

6 March 2026

Global Markets Research
Daily Market Highlights

6 Mar: All eyes on the US nonfarm job data today

Spike in oil prices gripped market; stocks & bonds fell; DXY up on haven bid
US job data reaffirmed a steady labour market although hiring plans slowed
MYR closed flattish after BNM maintained OPR & neutral policy stance

- US stocks resumed their downward trend after a 1-day respite, while the sell-off in treasuries deepened with signs of widening geopolitical risk pushing up both the WTI and Brent above the \$80/barrel level. The WTI briefly touched \$82.16/barrel before easing and closing the day at \$81.01/barrel (+8.5% d/d). (The WTI last closed above \$80/barrel in January 2025) Brent jumped 4.9% d/d to \$85.41/barrel, while a stronger Dollar saw prices for gold tumbling 1.1% d/d to \$5,079/oz.
- In the equity space, the 3 major stock indices fell 0.3-1.6% d/d amid sell-offs in all the sectors save for energy, tech and consumer discretionary. Stoxx Eur 600 also traded 1.3% d/d lower, but Asian markets rebounded after several days of steep losses with Kospi leading gains at 9.6% d/d. As it is, markets will continue to be rocky with Trump eyeing Cuba next and until tankers can navigate through the Strait of Hormuz safely, easing supply concerns.
- The global bond rout, meanwhile, showed no respite with concerns of an extended conflict and its repercussion on oil prices and inflation casting rate cut doubts in the near term, at least for the Fed. The benchmark 2Y yield rose 3bps to 3.58%, while the 10Y increased 4bps to 4.14%. 10Y European bond yields rebounded and jumped between 4-13bps overnight amid chatters of rate hike.
- In the forex space, the Dollar (DXY: 0.6% d/d to 99.32) resumed its climb, rebounding from a brief pullback with the widening conflict in the Middle East keeping investors on edge and driving demand for haven assets. All G10 currencies weakened against the Dollar, with GBP (-0.1% d/d to 1.3357) posting the narrowest loss while AUD (-1.0% d/d to 0.7008) the widest, among the major currencies.
- Similarly, most regional currencies also weakened against the greenback. CNH depreciated 0.3% d/d to 6.9180 after Beijing lowered its GDP growth target to “4.5-5.0” this year from 5.0% in 2025. SGD weakened 0.4% d/d to 1.2805, while

Key Market Metrics

	Level	d/d (%)
Equities		
Dow Jones	47,954.74	-1.61
S&P 500	6,830.71	-0.56
NASDAQ	22,748.99	-0.26
Stoxx Eur 600	604.83	-1.29
FTSE 100	10,413.94	-1.45
Nikkei 225	55,278.06	1.90
CSI 300	4,647.69	0.98
Hang Seng	25,321.34	0.28
Straits Times	4,846.56	0.70
KLCI 30	1,713.20	0.88
FX		
Dollar Index	99.32	0.55
EUR/USD	1.1609	-0.21
GBP/USD	1.3357	-0.13
USD/JPY	157.59	0.34
AUD/USD	0.7008	-0.95
USD/CNH	6.9180	0.33
USD/MYR	3.9447	0.03
USD/SGD	1.2805	0.42
USD/KHR	4,011.75	0.03
USD/THB	31.60	0.48
Commodities		
WTI (\$/bbl)	81.01	8.51
Brent (\$/bbl)	85.41	4.93
Gold (\$/oz)	5,078.70	-1.09
Copper (\$/MT)	12,902.00	-1.19
Aluminum(\$/MT)	3,296.00	-1.39
CPO (RM/tonne)	4,078.50	0.41

Source: Bloomberg, HLBB Global Markets Research
 * Closing as of 4 Mar for CPO

MYR closed just below its flatline at 3.9447 after the central bank maintained its policy rate unchanged as expected.

BNM maintained OPR and neutral policy tone as expected; maintain our view for no change in OPR in 2026

- As widely expected, the BNM maintained its Overnight Policy Rate (OPR) at 2.75% for the 4th straight meeting at its March policy meeting. The better-than-expected growth performance in 2025 is expected to continue into 2026 although the MPC did acknowledge increased uncertainty and downside risks stemming from the heightened tension in the Middle-east, impact of which would depend on the duration and severity of the conflict. Overall policy statement remained neutral in our opinion, and reinforced our view for OPR to stay unchanged this year. That said, we do reckon increasing uncertainties and downside risks should the Middle-east conflict turn out to be a long-drawn war that disrupts global trade flows, world economic ecosystem, and stability in the global financial markets. For detailed report, refer to Research Alert “No change in OPR and BNM’s neutral policy stance” dated 5th March.

Layoffs in the US plunged, but so are hiring plans as compared to a year ago; Stronger than expected productivity growth, softer than expected import prices help to contain price pressure

- In more signs of stabilisation in the labour market, data overnight showed that job cuts fell in February while initial jobless claims also remained low. The Challenger, Gray & Christmas Inc reported employers announced 48.3k job cuts in February, down 55.5% m/m and 71.9% y/y (prior: 205.0% m/m and 117.8% y/y) but with US involvement in a growing war in Iran, the end of 1Q may bring more layoff plans with companies tightening belts amid uncertainty and higher costs. Education, industrial goods and insurance led job cuts during the month, while hiring plans jumped 140.4% m/m but slid 63.1% y/y to 12.8k.
- Meanwhile, initial jobless claims were better than expected and steady at 213k for the week ended February 28 (prior: +5k). Continuing claims increased 46k to 1868k the week February 21 (prior: -42k), suggesting some people who lost their jobs are experiencing long bouts of unemployment.
- On the price front, productivity growth (better than expected at 2.8% in 4Q vs 5.2% in 3Q) and contained unit labour costs (2.8% vs -1.8%) will limit wage cost pressure, while steady import prices (0.2% m/m in January) will help contain price pressure overall prior to the recent spike in crude oil prices.

Unexpected drop in Eurozone's retail sales

- Retail sales unexpectedly fell 0.1% m/m in January, reversing the 0.1% m/m reported the prior month. The drop was underpinned by a decline in sales for automotive fuel (-1.1% m/m vs 0.6% m/m) and non-food (-0.2% m/m vs -0.4% m/m), while sales for food, drink and tobacco also grew a smaller pace of 0.3% m/m after 0.4% m/m. In our opinion, the drop partially reflects pullbacks from December's seasonal demand and will continue to be supported by a resilient labour market moving forward.

Still strong Australia's household spending; narrower trade surplus does not bode well for GDP calculation

- The rebound in household spending will likely lend weight to another RBA rate hike. Although a tad softer than expected, spending remained high on a yearly basis and rose 0.3% m/m in January following a 0.5% m/m drop in December. Spending on services drove the rise, led by health and other discretionary services like digital streaming and travel, and partly offset by a fall in spending on goods on account of drops in purchase of motor vehicles and recreation & culture goods.
- On a negative note, trade surplus unexpectedly narrowed to A\$2.6bn in January from A\$3.4bn previously as import growth rebounded to 0.8% m/m (prior: -1.8% m/m), while export growth turned contractionary at 0.9% m/m (prior: 0.9% m/m) on account of lower shipments to most of its major trading partners like the US and China.

Drop in Singapore's retail sales due to high base effect

- Retail sales surprised on the downside, contracting by 0.4% y/y in January, reversing the 2.5% y/y growth the prior month. The decline was underpinned by high base effect (Chinese New Year in February 2026 vs Jan 2025) and was weighed down by declines in sales for wearing apparel & footwear sales, at department stores as well as supermarkets & hypermarkets, negated by gains in recreational goods and motor vehicles, parts & accessories.

House View and Forecasts

FX	This Week	1Q-26	2Q-26	3Q-26	4Q-26
DX	96-100	96.71	95.13	94.70	95.49
EUR/USD	1.16-1.20	1.20	1.22	1.22	1.21
GBP/USD	1.33-137	1.36	1.37	1.37	1.35
USD/CHF	0.75-0.79	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.78
USD/JPY	153-159	153	149	147	147
AUD/USD	0.69-0.73	0.68	0.69	0.70	0.69
NZD/USD	0.58-0.62	0.58	0.59	0.59	0.58
USD/CNY	6.85-6.94	6.90	6.83	6.85	6.90

USD/MYR	3.89-3.96	4.00	3.97	3.97	4.00
USD/SGD	1.25-1.28	1.26	1.23	1.23	1.24
USD/THB	30.80-31.60	32.2	32,1	32.0	30.8

FX	Last close	1Q-26	2Q-26	3Q-26	4Q-26
EUR/MYR	4.5850	4.78	4.82	4.85	4.84
GBP/MYR	5.2682	5.44	5.45	5.45	5.41
AUD/MYR	2.7791	2.72	2.75	2.78	2.76
CNY/MYR	0.5723	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58
SGD/MYR	3.0912	3.17	3.21	3.23	3.22

Rates, %	Current	1Q26	2Q26	3Q26	4Q26
Fed	3.50-3.75	3.50-3.75	3.25-3.50	3.25-3.50	3.00-3.25
ECB	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
BOE	3.75	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50
SNB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
BOJ	0.75	0.75	0.75	1.00	1.00
RBA	3.85	3.85	4.10	4.10	4.10
RBNZ	2.25	2.25	2.25	2.25	2.25
BNM	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75

Source: HLBB Global Markets Research

Up Next

Date	Events	Prior
6-Mar	VN CPI YoY (Feb)	2.53%
	VN Exports YoY (Feb)	29.70%
	VN Industrial Production YoY (Feb)	21.50%
	VN Retail Sales YoY (Feb)	9.30%
	MA Foreign Reserves (Feb 27)	\$127.9bn
	EC GDP SA QoQ (4Q T)	0.30%
	EC Employment QoQ (4Q F)	0.20%
	US Change in Nonfarm Payrolls (Feb)	130k
	US Average Hourly Earnings YoY (Feb)	3.70%
	US Average Weekly Hours All Employees (Feb)	34.3
	US Unemployment Rate (Feb)	4.30%
	US Retail Sales (Jan)	0.0%
	6-Mar	US Consumer Credit (Jan)
9-Mar	JN Labor Cash Earnings YoY (Jan)	2.40%
	JN Bank Lending Incl Trusts YoY (Feb)	4.50%
	CH PPI YoY (Feb)	-1.40%
	CH CPI YoY (Feb)	0.20%
	JN Leading Index CI (Jan P)	111
	JN Eco Watchers Survey Outlook SA (Feb)	50.1
	EC Sentix Investor Confidence (Mar)	4.2
9-14	US NY Fed 1-Yr Inflation Expectations (Feb)	3.09%
Mar	CH Aggregate Financing CNY YTD (Feb)	7220.0b

Source: Bloomberg

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