Weekly Commercial Media Report for the period 10-17 April 2025

A.Israel-Internal

March CPI higher than expected, housing prices rise

Israel's Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose 0.5% in March 2025 according to figures released by the Central Bureau of Statistics today. Analysts had predicted a 0.4% rise, after the CPI was unchanged in February 2025. The March reading brings annual inflation in Israel down to 3.3% from 3.4% at the end of February, bringing inflation closer to the upper limit of the Bank of Israel's annual target range of 3% but not as close as the 3.1% inflation figure predicted by analysts.

https://en.globes.co.il/en/article-march-cpi-higher-than-expected-housing-prices-rise-1001507885

"We'll meet in the High Court": Barkat proposes a 165% levy, cannabis importers promise war

Last Thursday evening, just before leaving for the Passover vacation, Economy Minister Nir Barkat announced that he had accepted the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Dumping Levy — and would impose a 165% levy on cannabis imported from Canada (except for four importers on whom a lower levy will be imposed).

Next Thursday will be the end of the 15 days in which Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich can veto Barkat's decision. If he does not do so, the dumping levy will be approved by the Knesset Finance Committee. According to estimates in the cannabis market, the Finance Committee will not completely overturn the decision of the Economy Minister and the professionals in his office, but it may moderate the rate of the levy.

https://www.themarker.com/news/health/2025-04-17/ty-article/.premium/00000196-3f15-daed-a3d7-7f1f09d50000

Importers against the Chief Rabbinate: "There may be a shortage of dairy products on Shavuot"

"There is a real danger of a shortage of dairy products during Shavuot due to the Chief Rabbinate's unenforceable requirements for approving kosher certificates for imported dairy products," warns Shahar Turgeman, president of the Association of Chambers of Commerce, in a letter he sent to Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, Economy Minister Nir Barkat, and Religious Services Minister Michael Malchieli.

Turgeman writes: "I am warning you now that the Chief Rabbinate's conduct poses a real danger to the supply of dairy products ahead of the holiday."

https://www.ynet.co.il/economy/article/yokra14335748

March's consumer price index surprised negatively, housing prices rose 7.5% year-on-year

Notable price increases were recorded in the following categories: Clothing and Footwear, which rose by 2.2%, Culture and Entertainment, which rose by 1.5%, Fresh Fruit, which rose by 1.3%, and Tenant-Owned Housing Services, which rose by 1.2%. Notable price decreases were recorded in the following categories: Furniture and Home Equipment, and Communications, which each fell by 0.4%.

There has been a significant increase in the residential construction input price index, which rose by 6.1% in the past year, due to a 10% increase in construction wages. Such an increase will lead to further increases in housing prices.

https://www.ynet.co.il/economy/article/h1qx5coayx

B.Israel-Multilateral

Apple SVP leads senior delegation of execs to Israel

Apple senior vice president hardware technologies Johny Srouji, who reports directly to CEO Tim Cook, made a low profile working visit to Israel last week. Srouji, who is the most senior Israeli at the tech giant, led a senior delegation of Apple executives met with employees at Apple's R&D centers in Herzliya, Haifa and Jerusalem.

In the wake of Srouji's visit to Israel, "Globes" has learned that real estate sources estimate that Apple's new headquarters in Herzliya is expected to be completed and occupied in early 2027. This follows delays from the original plan, which anticipated completion of construction towards the end of 2025.

https://en.globes.co.il/en/article-apple-svp-leads-senior-delegation-of-execs-to-israel-1001507764

Kesem Energy signs gas deals worth $2.8b

Kesem Energy has signed a $2 billion gas supply agreement with **Energean plc** (LSE: ENOG; TASE: ENOG) over 17 years from the Karish-Tanin gas fields and a $700-800 million agreement with the Tamar partners until 2035. Kesem Energy will build a power plant at the Kesem junction on land belonging to Kibbutz Ein Hashlosha. The power plant is scheduled to begin operating in 2029.

https://en.globes.co.il/en/article-kesem-energy-signs-gas-deals-worth-28b-1001507818

At sea, in the air, on land: Just before Passover, Trump's war on China landed in Israel

Just before Passover, the U.S. pressured Israel to block Chinese company CRRC from supplying trains for Jerusalem's Blue Line light rail, a project valued at 9 billion shekels. CRRC had been selected after previous European and Polish suppliers withdrew, but U.S. opposition—channeled through Aryeh Lightstone, a Trump ally in Israel—halted final approval, delaying the project's financial closure.

The move reflects Trump's renewed economic campaign against China, now extending into Israeli infrastructure. U.S. officials also demanded protection for American companies like Chevron and Netflix, and pushed for regulatory benefits favoring U.S. imports.

Meanwhile, Israel eased restrictions on El Al's dividend distribution in a move some saw as politically motivated—likely linked to Netanyahu's promise to reduce Israel's trade deficit with the U.S., and indirectly support Boeing via El Al's $1.5B aircraft deal.

https://www.themarker.com/allnews/2025-04-15/ty-article/.highlight/00000196-3574-dc5b-af96-7df5debd0000

"Dramatic change in conditions": Removing Chinese from light rail sparks chain reaction

Will the geopolitical drama surrounding the Blue Line of the Jerusalem Light Rail help Shikun and Binui, Egged, and the Czech Skoda in their fight to re-edit the huge tender?
The group, which consists of the three companies, is again demanding that the state reopen the tender for the construction and operation of the Blue Line of the Jerusalem Light Rail, and allow the groups that originally competed to submit new bids.

https://www.ynet.co.il/economy/article/hknhuxrckg

C. Tenders

Company	Contact	Description	Submission Date