

15 April 2026

Global Markets Research
Daily Market Highlights

15 Apr: IMF expects global growth to slow moderately

World GDP growth downgraded 0.2ppt to 3.1%; CPI raised by 0.6ppt to 4.4% for 2026 Tamer than expected US PPI; weakened business confidence in the US and Australia China's exports disappointed; strong Japan's core machine orders before the war

- Prospect over a second round of peace talk between US-Iran saw crude oil prices tumbling more than 4% d/d each to \$91.28/barrel for the WTI and \$94.79/barrel for Brent, and in other asset classes, saw investors snapping risky assets like stocks and major equity bourses closing in green.
- In Wall Street, consumer and tech stocks led gains within the S&P 500 (1.2% d/d), while the Dow and Nasdaq also closed up 0.7% d/d and 2.0% d/d. Also supporting sentiment was the softer than expected PPI print overnight, as well as favourable bank earnings from some of the US' largest banks. On a separate note, the Senate Banking Committee has scheduled a confirmation hearing on April 21 for Kevin Warsh, President Trump's nominee for the next Fed Chair succeeding Jerome Powell.
- Elsewhere, Stoxx 600 rose 1.0% d/d in Europe, while Nikkei 225, CSI 300 and Hang Seng rallied between 0.8-2.4% d/d in Asia.
- In the bond space, treasuries gained in view of the softer than expected PPI and as oil benchmarks retreated d/d, soothing concerns on inflationary pressure ahead. The 2Y yield closed the day 3bps lower at 3.75%, and the 10Y by 5bps to 4.25%. 10Y European bond yields fell between 2-11bps.
- In the FX space, the DXY (-0.3% d/d to 98.12) fell for the seventh straight day as the prospect of another round of negotiation cooled demand for haven currencies. Most G10 FX appreciated against the Dollar, with NZD (0.6% d/d), GBP (0.5% d/d to 1.3567) and AUD (0.4% d/d to 0.7126) outperforming their peers. KRW (0.7% d/d) and MYR (0.6% d/d to 3.9523) led gains against the greenback on the regional front, while SGD appreciated 0.1% d/d to 1.2717 after MAS steepened its S\$NEER band in a widely anticipated move.

Key Market Metrics

	Level	d/d (%)
Equities		
Dow Jones	48,535.99	0.66
S&P 500	6,967.38	1.18
NASDAQ	23,639.08	1.96
Stoxx Eur 600	619.95	0.99
FTSE 100	10,609.06	0.25
Nikkei 225	57,877.39	2.43
CSI 300	4,701.28	1.19
Hang Seng	25,872.32	0.82
Straits Times	5,007.57	0.47
KLCI 30	1,688.12	0.45
FX		
Dollar Index	98.12	-0.25
EUR/USD	1.1796	0.31
GBP/USD	1.3567	0.45
USD/JPY	158.79	-0.41
AUD/USD	0.7126	0.44
USD/CNH	6.8108	-0.13
USD/MYR	3.9523	-0.62
USD/SGD	1.2717	-0.13
USD/KHR	4,003.88	-0.10
USD/THB	32.15	0.15
Commodities		
WTI (\$/bbl)	91.28	-7.87
Brent (\$/bbl)	94.79	-4.60
Gold (\$/oz)	4,825.00	1.74
Copper (\$/MT)	13,284.50	1.77
Aluminum(\$/MT)	3,563.00	-1.23
CPO (RM/tonne)	4,556.00	-0.32

Source: Bloomberg, HLBB Global Markets Research

* Closing as of 13 Apr for CPO

IMF lowered world GDP growth forecast to 3.1% for 2026; expect growth of 2.5% under adverse scenario and 2.0% under severe scenario

- Given the lack of clarity on the duration, intensity and scope of the Middle East conflict, the IMF presented a new set of “reference forecast,” in lieu of the traditional baseline, in their latest World Economic Outlook (WEO). Highlights from the report include:
 - Under the assumption of a **limited conflict (short-lived)**, global growth is expected to slow modestly from 3.4% in 2025 to 3.1% in 2026 (-0.2ppts from January’s forecast) and 3.2% in 2027 (unchanged).
 - In an **adverse** scenario, assuming a sharper increase in energy prices this year, rising inflation expectations and some tightening of financial conditions, growth is expected to ease to 2.5% this year and inflation rises to 5.4%.
 - In a **severe** scenario where energy supply dislocations extend into next year, inflation expectations become markedly less anchored, and financial conditions tightened sharply, global growth would ease to 2.0% this year and next, while inflation would exceed 6%.
- The overall impact on the majors will be uneven but modest, thanks to positive terms-of-trade effects and growth momentum for the US (-0.1ppts to 2.3% for 2026 and +0.1ppts to 2.1% for 2027, from 2.1% in 2025) and stimulus packages in Japan (unchanged at 0.7% for 2026 and unchanged at 0.6% for 2027, from 1.2% in 2025). Large negative effect is nonetheless expected in some net energy-importing economies, such as the Euro area (-0.2ppt to 1.1% for 2026 and -0.2ppt to 1.2% for 2027, from 1.4% in 2025) and the UK (-0.5ppt to 0.8% for 2026 and 0.2ppt to 1.3% for 2027, from 1.3% in 2025).
- In terms of CPI, global headline inflation is expected to increase from 4.1% in 2025 to 4.4% (+0.6ppts from January forecast) in 2026 before easing to 3.7% (+0.3ppts) in 2027. Inflation in the US is expected to accelerate from 2.7% in 2025 to 3.2% in 2026 (+0.8ppts from October forecast), before easing to 2.1% in 2027. Inflation for the Euro area is also projected to pick up from 2.1% in 2025 to 2.6% in 2026 (+0.7ppts) and 2.2% in 2027 but forecasted to ease for the UK, from 3.4% in 2025 to 3.2% in 2026 (+0.7ppts) and further soften to 2.4% in 2027. As for Japan, inflation is forecasted to also moderate from 3.2% in 2025 to 2.2% in 2026 (+0.1ppts), but to pick up slightly to 2.3% in 2027.

Tamer than expected producer prices for the US; plunge in small business owners' optimism

- Producer prices (PPI) were tamer than expected, holding steady at 0.5% m/m in March, with the jump in energy prices (8.5% m/m vs 2.1% m/m) due to the war partially offset by steady services cost (0 vs 0.3% m/m). Prices of goods (1.6% m/m vs 1.0% m/m) also saw a pick up, but more importantly, components that feed into the core PCE like airfares, health care and portfolio management saw an acceleration that points to higher PCE prints going forward.
- The NFIB Small Business Optimism index fell more than expected by 3 points to 95.8 in March, leaving it below its 52-year average of 98.0. Business tax provisions have had many positives for small business owners, but the spike in oil prices negated this.

Australia's business and consumer confidence slumped following the geopolitical shock

- The outbreak of the conflict in the Middle East saw business confidence falling sharply to -29 in March (prior: 0), while consumer confidence also dropped significantly by 12.5% m/m in April (prior: 1.2% m/m). The latter marks its second largest monthly fall in the survey's history and largely echoes the magnitude previously only seen in the GFC and the onset of COVID. At the same time, resilience in business conditions also highlights that the economy had carried a healthy level of momentum heading into the unfolding shock, but is set to soften ahead with amid rising caution among businesses and consumers.

China's external demand moderated dragged by the US; imports surprised on the upside

- Mixed data from China. Exports slowed more than expected to 2.5% y/y in March (prior: 39.6% y/y) in the first month of the Iran war and partially due to seasonal pullbacks, while imports logged its strongest growth in more than four years at 27.8% y/y (prior: 13.8% y/y). Imports growth surpassed expectations, and will likely see energy prices feeding into more import prices in the months ahead. As a result of the continued strength in imports and slower export growth, China's trade surplus fell to its 13-month low of \$51.1bn, sharply below market expectations and not favourable for GDP calculation for the quarter (1Q expectation: 4.8% vs 4Q 2025: 4.5%). By destination, China's exports to the US remained a drag, falling 16.3% YTD, while exports to other key markets remained mostly solid.

Strong core machine orders from Japan's manufacturing sector, before the war

- Core machine orders grew a strong 13.6% m/m in February (prior: -5.5% m/m) before the US-Iran conflict. The data, released this morning, was better than forecast supported by robust orders from the manufacturing sector (30.7% m/m vs -12.5% m/m), while demand from non-manufacturing eased to 0.9% m/m 6.8% m/m previously.

House View and Forecasts

FX	This Week	2Q-26	3Q-26	4Q-26	1Q-27
DXY	97-101	100.63	99.80	97.96	96.48
EUR/USD	1.15-1.19	1.14	1.15	1.17	1.19
GBP/USD	1.32-1.36	1.31	1.32	1.34	1.35
USD/CHF	0.78-0.82	0.79	0.78	0.76	0.75
USD/JPY	156-161	159	155	152	152
AUD/USD	0.69-0.72	0.68	0.69	0.70	0.71
NZD/USD	0.56-0.59	0.57	0.58	0.58	0.59
USD/CNY	6.81-6.85	6.93	6.88	6.84	6.77
USD/MYR	3.95-4.01	3.98	3.96	3.93	3.90
USD/SGD	1.26-1.29	1.29	1.28	1.27	1.25
USD/THB	31.70-32.50	31.60	31.80	31.80	31.40

FX	Last close	2Q-26	3Q-26	4Q-26	1Q-27
EUR/MYR	4.6592	4.55	4.55	4.60	4.66
GBP/MYR	5.3524	5.23	5.23	5.26	5.28
AUD/MYR	2.8114	2.72	2.72	2.75	2.77
CNY/MYR	0.5798	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58
SGD/MYR	3.1072	3.09	3.10	3.11	3.12

Rates, %	Current	2Q26	3Q26	4Q26	1Q27
Fed	3.50-3.75	3.50-3.75	3.50-3.75	3.25-3.50	3.25-3.50
ECB	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
BOE	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75
SNB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
BOJ	0.75	0.75	1.00	1.00	1.00
RBA	4.10	4.35	4.35	4.35	4.35
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
15-Apr	EC Industrial Production SA MoM (Feb)	-1.50%
	US MBA Mortgage Applications	-0.80%
	US Empire Manufacturing (Apr)	-0.2
	US Import Price Index YoY (Mar)	1.30%
	US NAHB Housing Market Index (Apr)	38
	US Fed Releases Beige Book	
16-Apr	AU Consumer Inflation Expectation (Apr)	5.20%
	CH New Home Prices MoM (Mar)	-0.28%
	CH Used Home Prices MoM (Mar)	-0.43%
	AU Unemployment Rate (Mar)	4.30%
	CH GDP YoY (1Q)	4.50%

Hong Leong Bank Berhad

Fixed Income & Economic Research,
Global Markets
Level 8, Hong Leong Tower
6, Jalan Damansara
Bukit Damansara
50490 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: 603-2081 1221
Fax: 603-2081 8936

HLMarkets@hlbb.hongleong.com.my

CH Retail Sales YTD (Mar)	2.80%
CH Industrial Production YTD (Mar)	6.30%
CH Fixed Assets Ex Rural YTD YoY (Mar)	1.80%
CH Surveyed Jobless Rate (Mar)	5.30%
UK Monthly GDP (MoM) (Feb)	0.00%
US New York Fed Services Business Activity (Apr)	-22.6
US Initial Jobless Claims	219k
US Philadelphia Fed Business Outlook (Apr)	18.1
US Industrial Production MoM (Mar)	0.20%

Source: Bloomberg

DISCLAIMER

This report is for information purposes only and does not take into account the investment objectives, financial situation or particular needs of any particular recipient. The information contained herein does not constitute the provision of investment advice and is not intended as an offer or solicitation with respect to the purchase or sale of any of the financial instruments mentioned in this report and will not form the basis or a part of any contract or commitment whatsoever.

The information contained in this publication is derived from data obtained from sources believed by Hong Leong Bank Berhad ("HLBB") to be reliable and in good faith, but no warranties or guarantees, representations are made by HLBB with regard to the accuracy, completeness or suitability of the data. Any opinions expressed reflect the current judgment of the authors of the report and do not necessarily represent the opinion of HLBB or any of the companies within the Hong Leong Bank Group ("HLB Group"). The opinions reflected herein may change without notice and the opinions do not necessarily correspond to the opinions of HLBB. HLBB does not have an obligation to amend, modify or update this report or to otherwise notify a reader or recipient thereof in the event that any matter stated herein, or any opinion, projection, forecast or estimate set forth herein, changes or subsequently becomes inaccurate.

HLB Group, their directors, employees and representatives do not have any responsibility or liability to any person or recipient (whether by reason of negligence, negligent misstatement or otherwise) arising from any statement, opinion or information, expressed or implied, arising out of, contained in or derived from or omission from the reports or matter.

Potential and actual conflict of interest may arise from the activities of HLB Group. HLB Group constitute a diversified financial services group. These entities engage in a wide range of commercial and investment banking, brokerage, funds management, hedging transactions and other activities for their own account or the account of others. In the ordinary course of their business, HLB Group may effect transactions for their own account or for the account of their customers and hold long or short positions in the financial instruments. HLB Group, in connection with its business activities, may possess or acquire material information about the financial instruments. Such activities and information may involve or have an effect on the financial instruments. HLB Group have no obligation to disclose such information about the financial instruments or their activities.

The past performance of financial instruments is not indicative of future results. Whilst every effort is made to ensure that statements of facts made in this report are accurate, all estimates, projections, forecasts, expressions of opinion and other subjective judgments contained in this report are based on assumptions considered to be reasonable as of the date of the document in which they are contained and must not be construed as a representation that the matters referred to therein will occur. Any projections or forecasts mentioned in this report may not be achieved due to multiple risk factors including without limitation market volatility, sector volatility, corporate actions, the unavailability of complete and accurate information. No assurance can be given that any opinion described herein would yield favourable investment results. Recipients who are not market professional or institutional investor customer of HLBB should seek the advice of their independent financial advisor prior to taking any investment decision based on the recommendations in this report.

HLBB may provide hyperlinks to websites of entities mentioned in this report, however the inclusion of a link does not imply that HLBB endorses, recommends or approves any material on the linked page or accessible from it. Such linked websites are accessed entirely at your own risk. HLBB does not accept responsibility whatsoever for any such material, nor for consequences of its use.

This report is not directed to, or intended for distribution to or use by, any person or entity who is a citizen or resident of or located in any state, country or other jurisdiction where such distribution, publication, availability or use would be contrary to law or regulation. This report is for the use of the addressees only and may not be redistributed, reproduced or passed on to any other person or published, in part or in whole, for any purpose, without the prior, written consent of HLBB. The manner of distributing this report may be restricted by law or regulation in certain countries. Persons into whose possession this report may come are required to inform themselves about and to observe such restrictions. By accepting this report, a recipient hereof agrees to be bound by the foregoing limitations.