

Catch up: a caveated Black Sea ceasefire; Trump administration defends Signal fiasco



America said that **Russia** and **Ukraine** had agreed to end “the use of force” in the **Black Sea** and ensure “safe passage” for commercial shipping. The [countries](#) also agreed to “develop measures” to ban strikes on energy facilities in Ukraine and Russia, and America said it would help restore Russia’s ability to export agricultural products. However, Russia subsequently stated that the agreement would only come into force once a set of related sanctions had been relaxed, casting doubt over whether anything had changed.

Members of the **Trump administration** denied that they had done anything wrong after [Mike Waltz](#), America’s national security adviser, accidentally added a journalist to a secret war-planning group chat. Appearing before the Senate Intelligence Committee, America’s director of national intelligence, [Tulsi Gabbard](#), denied that classified material was shared. Mark Warner, a Democratic senator, said the leak was “reckless, sloppy and stunning”.

Police arrested dozens in **Turkey** for insulting the president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and his family, according to the country's interior minister. Mr Erdogan said that [protests against the arrest](#) last week of Ekrem Imamoglu, a popular opposition leader, were “evil”. The opposition said it would end its street protests but urged supporters to boycott companies that it claimed support the government.

Israel's government passed a long-delayed budget for 2025. The plan will increase spending by 21% this year, compared to 2024, and push defence spending to a record 110bn shekels (\$30bn). The budget's passage will strengthen the ruling coalition of [Binyamin Netanyahu](#). The prime minister had to pass the budget by March 31st or call an election.

A conflict monitoring group in **Sudan** said that more than 250 people were killed in an air strike on Tora, a village in [Darfur](#). The Sudanese army was accused of carrying out the strike, but denied targeting civilians and described the reports as “false claims”. The Sudanese army has been fighting the Rapid Support Forces, a paramilitary group, for nearly two years.

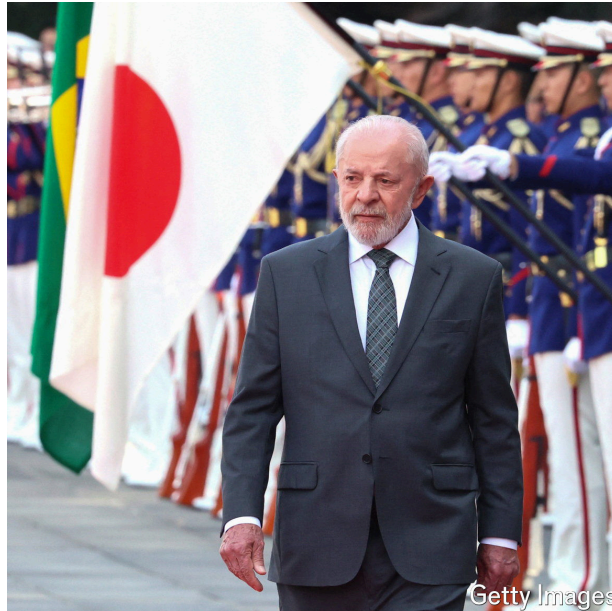
Israeli police released from detention **Hamdan Ballal**, an [Oscar-winning Palestinian director](#) who says he was beaten by [Israeli settlers](#) after fighting broke out near his home in the West Bank. The Israel Defence Forces said it sent soldiers to disperse the “violent confrontation” on Monday. Mr Ballal and three others, including one Israeli, were among those detained for allegedly throwing rocks at soldiers.

A **crypto platform** backed by Donald Trump's family will launch a [stablecoin](#), a digital asset that will be pegged to the dollar. World Liberty Financial was created last year by Mr Trump's sons and the son of Steve Witkoff, the president's [diplomatic dealmaker](#). In January America's president [peddled a meme-cryptocurrency](#), raising ethics concerns, and most recently pledged to establish a “strategic bitcoin reserve”.

Who will win Canada's election next month? Our [poll tracker](#) has the odds, updated daily.

Figure of the day: 23%, the share of the world's copper that it is mined in Chile. [Read the full story.](#)

Brazil's Trump-sized opportunity in Asia



President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of Brazil, known as [Lula](#), kicked off a five-day trip to Asia this week. Brazil spies an opportunity to deepen its economic ties with the region at the same time as [Donald Trump's fondness for tariffs](#) makes America a less reliable trading partner. In Tokyo on Wednesday Lula, travelling with a vast entourage of businessmen, and the Japanese prime minister, Ishiba Shigeru, will restate their commitment to free trade.

During Mr Trump's first administration, Brazilian exports to China nearly doubled as China bought soyabeans and corn from Brazil instead of America. A similar boost could come from other Asian countries seeking to diversify their imports. Almost all of Japan's imports of red meat, for instance, come from America and Australia. Brazilian producers, who have sought access to the Japanese market for two decades, believe a breakthrough is coming. With Mr Trump's return to power, the sticking point in negotiations—sanitation standards—is getting ever less sticky.

Britain's chancellor gives her spring statement



Rachel Reeves is in for a big day on Wednesday. Britain's chancellor is required by law to commission two economic forecasts a year from the Office for Budget Responsibility, Britain's fiscal watchdog. After a dramatic budget last October, in which Ms Reeves raised taxing, borrowing and spending, she had hoped that her spring statement—which is accompanied by an OBR forecast—would be a low-key affair.

Unfortunately, weak growth and rising gilt yields, which increase the government's borrowing costs, have cut back Ms Reeves's fiscal space and forced her to start making bigger moves to free up cash. One came last week, when the government set out plans to save £5bn (\$6.5bn) a year by slowing the rise in the number of working age Britons [claiming sickness benefits](#). More are surely on the way. Alongside the chancellor, watch closely what the OBR says. It has a habit of puncturing politicians' assumptions with a delicately-worded footnote or caveat.

A controversial conference in Israel



An international conference on combating antisemitism, organised by the [Israeli government](#), begins on Wednesday in Jerusalem. But a number of important Jewish figures are staying away. Israel's president, Isaac Herzog, who was to host the opening event, has withdrawn. So have Ephraim Mirvis, the chief rabbi of Britain, and the French-Jewish philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy. Jonathan Greenblatt, the boss of the Anti-Defamation League, a major American-Jewish organisation, will be absent. So will officials from the British and German governments in charge of fighting antisemitism.

They are staying away in protest against the presence of hard-right politicians from France, Spain, Sweden and Hungary. They were invited by Amichai Chickli, Israel's minister for diaspora affairs (pictured). Mr Chickli has promoted ties with the hard right, whom he sees as allies against Islamic fundamentalism. But many leaders of the Jewish diaspora—who worry about antisemitism on Europe's nationalist and populist right itself—think otherwise. The conference is “stabbing Jews in the back”, said Ariel Muzicant, the president of the European Jewish Congress.

Italy's tourism minister dukes it out in court



Daniela Santanchè, Italy's tourism minister (pictured), is due to appear in court in Milan on Wednesday. Prosecutors say the accounts of a company she ran before entering government were fiddled to cover up losses and that, during the pandemic, the firm took €126,000 (\$136,000) of taxpayers' money to furlough employees who continued working. Ms Santanchè denies wrongdoing. She has already been indicted in another case. The judge must decide if she should stand trial a second time. On Monday Ms Santanchè said she would not resign.

[Giorgia Meloni](#), the conservative prime minister, has lent her backing to Ms Santanchè, who is among her most vocal supporters. But the imbroglio has embarrassed the government. Among others accused is Ms Santanchè's companion, who claims to be a scion of the archducal family that ruled Tuscany. The head of the family has said he was unable to find Prince Dimitri Kunz D'Asburgo Lorena Piast Bielitz Bielice Belluno Spalia Rasponi Spinelli on "any branch of the genealogical tree". Prince Dmitri also denies wrongdoing.

“The Studio” comes to Apple



On Wednesday the first two episodes of “The Studio”, a comedy, premiere on Apple TV. Seth Rogen stars as the new boss of Continental Studios in Hollywood, who is trying to balance his desire to make worthwhile films with the commercial pressures of the business. There is plenty to mock about Hollywood—from its [wokeness](#), to its insufferably long films, to executives’ unwillingness to deliver harsh feedback to stars. The show takes on all of these and more.

Unfortunately, what could have been a richly entertaining romp ends up feeling like the worst of show business: the series is self-regarding, over-the-top and indulgent. In one episode executives cannot agree on who should tell a famous director that his film is boring and needs to be cut down; they settle on a contrived plan to make the feedback easier to deliver. Unfortunately for viewers, it is “The Studio” itself that needed a better edit.

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.

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

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

It is not enough to be in the right place at the right time. You should also have an open mind at the right time.

Paul Erdos