

Catch up: Russia strikes Ukraine during talks; more than 1,100 arrests in Turkey



Russian strikes hit a children's hospital in northern Ukraine, local officials said, injuring 28 people including four children. The attack occurred as **American** and **Russian** officials met in Saudi Arabia to discuss a plan to pause strikes on Ukrainian energy infrastructure and a potential ceasefire in the Black Sea to allow the resumption of grain and fuel exports.

Turkish authorities said they arrested more than 1,100 people during five days of mass protests over the **jailing** of Ekrem Imamoglu, the mayor of Istanbul and opposition leader. The government banned public gatherings in many cities, but hundreds of thousands joined demonstrations. Those detained included ten journalists. The opposition says Mr Imamoglu's arrest was politically motivated.

South Korea's constitutional court reinstated Han Duck-soo, the prime minister, as acting president. Mr Han had replaced Yoon Suk Yeol, who was **impeached** in December after briefly imposing martial law. Mr Han was suspended two weeks later for his alleged

role in the coup attempt and for failing to fill three vacancies in the constitutional court. The court is expected to rule on Mr Yoon's impeachment in the coming days.

Thailand's prime minister, Paetongtarn Shinawatra, is to face a confidence vote in parliament. The main opposition party has claimed that Ms Shinawatra's father wields too much influence over her government. [Thaksin Shinawatra](#), who was a divisive populist PM in 2001-06, and who spent years in exile, has trailed policies later adopted by the ruling Pheu Thai party, including legalising gambling and stimulus cheques.

Business activity in the **euro zone** grew at its fastest pace in seven months in March, according to a closely watched survey compiled by Hamburg, a bank. The purchasing-managers' index rose to 50.4, from 50.2 in February; readings above 50 signal growth. Factory output expanded for the first time in two years, offsetting a slowdown in the services sector. Optimism is rising because of Germany's plans to boost [infrastructure and defence spending](#).

James Hardie Industries, an Australian building-materials company, said it plans to buy Azek, an American home-decking firm, in a deal worth nearly \$9bn. The announcement, which comes amid concerns about an American economic slowdown, triggered a sell-off in shares in James Hardie. The firm's boss insisted that the sector's long-term prospects were "very, very strong" as mortgage rates are expected to fall.

A delegation of **American** officials, including Mike Waltz, the national security adviser, will travel to **Greenland** later this week. Donald Trump has repeatedly said that America should [acquire](#) the autonomous Danish territory. The White House insisted that the group was only travelling to learn about Greenland's "history" and attend "a dogsled race". Jens-Frederik Nielsen, Greenland's incoming prime minister, said the trip showed "a lack of respect".

Figure of the day: 30. At least that many countries have outlawed all vaping products. [Read the full story.](#)

How closely have you followed the week's news? [Play our pint-sized news quiz](#) to see if you're truly clued up on current affairs, or if you've barely skimmed the headlines.

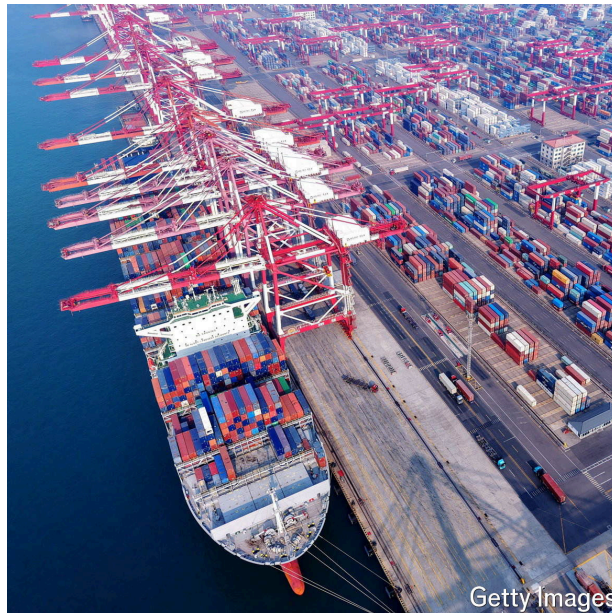
A fragile ceasefire plan for Ukraine



On Monday American mediators in Saudi Arabia will seek to nail down the details of a 30-day [partial ceasefire](#) proposed by President Donald Trump. They began talks with a Russian delegation, following negotiations with [Ukrainian envoys](#) that started on Sunday. The main task will be drawing up a list of protected facilities. The Kremlin wants this restricted to energy infrastructure, narrowly defined; Ukraine and America insist on including other infrastructure, such as ports, civilian buildings and railways.

Russia has yet to show real commitment to a ceasefire. On March 18th, after a call with Mr Trump, Russia's president, Vladimir Putin, claimed he had ordered a halt to attacks on energy infrastructure. Russia then launched hundreds of drones and missiles at Ukrainian energy sites. [Steve Witkoff](#) (pictured), Mr Trump's special envoy handling communications with Russia, said he believed Mr Putin would act "in good faith". Volodymyr Zelensky, Ukraine's president, expressed more doubt: "With each launch, the Russians reveal their true attitude towards peace," he said.

China courts foreign bosses



For global executives eager to schmooze with Chinese policymakers this is a busy time. Following the China Development Forum in Beijing over the weekend, some will be heading straight to another big annual conference in the far south—the Boao Forum for Asia, which begins on March 25th.

Chinese officials are eagerly feeding their message to chief executives rattled by [Donald Trump's erratic economic policy](#): that their country is a land of stability in a turbulent world. On Sunday China's prime minister, Li Qiang, said that amid “rising instability and uncertainty” countries need to open up their markets. He also met Steve Daines, a Republican senator who was an intermediary during the first Trump term. Mr Daines told the *New York Times* he wanted to lay the groundwork for a meeting between Mr Trump and Xi Jinping, China's leader. But as tensions caused by Mr Trump's tariffs worsen, China may be hesitant.

Louisiana's congressional map at SCOTUS



On Monday America's Supreme Court hears *Louisiana v Callais*, a case that could decide control of the House of Representatives in [next year's midterm elections](#). After the 2020 census Louisiana's legislature drew a map that included just one district (of six) where black voters form a majority. A court, noting that nearly a third of Louisiana's voters are black, said that arrangement violated the federal Voting Rights Act (VRA) of 1965 and ordered lawmakers to add a second majority-black district. But the redrawn map drew fire from plaintiffs who claim that the "sinuous and jagged" new district is "racially balkanising". They persuaded a different court that it violates the equal-protection clause of the 14th Amendment.

Louisiana says the redrawn map seeks to balance its competing obligations to the VRA and the constitution. It contends that its main goal was not racial but political: to protect the seats of certain Republicans, including Mike Johnson, the House speaker.

At last, German business looks cheerier



According to data released on Monday, the Hamburg Commercial Bank's purchasing managers' index, a gauge of Germany's business activity, rose in March. On Tuesday the Ifo institute's business climate index, another closely watched economic indicator, is expected to show a similar improvement. February's Ifo index was unchanged from January's as business leaders remained sceptical about the prospect of economic growth.

But lately their mood has improved. Bosses are encouraged by the bold steps of Friedrich Merz, the chancellor-in-waiting. His big reform, to [exempt defence spending](#) from the strict fiscal limits enshrined in the German constitution and to set up a €500bn (\$540bn) infrastructure fund, [passed both houses of parliament](#) last week. They hope that other badly needed structural reforms will follow, and that Germany will at last haul itself out of recession. Mr Merz's coalition government is expected to be ready to take office just after Easter.

Curbing bullfighting in Mexico City



This week Mexico City is set to enforce a new law that [bans traditional bullfighting](#). Rather than imposing a total prohibition—as five of the country’s 31 states have done—the capital city aims to modify the spectacle. Under the “non-violent” bullfighting rules, killing or injuring bulls will be prohibited. Sharp objects, including swords and spears, are banned; matadors will only be able to use capes. In addition, the bulls’ horns must be protected and their time in the arena will be capped at 15 minutes.

The compromise is intended to appease the industry, which generates \$50m of revenue annually in Mexico City. But it may satisfy few people. The sport’s supporters—a quarter of the city’s population, according to a recent survey—accuse the authorities of diluting a tradition. Yet animal-rights activists argue that, even without bloodshed, the sport causes stress to bulls. Their viewpoint may prevail globally: [more and more countries](#) are imposing restrictions on bullfighting.

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. We'll pick randomly from those with the right answers and crown three winners on Saturday.

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

**Not on one strand are all life's jewels
strung.**

William Morris