20 April 2026

Global Markets Research

Daily Market Highlights

20 Apr: Risk sentiments turn sour this morning

Stand-off in Strait of Hormuz and ship attacks revived gains in oil prices & DXY today

AI demand continues to drive Singapore's NODX; Narrower trade surplus for Eurozone

Broad easing across all sectors for Malaysia's advanced 1Q GDP; CPI spiked on transport

- The flare up in the US-Iran tension over the weekend and continued standoff in the Strait of Hormuz saw risk sentiment turning sour again this morning. Futures suggest that the equity markets will likely tumble, Brent and WTI have crept up above the $96/barrel and WTI $90/barrel, while DXY has rebounded to 98.29 at the point of writing,
- Although debatable, a potential break-through in peace prospects saw the S&P 500 and Nasdaq wrapping up last week with another record highs. The S&P 500 jumped 1.2% d/d crossing the 7.1k threshold for the first time ever, Nasdaq gained 1.5% d/d, while the Dow jumped 1.8% d/d after Iran declared the complete opening of Strait of Hormuz to shipping.
- Tech and consumer discretionary stocks led gainers within the broad index, while utilities and energy lagged, the latter as crude oil prices plunged more than 9% d/d each to $83.85/barrel for the WTI and $90.38/barrel for Brent last Friday.
- Elsewhere, Stoxx 600 soared 1.6% d/d, with travel stocks leading gains. Asian stocks (Nikkei 225: -1.8% d/d, CSI 300: -0.2% d/d, Hang Seng: -0.9% d/d) were the outlier, retreating earlier in the day.
- Treasuries rallied with softer crude oil prices boosting rate cut bets. The benchmark 2Y fell 7bps to 3.71%, while the 10Y slid 6bps to 4.25%. 10Y European bond yields plunged 1-13bps.
- In the forex space, the G10 traded mixed against the greenback and the DXY closed out Friday 0.1% d/d lower at 98.10 on hopes for war's end. JPY (0.3% d/d to 158.64), SEK (0.3% d/d) and CHF (0.3% d/d) outperformed, while EUR (-0.1% d/d to 1.1765) and GBP (-0.1% d/d to 1.3516) weakened. Regional currencies traded mixed against the greenback, but CNH, MYR and SGD were 0.1-0.3% d/d stronger against USD at 6.8160, 3.9505 and 1.2694.

Key Market Metrics

	Level	d/d (%)
Equities		
Dow Jones	49,447.43	1.79
S&P 500	7,126.06	1.20
NASDAQ	24,468.48	1.52
Stoxx Eur 600	626.58	1.56
FTSE 100	10,667.63	0.73
Nikkei 225	58,475.90	-1.75
CSI 300	4,728.67	-0.17
Hang Seng	26,160.33	-0.89
Straits Times	4,997.93	-0.20
KLCI 30	1,695.21	0.33
FX		
Dollar Index	98.10	-0.12
EUR/USD	1.1765	-0.14
GBP/USD	1.3516	-0.08
USD/JPY	158.64	-0.33
AUD/USD	0.7174	0.18
USD/CNH	6.8160	-0.10
USD/MYR	3.9505	-0.10
USD/SGD	1.2694	-0.27
USD/KHR	4,003.88	-0.02
USD/THB	31.93	-0.23
Commodities		
WTI ($/bbl)	83.85	-11.45
Brent ($/bbl)	90.38	-9.07
Gold ($/oz)	4,857.60	1.51
Copper ($/MT)	13,347.00	0.58
Aluminum($/MT)	3,564.50	-2.17
CPO (RM/tonne)	4,414.50	-0.33

Source: Bloomberg, HLBB Global Markets Research
** Closing as of 16 Apr for CPO*

Narrower trade surplus for the Eurozone a drag to growth

- All eyes will be on the energy shock, but tariffs and trade were already a drag to growth in February and will likely remain so for the next two months at least. Trade surplus narrowed to €7.0bn from €12.8bn previously as import growth of 3.5% m/m outpaced exports growth of 0.9% m/m in February.

AI demand drove Singapore's NODX to post its strongest growth since October 2025

- Sustained AI-driven electronics demand and low base effects, meanwhile, saw non-oil domestic exports (NODX) accelerating more than expected to 15.3% y/y in March from 4.0% y/y previously. Electronic NODX surged 74.0% (prior: +43.1%), while non-electronic NODX declined by 0.6% (prior: -6.9%).
- Amongst its top 10 markets, NODX to Hong Kong, Taiwan and China grew, while those to Indonesia, the EU, the US and Thailand fell. Just a recap, officials had expected NODX to grow between 2-4% this year, and with the latest print, we opine that this is achievable at this juncture.

Bigger than expected pullback in Malaysia's 1Q GDP; CPI jumped on higher transport costs

- The Malaysian economy expanded at a slower than expected pace of 5.3% y/y in 1Q. This marked a sharp pullback from the 6.3% y/y increase in 4Q25 and undershot both market as well as our expectations. All sectors registered smaller increases (contraction in mining), with the biggest drag from services (5.4% vs 6.3% y/y).
- In a separate release, March CPI spiked to a 14-month high of 1.7% y/y (Feb: 1.4% y/y), below our expectation but within consensus estimate. It goes without say that the sharp jump was driven by a rebound in transport costs (+1.6% vs -0.7% y/y), as the government has since adjusted petrol and diesel pump prices by between 21-54% y/y and 24-38% m/m during March following the rally in global Brent crude prices from an average of $77/ barrel in February to an average of $104/ barrel in March, no thanks to the Middle East conflict. (Refer to Research Alert "Growth and inflation running at opposite ways" dated 17 April for more details).

House View and Forecasts

FX	This Week	2Q-26	3Q-26	4Q-26	1Q-27
DXY	97-100	100.63	99.80	97.96	96.48
EUR/USD	1.16-1.19	1.14	1.15	1.17	1.19
GBP/USD	1.33-1.37	1.31	1.32	1.34	1.35
USD/CHF	0.76-0.80	0.79	0.78	0.76	0.75

USD/JPY	156-161	159	155	152	152
AUD/USD	0.70-0.73	0.68	0.69	0.70	0.71
NZD/USD	0.56-0.61	0.57	0.58	0.58	0.59
USD/CNY	6.79-6.85	6.93	6.88	6.84	6.77
USD/MYR	3.92-4.00	3.98	3.96	3.93	3.90
USD/SGD	1.26-1.29	1.29	1.28	1.27	1.25
USD/THB	31.50-32.50	31.60	31.80	31.80	31.40

FX	Last close	2Q-26	3Q-26	4Q-26	1Q-27
EUR/MYR	4.6614	4.55	4.55	4.60	4.66
GBP/MYR	5.3456	5.23	5.23	5.26	5.28
AUD/MYR	2.8335	2.72	2.72	2.75	2.77
CNY/MYR	0.5794	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58
SGD/MYR	3.1069	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
20-Apr	CH 5-Year Loan Prime Rate	3.50%
	CH 1-Year Loan Prime Rate	3.00%
	MA Exports YoY (Mar)	10.80%
21-Apr	UK Average Weekly Earnings 3M/YoY (Feb)	3.90%
	UK ILO Unemployment Rate 3Mths (Feb)	5.20%
	UK Payrolled Employees Monthly Change (Mar)	20k
	EC ZEW Survey Expectations (Apr)	-8.5
	US Pending Home Sales MoM (Mar)	1.80%

Source: Bloomberg

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