

## Catch up: Heathrow to reopen after fire; Germany passes funding bill



London's **Heathrow airport** said it would reopen after a fire at a nearby electrical substation caused it to close for most of Friday. [Heathrow](#), one of the world's busiest airports, said it hoped to run a "full operation" on Saturday. Counterterrorism police, who are leading the investigation into the blaze, said there was no indication of foul play.

The upper house of **Germany's** parliament approved the creation of a €500bn (\$542bn) fund for infrastructure and the loosening of the "debt brake", the country's legal limit on government borrowing, to allow for greater defence spending. The centre-right Christian Democrats, led by [Friedrich Merz](#), the probable next chancellor, passed the bill with the support of the centre-left Social Democrats and the Greens.

Shares in **Nike** dropped to a five-year low after it issued a weak earnings forecast on Thursday. The [sportswear giant](#) is struggling to compete with Adidas, a German firm, and other rivals, and warned that tariffs on imports to America could weigh on its sales. Nike

has factories in China and Mexico, both of which have been targeted by Donald Trump.

Mr Trump awarded **Boeing** a contract to develop a next-generation fighter jet. The aerospace giant's shares rose by more than 5% following the announcement. America's 47th president said that a prototype of the plane, the name of which he revealed as the F-47, had been tested in secret for five years. [Boeing](#) has been beset by safety and production problems in recent years.

**Johnson & Johnson** announced investments of \$55bn in its American manufacturing capacity over the next four years—an increase of 25% on the previous four. The drugmaker has begun building a plant in North Carolina and said it would build three more. The announcement comes as [Mr Trump's tariff plans](#) threaten to raise the price of imported drugs.

Lawmakers in **Peru** voted to oust the country's interior minister as it battles a surge in crime, pointing to his “inability” to address the violence. A popular singer was murdered on Sunday, prompting Peru's president, Dina Boluarte, to declare a national emergency in Lima, the capital, and send troops into the streets. Murders were up by 36% in 2024 compared with a year earlier.

**Conor McGregor** declared his candidacy in **Ireland's presidential election** later this year. The [mixed martial-arts fighter](#) plans to campaign against immigration. He may struggle to secure the nominations needed from 20 lawmakers (or four local councils). Mr McGregor, who was found liable for rape in a civil suit in Ireland last year, on Monday met Mr Trump, a fan, in the White House.

**Word of the week:** *Jingwai*, the ambiguous word that Lai Ching-te, Taiwan's president, used to refer to China on March 13th. [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.*

# China's East Asian diplomacy



When the foreign ministers of China, Japan and South Korea last met, in November 2023, China was on a charm offensive. Its tendency to flex its economic and military muscles had been turning off its neighbours. Meanwhile President Joe Biden had been hard at work drawing two of East Asia's richest democracies together, and closer to America. But China's overtures worked. The next May South Korea's president, Japan's prime minister and China's premier [met for the first time](#) in over four years.

The three countries' foreign ministers are meeting again on Saturday in Tokyo. Much has changed. Kishida Fumio, Japan's prime minister, [stood down](#) last October. Yoon Suk Yeol, South Korea's president, is [in the middle](#) of an impeachment trial. And Mr Biden, who convinced Japan and South Korea to repair their historic animus, has been replaced by Donald Trump, who [threatens to upend](#) 80 years of American diplomacy. China is unlikely to miss a chance to exploit the uncertainty created by that chaos.

# Trading insults across the Atlantic



France and America may be old allies, but they know exactly how to rile one another up. This week Raphaël Glucksmann, a French member of the European Parliament, called on America to return the Statue of Liberty, a gift from his country. “Absolutely not,” retorted Karoline Leavitt, the White House press secretary. It was only because of America that “the French are not speaking German right now”, she added.

This ill-tempered exchange followed Donald Trump’s comment this month that he was “not so sure” France would come to America’s aid if America needed it. [Emmanuel Macron](#), France’s president, responded with a lesson in the history of French support for America. Despite the Punch and Judy pummelling, however, Mr Macron talks to Mr Trump almost daily by telephone about [Ukraine](#). The two, say aides, have a cordial relationship. Whether the French president also has influence over his American counterpart is another matter.

# How to revive Snow White



When Disney began [remaking “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs”](#) five years ago, the company’s choices mirrored the values of the moment. In the old version, released in 1937, Snow White was so named because of her complexion; in the new one, it is because she was born in a blizzard. Instead of cleaning for her housemates, she makes the “magical creatures” (not dwarves) pick up after themselves. Dopey, mute in the original, is a more complex character struggling to express himself. The remake was released on Friday.

The star, Rachel Zegler, stirred up trouble for calling the original “extremely dated”; some critics denounced the remake as “woke”. Yet others asked why the film uses CGI instead of employing actors with dwarfism. For all the controversy, the remake is a mediocre but sweet confection that focuses on the princess finding her voice. Nowadays such a theme is a cliché. Disney has made many charming fairytale adaptations. This is not the fairest of them all.



# An Australian cricketer's big opportunity



No one in cricket has a bad word to say about Pat Cummins, who is considered to be among the world's best fast bowlers. He has also led Australia's national team since 2021. (That is unusual: more often, captains are batsmen.) With Australia he has won the Ashes against England, as well as a one-day World Cup; he was vice-captain when the Aussies won the world Twenty20 title. The next big trophy in Mr Cummins's sights as a captain is that of the [Indian Premier League](#), the top Twenty20 tournament, which begins on Saturday.

In the IPL Mr Cummins captains Sunrisers Hyderabad, who lost in the final last year. Alongside Sunrisers' head coach, Daniel Vettori, Mr Cummins pushed his team to embrace an ultra-aggressive batting strategy, which helped them record—all in 2024—three of the four highest team totals in the IPL's 17 seasons. If the Sunrisers keep up the pace this year, Mr Cummins could be lifting another big prize.

## Weekend profile: Armin Papperger, the German arms boss Russia wants dead



The German state of North Rhine-Westphalia has long provided bodyguards to Armin Papperger. But since American and German spooks foiled a Russian plot to kill him last year, the boss of [Rheinmetall, Germany's biggest armsmaker](#), has had his security beefed up. His detail is now equivalent to that of the country's chancellor.

Far from being cowed, Mr Papperger is more ambitious than ever. The 62-year-old company lifer, who started as an engineer in 1990 and ascended to the top in 2013, wants to haul Rheinmetall into the top tier of armsmakers, dominated by American giants. Mr Papperger was born in the southern state of Bavaria, and grew up at a time when West Germany still had conscription. He never served in the army because of a sports accident. But he can drive a tank. Every member of Rheinmetall's board is trained to use the company's weapons.

Few firms have profited as much as Rheinmetall from [Europeans' increased need for military kit](#) since Russia's full-scale invasion of



Ukraine in 2022. America's wavering support for its allies under [Donald Trump](#) will fuel European demand further. On March 12th Rheinmetall said that in 2024 sales grew 36% to €9.8bn (\$10.6bn). The firm expects a 30% increase this year. Mr Papperger wants revenue to reach €20bn by 2027 and, eventually, €40bn.

Europeans' resolve to tool up means that he may achieve that. This week Germany's parliament voted to exempt [defence expenditure](#) from the debt brake, the strict fiscal limit enshrined in the constitution. And on March 19th the European Commission, the EU's executive arm, also proposed to exempt defence from deficit limits and establish a defence fund of €150bn.

For many years Mr Papperger was viewed with disdain in polite circles, and well beyond. Rheinmetall began producing ammunition in 1889. But after the horrors of the second world war Germans had a deep aversion to armsmakers. A teacher of his daughter once asked him how he could do his job with a clear conscience. Mr Papperger's home was the target of arson attacks and daubed with graffiti. Successive defence ministers avoided Rheinmetall's headquarters in Düsseldorf. Some politicians even refused to shake his hand.

These days Mr Papperger is sought after, not shunned. At the Munich Security Conference in February he talked to [Friedrich Merz](#), the next chancellor; [Volodymyr Zelensky](#), the Ukrainian president; and Mark Rutte, the secretary-general of NATO. And Germans seem to have warmed to him too. Borussia Dortmund, a football club in Rheinmetall's home state, is proud to have the firm as a sponsor. Mr Papperger says that sometimes people come up to him at games and say that it's good that he's around.

# 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* Trump's controversial promise of French wine and a horrible stain with an egg in it (12)

*1 across* Little Deborah, Tom said initially, must be paid off (5)

*2 across* Tesla, formerly cash central, is a state (5)

*3 across* Sounds like appropriate thing to make cars out of (5)

## Factual clues

*1 down* Actions taken against alleged Venezuelan gang members in America last week (12)

*1 across* Liabilities being racked up by several countries to pay for defence, among other things (5)

*2 across* True-blue southern state, whose economy is growing fast (5)

*3 across* One of the domestic industries Donald Trump is trying to protect through tariffs (5)

Email all four answers, along with your home city and country, by 9am GMT on Monday to [crossword@economist.com](mailto: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:

**Ewoud Roes**, Bucharest, Romania

**Mark Kelly**, Dublin, Ireland

**Jakob Vielsoe-Nielsen**, Naestved, Denmark

They all gave the correct answers of 16, farewell, "The Favourite", mountain, and Maria Callas. The theme is songs in "The Sound of Music": "Sixteen Going On Seventeen", "So Long, Farewell", "My Favourite Things", "Climb Ev'ry Mountain" and "Maria".

The questions were:

**Monday:** How many fluid ounces equal a pint in America?

**Tuesday:** How is Haydn's 45th symphony generally known?

**Wednesday:** Olivia Colman won an Oscar for playing Queen Anne in which 2018 film?

**Thursday:** Fold, dome and plateau are all types of which geographical feature?

**Friday:** Angelina Jolie recently played which opera singer in a movie biopic?





**Do not the most moving moments of our  
lives find us all without words?**

*Marcel Marceau*