



Thursday 19th March 2026

Inflation expectations flash a warning - but not a long-lasting one

Central banks have good reason to sit up and take notice of how this month's oil shock is hitting inflation expectations. Yet financial market pricing shows a split picture so far. It looks like a one-two punch: a near-term cost-of-living burst that subsides again over the longer term. (www.reuters.com 18/03/26)

Eurozone inflation rises as estimated

Eurozone inflation increased in Feb. as initially estimated, driven by faster service sector price growth and moderated energy cost decline, final data from Eurostat showed on Wednesday [18/03]. The harmonized index of consumer prices registered an annual increase of 1.9% after rising 1.7% in Jan. The rate came in line with the estimate published on March 3. (www.rttnews.com 18/03/26)

ECB to hold as it weighs Iran war's inflation threat

The European Central Bank is set to keep interest rates unchanged as it gauges how much of an inflation shock the war in Iran will deliver. The deposit rate will be held at 2% today where it's been since last June according to a Bloomberg survey. While most economists see borrowing costs staying there through year-end, traders are betting on at least one hike. (www.bloomberg.com 19/03/26)

Trump ally warns US economy not strong enough to cope with Iran war

Donald Trump's one-time pick to lead the Bureau of Labor Statistics has said the US economy is too weak to handle oil at \$100 per barrel as he warned of rising consumer prices triggered by the war in Iran. "I don't think this is an economy that is going to be able to handle \$100 a barrel for oil, it's just not," EJ Antoni told the FT. "The economy is weaker than we thought it was, and inflation is worse than we thought it was," he added. (www.ft.com 18/03/26)

Fed chief Jay Powell says Iran oil crisis will worsen US inflation

Fed chair Jay Powell has acknowledged that the Iran war will raise inflation as a fresh jump in oil prices sent short-term US borrowing costs to the highest level since last summer. Powell said that in the near term, "higher energy prices will push up overall inflation, but it is too soon to know the scope and duration of the potential effects on the economy". (www.ft.com 19/03/26)

China set to keep rates steady as Mideast war clouds inflation outlook

China is expected to keep benchmark lending rates steady for the 10th consecutive month in March on Friday [20/03], a Reuters survey showed, as rising global oil prices driven by heightened Middle East tensions add uncertainty to the inflation outlook. Beijing's 2026 economic growth target of 4.5% to 5%, slightly below last year's 5% expansion. (www.reuters.com 19/03/26)

Economists raise UK inflation forecasts after energy costs surge

Economists have raised their forecasts for UK inflation following the surge in energy prices caused by the war in Iran, complicating the Bank of England's decision on interest rates today. The Treasury's summary of independent forecasts showed economists now expect annual inflation to reach 2.6% in Q4. (www.ft.com 18/03/26)

BOJ says will raise rates if outlook stays on track after hold

The Bank of Japan kept its policy rate unchanged as uncertainty surrounding the Middle East conflict clouds the economic outlook, while also pledging to raise borrowing costs if its price forecast materializes. It left its benchmark interest rate untouched at 0.75% today at the conclusion of a two-day gathering. The outcome matched the expectations of all 51 economists. (www.bloomberg.com 19/03/26)

EXCHANGE RATES OF SELECTED CURRENCIES

CURRENCIES	BUYING		SELLING	
+USD/GBP	1.3324	(1.3345)	1.3325	(1.3346)
+USD/EUR	1.1516	(1.1530)	1.1516	(1.1530)
*GHS/USD	10.9145	(10.8946)	10.9255	(10.9055)
*GHS/GBP	14.5425	(14.5388)	14.5582	(14.5544)
*GHS/EUR	12.5692	(12.5627)	12.5805	(12.5740)

+SOURCE: BOG INTERNAL TRANSACTION RATES: 19/03/26 (Rates for 18/03/26 in brackets)

* BOG INTERNAL TRANSACTION RATES: 19/02/26 (Rates for 18/03/26 in brackets)

Bank of Canada holds rates, looks through near-term oil risk

The Bank of Canada held interest rates steady, saying it would “look through” the Middle East war’s immediate inflation impact as it kept focus on downside growth risks. Officials led by Governor Tiff Macklem kept the policy rate at 2.25% on Wednesday [18/03], matching expectations of markets and most economists. (www.bloomberg.com 18/03/26)

RBA warns of global financial stability risks as Iran war rages

Australia’s central bank said local households and firms are broadly well placed to cope with recent interest-rate increases and surging fuel prices from the escalating Middle East conflict, while highlighting the potential for an unexpected shock because of elevated international risk. (www.bloomberg.com 19/03/26)

Hong Kong jobless rate falls to 3.8%

Hong Kong's unemployment rate decreased in the Dec. to Feb. period, labor force statistics from the Census and Statistics Department showed on Wednesday [18/03]. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate came in at 3.8% for Dec. to Feb. down from 3.9% in the Nov.-Jan. period. (www.rttnews.com 18/03/26)

Poland to invest \$270bn in energy sector over next decade: PM

Poland will invest 1tr Polish zlotys (\$270bn) in its energy sector over the next decade, Prime Minister Donald Tusk said on Wednesday [18/03]. More than 220bn zlotys (\$59bn) will go to renewable energy and energy storage, 234bn zlotys (\$63bn) to power distribution, and 160bn zlotys (\$43bn) to nuclear energy, Tusk said. (www.xinhuanet.com 18/03/26)

Chile's economy grows 2.5% in 2025

Chile's economy grew 2.5% in 2025, surpassing business sector forecasts, the Central Bank of Chile reported Wednesday [18/03]. The expansion was driven by domestic demand, with increases in investment and consumption. The 2025 figure aligns with the previous administration's forecast, said the report. (www.xinhuanet.com 19/03/26)

Oil rises after Iran strikes Middle East energy facilities

Oil prices rose today, with benchmark Brent rising as much as \$5 a barrel, after Iran attacked energy facilities across the Middle East following a strike on the South Pars gas field, a major escalation in the war with the US and Israel. Brent futures were up \$4.66, or 4.3%, at \$112.04 a barrel by 0400 GMT. (www.reuters.com 18/03/26)

African nations to borrow \$155bn this year, S&P says

African nations are expected to borrow \$155bn in long-term commercial debt this year, S&P Global Ratings said, a 10% increase on the previous year, to refinance maturing debt and navigate growing fiscal obligations at home. Projected borrowing for 2026 will raise total outstanding sovereign commercial debt to just above \$1.2tr. (www.reuters.com 18/03/26)

Egypt's energy import bill more than doubles as global prices surge

Egypt's energy import bill has more than doubled since the outbreak of the US-Israeli war with Iran, Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly said, underscoring mounting pressure on the country's finances as global fuel prices rise. (www.reuters.com 18/03/26)

World Bank looks at 'all options' to help debt-burdened Mozambique

The World Bank is working with Mozambique to tackle the country's mounting debt challenges, a senior bank official said, as its borrowing costs surge, highlighting pressure on its finances against a backdrop of heightened geopolitical risk. (www.reuters.com 18/03/26)

Ghana central bank extends rate-cutting cycle despite Iran war risks

Ghana's central bank delivered its fifth interest rate cut running on Wednesday [18/03], a 150-basis-point move this time, saying low inflation and favourable domestic conditions gave scope to cut again despite risks stemming from the Middle East conflict. The decision takes the Bank of Ghana's monetary policy rate to 14%. (www.reuters.com 18/03/26)

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