion of journalist and editor-in-chief of The Atlantic, Jeffrey Goldberg, in a Signal group chat where top U.S. officials discussed sensitive military operations in Yemen, ignited a firestorm of controversy within the United States. In serious op-eds to comedy shows, the discourse has predominantly centered on the breach of national security protocols and the potential risks posed to American military personnel, reflecting the shades of American patriotism, with a huge blind spot. Few in America saw the problems behind this intense focus on domestic security implications, particularly the profound humanitarian crisis in Yemen, a by-product of never-ending US-led wars in the Middle East, and only further exacerbated by the very operations under discussion. As noted by Mohammed almahfali, the so-called Signalgate and the national American rage surrounding it pulled back the curtain on the chilling indifference with which Yemeni lives are treated at the highest levels of American power. In addition, the international response to the leak has also focused on the security breach and its diplomatic fallout, showing that it lacks the ability to imagine Yemen as a nation of people outside its geopolitical importance.

The internal U.S. reaction to the leak primarily focused on the embarrassment of a security lapse, with little public reflection on the ethical implications of casually discussing military action against another nation. This detachment underscores how Yemen—and Yemeni lives—have been dehumanized in foreign policy discussions. European responses also centered on strategic concerns, with former UK Defence Secretary Grant Shapps expressing unease about America's aggression, focusing on European security rather than Yemeni suffering. Similarly, Vice President JD Vance as well as Secretary of State Marco Rubio's statements concerning Yemen also reduced it to an issue of shipping lanes and global supply chains, as well as the feeling that the world was not thanking Americans enough, all pointed to a shared understanding of Yemen as just a chessboard for Western interests, with little care for the interests of its people, or the fact that it is among the places facing the worst humanitarian crises in the world.



Ambassador Ebrahim Rasool declared persona non grata in the US

The administration of President Donald Trump has declared South African Ambassador Ebrahim Rasool a persona non grata in the United States. In a social media post on Friday, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said that Rasool was “no longer welcome in our great country.” The expulsion came following comments made by Rasool in a webinar organised by a South African think-tank, where the 62-year-old seasoned politician was speaking about the policies of President Donald Trump and the implications for Africa. The talk had been arranged following weeks of US pressure on South Africa over a controversial land law that resulted in the US cutting off funding to the country. The US alleged that South Africa's white minority was being unfairly targeted, an allegation strongly refuted and protested by the government in Pretoria. While commenting on the state of affairs, Rasool opined that President Trump was “mobilising a supremacism” and trying to “project white victimhood as a dog whistle” as the white population faced becoming a minority in the US. After his comments were picked up by American right-wing news outlets and blown out of proportion, Marco Rubio made the announcement of the expulsion of the veteran ambassador, adding that Rasool was a “race-baiting politician who hates America” and Trump.

After returning home to a hero's welcome, Rasool said that he had no regrets about his remarks. South African President Cyril Ramaphosa's office said the US decision to expel Rasool was “regrettable” as the president himself defended the “great deal of progress” the ambassador had been making prior to his expulsion. Rasool's role as an anti-racism activist is no secret to those who know him – growing up as a victim of the apartheid system, he was active against apartheid since his school years in the 1970s. As an anti-apartheid activist, he was frequently imprisoned since the 90s and met with Mandela, the future Prime Minister of post-apartheid South Africa. Later, he served in various leadership positions within the governing African National Congress and South Africa before being appointed to his first stint as US ambassador from 2010 to 2015, when Barack Obama was president. Rasool's expulsion is the latest in a series of moves by the Trump administration castigating South Africa, a country that has supported Palestinian rights and helped spearhead a case at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) accusing Israel, a US ally, of genocidal acts in Gaza.



Photo: UNHCR/Colin Delfosse

As army makes gains on ground, Sudanese government files genocide lawsuit against UAE at the ICJ

As Sudan continues to grapple with intense internal conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), the country filed a case against the United Arab Emirates (UAE) at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on March 6, 2025. In a significant legal move, the Sudanese government has accused the UAE of violating the Genocide Convention by providing support to the RSF, which has been implicated in ethnic-based attacks against the non-Arab Masalit tribe in West Darfur during 2023. The United States had previously classified these attacks as genocide, and Sudan is seeking emergency measures from the ICJ to prevent further genocidal acts. The UAE, on its part, has denied supporting the RSF and dismissed these allegations as baseless, labeling the case a "cynical publicity stunt" aimed at diverting attention from the Sudanese Armed Forces' own atrocities. UN experts, however, have found the claims credible, and the ICJ has scheduled a hearing on the emergency measures for April 10, 2025.

The ongoing conflict has precipitated a dire humanitarian crisis, with over 14 million people displaced and several regions teetering on the brink of famine. The international community remains deeply concerned about the escalating violence and its broader implications for regional stability. The African Union has warned that the establishment of a parallel government by the RSF risks further fragmenting the nation. Recent developments have seen the SAF reclaim significant territories, including the presidential palace and Khartoum International Airport in late March 2025. However, this has been accompanied by accounts of extrajudicial executions of civilians committed by the Sudanese army on suspicions of collaborating with the RSF. Disturbing footage has surfaced, depicting blindfolded individuals being executed by uniformed personnel, which has been condemned by Volker Turk, the UN Commissioner for Human Rights in a statement calling for an end to such executions and greater accountability.



Bangladesh showcases proactive foreign policy following Yunus's China visit

Bangladesh's interim government Chief Adviser Prof. Dr. Muhammad Yunus recently concluded a four-day visit to China from March 26 to 29, 2025, aimed at strengthening bilateral ties and exploring avenues for economic cooperation. During his stay, he attended the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference in Hainan and held discussions with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing. The meetings culminated in the signing of multiple agreements, including a 50-year master plan for comprehensive river and water management, and commitments from China to invest \$2.1 billion in Bangladesh's infrastructure and manufacturing sectors. Following that, Yunus met with Indian PM Narendra Modi at the sidelines of the BIMSTEC conference, where the two leaders discussed pressing issues such as the potential extradition of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, border security, water-sharing agreements, and the safety of minority communities in Bangladesh. At the same summit, meetings between Bangladeshi and Myanmar officials culminated in a breakthrough agreement where Myanmar confirmed that 180,000 Rohingya refugees living in Bangladesh since fleeing their homeland were eligible to return.

Meanwhile, Bangladeshi authorities said that a commercial deal with Elon Musk's SpaceX-owned satellite internet network Starlink was in the works and was expected to be reached within three months to provide internet services across the South Asian country. Among the stated reasons for the deal was the hope that no government in the future would have the ability to shut down internet access or lock citizens out of the digital world. However, the move was also interpreted by some as a way to appease Trump ally Elon and gain favourable status in terms of trade with the US, which currently seems to be in jeopardy following the recently announced Trump tariffs, where Bangladesh has been hit with 37% tariffs. Another connected development has been the nomination of Bangladeshi female activists by the US State Department for its 'International Women of Courage' Award 2025 as a special recognition in honour of their contributions to the July uprising. Under this recognition, the 'Madeleine Albright Honorary Group Award' was been bestowed upon all women involved in the movement. However, Umama Fatema, prominent student leader and spokesperson of the Students Against Discrimination, personally rejected the award, citing the US role in enabling Israeli genocide in Gaza and stated her solidarity with Gaza via this move.



Tesla stock prices keep dropping as protests escalate against billionaire Elon Musk's role in US government

In December, after Donald Trump won the presidential election, Tesla stocks hit a record high of \$480 per share, with soaring forecasts. The market assumed the close relationship between CEO Elon Musk and President Donald Trump would benefit the company in some way or the other. Instead, however, Tesla stock tumbled more than 50% from its record high in early March. While historically, Tesla stocks have made comebacks following periodic declines, this time the reasons behind its decline are connected to politics in a way not seen before, especially Elon Musk's rather unpopular cost-cutting role in Trump's administration. Moreover, the current Tesla decline is essentially a continuation of the last one back in 2021-22, because the underlying Tesla supply chain problems and weak demand amid rising interest rates were never really solved. Instead, the rebound in 2024 was driven by expectations that Tesla would benefit from the ties between Musk and President Trump. However, the company is still battling weak demand worldwide, and Musk, following his disastrous saga at Twitter, is arguably more distracted than ever in political showmanship.

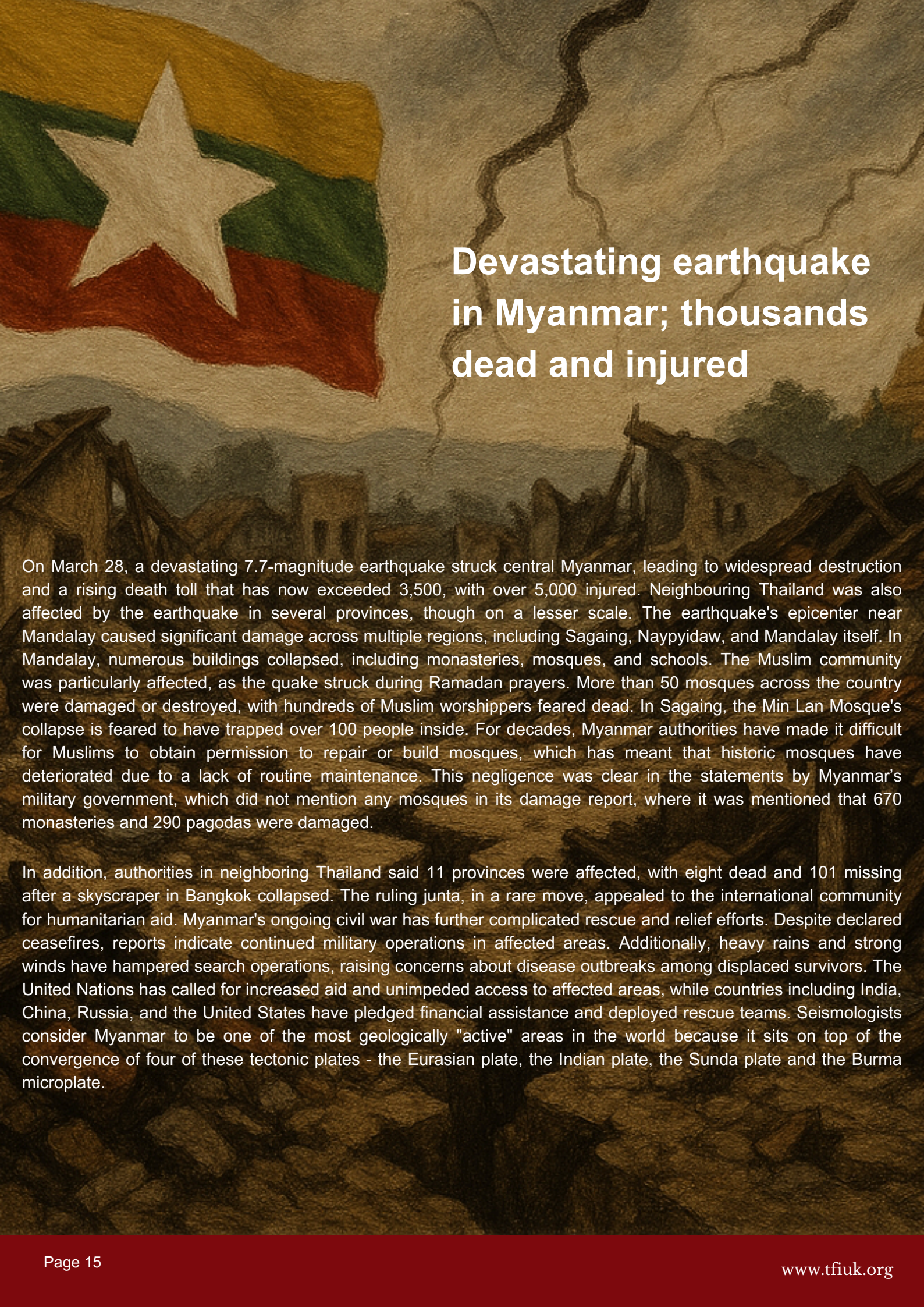
Despite a boom in the electric vehicle market, as seen by surging sales of Tesla competitors such as BYD, demand for Teslas is deteriorating around the world. The company lost market share across its three major markets in 2024, and the losses have accelerated in 2025. In January, Tesla's market share fell by nearly 7 percentage points in the U.S., 8 percentage points in Europe, and 2 percentage points in China. This decline has been aggravated by large-scale anti-Musk protests as well as acts of vandalism against Tesla vehicles, dealerships and other facilities, which have spread for weeks, in protest both against Musk's ruthless job-cutting work, and what has been seen as his unwelcome interference in politics. Recently, large-scale coordinated protests were held outside Tesla dealerships throughout the U.S. and in some cities in Europe by political and environmentalist groups. Although Trump has attempted to boost Elon's image by posing with Tesla car models at the White House, and US Attorney General Pam Bondi has labelled acts of vandalism against Tesla outlets as domestic terrorism, the protests have shown no sign of decline. On the contrary, there is now talk of Elon Musk's possible resignation from duties at DOGE and return to private life, a testament to the challenges that come with such roles.



Far-right ideology seeping into German police as country braces to deport Palestine activists

German authorities came under media scrutiny for moving to deport four young foreign residents on allegations related to participation in protests against Israel's war on Gaza, an unprecedented move that raises serious concerns over civil liberties in Germany. The move brings to light similarities to the widely condemned American drive to deport pro-Palestine activists such as Mahmoud Khalil for leading widespread student protests denouncing the Israeli genocide in Gaza. It has been reported that the deportation orders, issued under German migration law, were made amid political pressure and over internal objections from the head of the state of Berlin's immigration agency, particularly owing to the fact that three of the four are citizens of fellow EU countries, and one is a US citizen. None of the four, who have been given a month to leave Germany or be forced to be deported, have been charged with any crimes.

On the other hand, a recent study conducted by the Hamburg Police Academy has revealed concerning insights into the political and social attitudes of the city's police force. The study, titled "Attitudes and Values Towards Democracy Within the Hamburg Police" (DeWePol), surveyed 2,018 officers and uncovered that 25% identified themselves as "racist or far-right," while 45% expressed negative sentiments toward refugees. The research further highlighted that minority groups, such as the Sinti and Roma communities and the long-term unemployed, are perceived negatively by a significant portion of the officers. Additionally, the study noted the frequent use of terms like "undemocratic" or "foreign" when officers referred to Muslims. Approximately one-third of the surveyed officers were open to populist views, and 7% subscribed to conspiracy theories. This study adds to a series of reports indicating the infiltration of far-right ideologies within German law enforcement agencies.



Devastating earthquake in Myanmar; thousands dead and injured

On March 28, a devastating 7.7-magnitude earthquake struck central Myanmar, leading to widespread destruction and a rising death toll that has now exceeded 3,500, with over 5,000 injured. Neighbouring Thailand was also affected by the earthquake in several provinces, though on a lesser scale. The earthquake's epicenter near Mandalay caused significant damage across multiple regions, including Sagaing, Naypyidaw, and Mandalay itself. In Mandalay, numerous buildings collapsed, including monasteries, mosques, and schools. The Muslim community was particularly affected, as the quake struck during Ramadan prayers. More than 50 mosques across the country were damaged or destroyed, with hundreds of Muslim worshippers feared dead. In Sagaing, the Min Lan Mosque's collapse is feared to have trapped over 100 people inside. For decades, Myanmar authorities have made it difficult for Muslims to obtain permission to repair or build mosques, which has meant that historic mosques have deteriorated due to a lack of routine maintenance. This negligence was clear in the statements by Myanmar's military government, which did not mention any mosques in its damage report, where it was mentioned that 670 monasteries and 290 pagodas were damaged.

In addition, authorities in neighboring Thailand said 11 provinces were affected, with eight dead and 101 missing after a skyscraper in Bangkok collapsed. The ruling junta, in a rare move, appealed to the international community for humanitarian aid. Myanmar's ongoing civil war has further complicated rescue and relief efforts. Despite declared ceasefires, reports indicate continued military operations in affected areas. Additionally, heavy rains and strong winds have hampered search operations, raising concerns about disease outbreaks among displaced survivors. The United Nations has called for increased aid and unimpeded access to affected areas, while countries including India, China, Russia, and the United States have pledged financial assistance and deployed rescue teams. Seismologists consider Myanmar to be one of the most geologically "active" areas in the world because it sits on top of the convergence of four of these tectonic plates - the Eurasian plate, the Indian plate, the Sunda plate and the Burma microplate.

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