Hong Leong Bank

Global Markets Research

Weekly Market Highlights

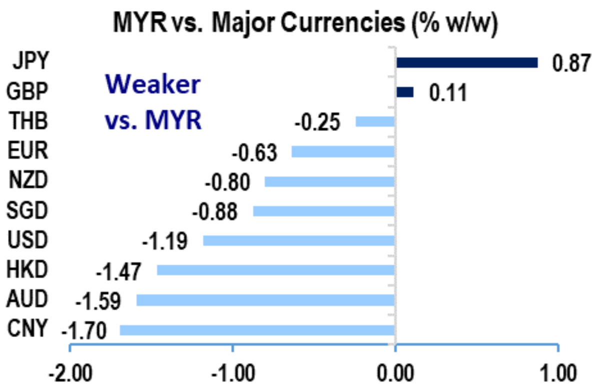
Markets

	Last Price	WOW%	YTD %
Dow Jones Ind.	33,044.56	-3.35	-0.31
S&P 500	3,898.85	-2.12	1.55
FTSE 100	7,747.29	-0.60	3.97
Hang Seng	21,650.98	0.64	9.45
KLCI	1,496.22	0.51	0.05
STI	3,276.18	0.26	0.76
Dollar Index	102.09	-0.15	-1.39
WTI oil ($/bbl)	80.38	2.54	0.09
Brent oil ($/bbl)	86.16	2.53	0.29
Gold (S/oz)	1,934.00	1.85	5.90

Source: Bloomberg

- **Markets down on recession concerns:** US markets were sold off towards the end of the week as risks from rising interest rates to economic growth and earnings kept a grip on sentiments. Dow Jones fell 3.4%, Nasdaq Composite lost 1.4% while S&P dipped 2.1% w/w. On the corporate front, markets were also negatively impacted by earning warnings from the big banks as well as job cuts from Microsoft to Amazon. Oil prices, on the other hand, rose more than 2.0% w/w as hopeful Chinese demand cushioned fears of recession risks as well as rising inventory.
- **Next week data:** The US calendar will be heavy next week. Indicators to to be released include advance 4Q GDP, core-PCE prices, leading index, trade balanc, and durable goods orders. There will also be a string of PMIs both from S&P and various Fed districts for both the services and manufacturing sectors. In the housing market, US new and pending home sales for the month of December will be published. On the consumers' side, we will be monitoring the personal income and spending indicators as well as Michigan sentiment closely.

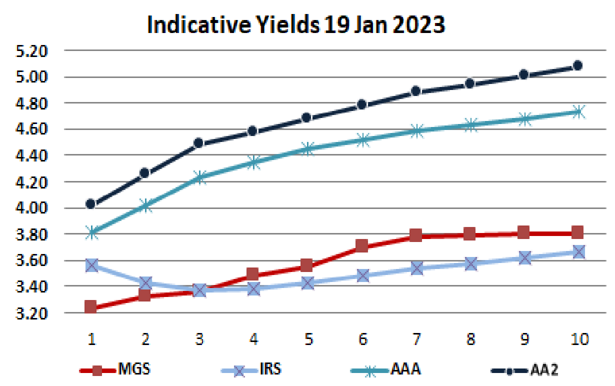
Forex



Source: Bloomberg

- **MYR:** Ringgit reversed its prior trend to strengthen against most major regional currencies this week, supported by expectations that BNM will raise the OPR by another 25bps in its MPC meeting on Thursday. Defying expectations by staying pat, this failed to dissuade investors, sending Ringgit stronger 0.2% d/d and 1.2% w/w to close at 3.3073 at the point of writing. We have a ***Neutral*** outlook for USD/ MYR in the week ahead, potentially in a range of 4.30-4.35 in view that market will stay relatively quiet ahead of a long lunar weekend as well as lack of catalyst on the domestic front. Any sway to this pair will be predominantly US driven.
- **USD**: The Dollar Index largely held onto the 102-handle earlier in the week in the absence of economic data as well as investors staying pat ahead of expectations of a possible policy shift at the BOJ. Nevertheless, a string of disappointing data from the US sent the index sliding slightly by 0.2% w/w, with greenback weakening against most regional currencies but mixed against its G10 peers. We are ***Neutral*** *on* USD outlook, eyeing a 101-104 range in the week going forward ahead as DXY seemed to have stabilised at this level and that investors will stay cautious ahead of FOMC meeting the following week. US will be data heavy next week, with key indicators to watch out for include advance 4Q GDP, core-PCE, leading index, PMIs, capital and durable goods order as well as new and pending home sales.

Fixed Income



Source: Bloomberg/ BPAM

- **UST:** US Treasuries continued to strengthen post-CPI last week followed by this week's weak US data and dovish-tone in the ECB report. The UST 2Y eased 4bps to 4.11% whilst the much-watched UST 10Y (which ranged sharply lower; between 3.33-3.55%), slipped 6bps lower to 3.39%. Treasury's $12b of 20-year bond auction and $17b of 10-year TIPS auction saw strong bidding metrics. Elsewhere, Treasury Secretary Yellen is expected to introduce "extraordinary measures" to prevent the US govt from defaulting on its debt as it climbed to ~$31.4 trillion; crossing the threshold set by Congress more than a year ago.
- **MGS/GII:** Local govvies saw both MGS/GII post strong gains throughout the week (save for Tuesday), whilst taking cue from stronger UST performance, followed by yesterday's surprising decision to stay pat on the OPR at 2.75%. IRS yields moved sharply lower, leading underlying bonds whilst brushing aside concerns over media reports on the elevated government debt of ~RM1.2 trillion (which is about 80% of GDP). The curve shifted lower as overall benchmark MGS/GII yields fell between 9-29bps across. The average daily secondary market volume jumped again by 31% w/w to ~RM5.6b w/w with interest seen mainly in the off-the-run 23's and benchmark 3Y MGS/GII, 5Y MGS, 7Y GII and 10Y MGS/GII. Expect local govvies to be well-supported next week amid intermittent profit-taking activities in a holiday-shortened week.

Macroeconomic Updates

- **Markets down on recession concerns:** US market fell towards the end of the week as risks from rising interest rates to economic growth and earnings kept a grip on sentiments. Dow Jones fell 3.4%, Nasdaq Composite lost 1.4% while S&P dipped 2.1% w/w. On the corporate front, markets were also negatively impacted by earning warnings from the big banks as well as job cuts from Microsoft to Amazon. Oil prices, on the other hand, rose more than 2.0% w/w as hopeful Chinese demand cushioned fears of recession risks as well as rising inventory.

- **Mixed US economic numbers:** The string of economic indicators released in the US were mixed and skewed to the downside. PPI eased to +6.2% y/y in December, while retail sales fell -1.1% m/m. IPI also contracted -0.7% m/m. Despite modest drops in mortgage rates, housing indicators were not positive across board. Builder condidence ended a string of 12 straight monthly declines with an unexpected improvement, while mortgage applications jumped 27.9% w/w. Nervetheless, housing starts and building permits fell.The labour market remained a bright spot, with jobless claims unexpectedly falling 15k to190k, the lowest since Sept and a level consistent with a tight labour market.

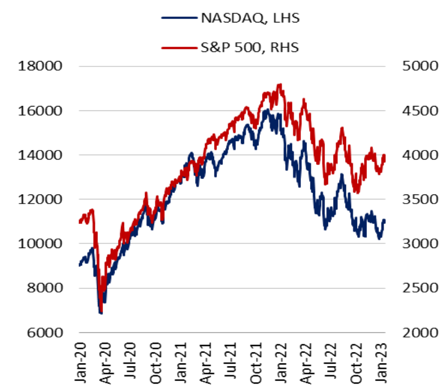
- **China's GDP slowed to 2.9% in 4Q:** During the week, China released its GDP data which showed that the economy slowed less than forecast to +2.9% y/y in 4Q (2022: +3.0%). December data suggests activity remained weak for the month, albeit not as bad as expected. Growth in industrial output decelerated to 1.3% y/y, while retail sales contracted at a slower pace of 1.8% y/y. Fixed asset investment gained +5.1% YTD, while jobless rate fell to 5.5%. The statistics bureau added that the foundation of the domestic economic recovery is not solid as the international situation is still complicated and severe. Domestically, the economy is facing a triple threat of demand contraction, supply shock and weakening expectations. As such, while PBOC maintained its 1-year medium term lending facility rate unchanged at 2.75%, a rate cut is still in the cards given the headwinds in the demand side of the economy.

- **Dovish BOJ stay pat:** During the week, BOJ maintained its short-term policy interest rate unchanged at -0.1% and target for 10-year yields under its curve control programme around 0%. The Bank will also continue to allow 10-year JGB yields to fluctuate in the range of around +/-0.5ppts from the target level. Given the change of guard at the BOJ helm in April, we see high likelihood that BOJ will continue to stand pat at the next meeting in March. The BOJ updated forecasts also showed that officials don't see inflation staying above 2.0% in a sustainable manner. BOJ largely left its inflation rate unchanged at +1.6% for 2023 and +1.8% for 2024. BOJ revised its GDP forecast downwards slightly to +1.7% for 2023 and +1.1% for 2024.

- **BNM surprised with status quo:** In a largely surprised move, BNM left the OPR unchanged at 2.75% at the January MPC meeting. Taking cue from the somewhat hawkish statement signalling intention for further policy normalization, we believe BNM stands ready to raise the OPR by a further 25-50bps back to pre-pandemic level of 3.00-3.25%, barring any new shocks. Separately, Malaysia's exports growth decelerated to 6.0% y/y in December; its slowest since July 2021. Exports outlook will remain challenging going forward as the world economy slows. We are maintaining our 4Q's GDP growth forecast of 4.9% and full year growth projection of 8.2% at this juncture.

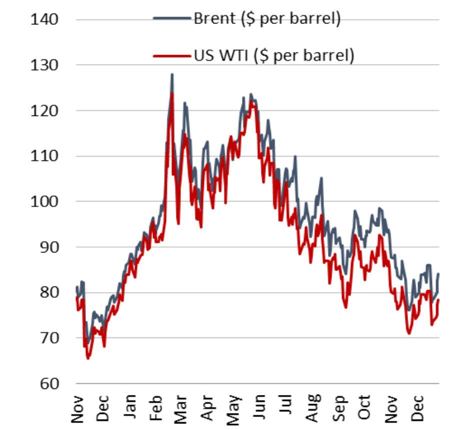
- **Next week data:** US will be data heavy next week. Indicators to to be released include advance 4Q GDP, core-PCE prices and Leading Index. There will also be a string of PMIs both from S&P and from the various Fed districts for both the services and manufacturing sectors. For the latter, other key data to watch out for would be trade balance, inventories as well as capital and durable goods order. In the housing market, new and pending home sales for the month of December will be published. On the consumers' side, we will be monitoring the personal income and spending indicators as well as Michigan sentiment closely. Similar to US, S&P will be releasing the PMI manufacturing and services indices for Europe, UK and Japan. On top after that, Europe will release its consumer confidence index and for UK, its PPI data. Japan is set to release its leading index as well as PPI services. Singapore is set to release its CPI, IPI and unemployment rate indicators.

Stock markets nursed loses



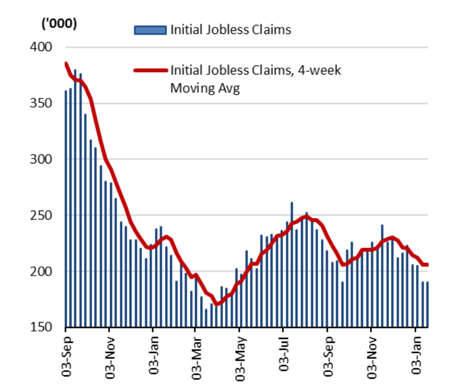
Source: Bloomberg

Oil prices closed higher on Chinese demand



Source: Bloomberg

Jobless claims unexpected fell



Source: Bloomberg

Foreign Exchange

- **MYR:** Ringgit reversed its prior trend to strengthen against most major regional currencies this week, supported by expectations that BNM will raise the OPR by another 25bps in its MPC meeting on Thursday. Defying expectations by staying pat, this failed to dissuade investors, sending Ringgit stronger 0.2% d/d and 1.2% w/w to close at 3.3073 at the point of writing. We have a ***Neutral*** outlook for USD/ MYR in the week ahead, potentially in a range of 4.30-4.35 in view that market will stay relatively quiet ahead of a long weekend as well as lack of catalyst on the domestic front. Any sway to this pair will be predominantly US driven.

- **USD**: The Dollar Index largely held onto the 102-handle during the week in the absence of economic data early in the week as well as investors staying pat ahead of expectations of a possible policy shift at the BOJ later. Nevertheless, a string of disappointing data from the US sent the index sliding slightly by 0.2% w/w, with greenback weakening against most regional currencies but mixed against its G10 peers. We are ***Neutral*** *on* USD outlook, eyeing a 101-104 range in the week going forward ahead as DXY seemed to have stabilised at this level and that investors will stay cautious ahead of FOMC meeting the following week. US will be data heavy next week, with key indicators to watch out for include advance 4Q GDP, core-PCE prices, leading index, PMIs, capital and durable goods order as well as new and pending home sales.

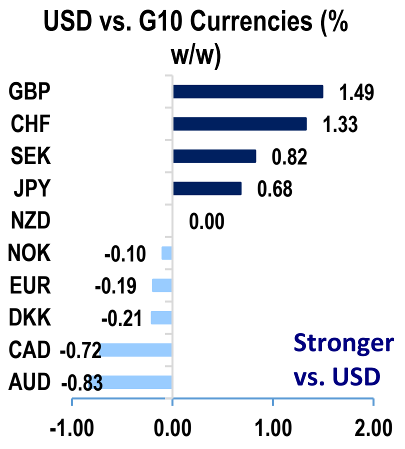
- **EUR**: EUR/ USD was set to head for its second week of gain this week, hitting a high of 1.0887 on Wednesday as ECB member Francois Villeroy de Galhau said it was too early to speculate about what the central bank would do at the March meeting. Nevertheless, gains were pared on Thursday, sending euro slightly weaker by 0.2% w/w ahead as the delegates from World Economic Forum meet this week. We are ***Neutral to Slightly Bearish*** on EUR/ USD, likely in a range of 1.07-1.09 in the week ahead. While there are major catalysts on the data front, we believe that ECB's Lagarde's speech at WEF will set the tone the coming week.

- **GBP**: GBP is the best performing G10 currency during the week touching a high of 1.2436 on Wednesday. GBP strengthened w/w against all its G10 peers and advanced 1.5% w/w vis-a-vis USD. The strong sterling over the week essentially reflects optimism that the UK economy may not be hit as much as economists had expected. We are ***Neutral-to-Slightly Bullish*** on GBP/ USD, likely in a range of 1.21-1.27 in the week ahead as BOE will most likely look past the softer CPI, thus supporting sterling.

- **JPY**: A policy driven JPY this week, with the currency strengthening to 127.23 vs the USD on Monday on expectations of a possible policy shift and that the BOJ that could end its so-called yield curve control. JPY quickly tanked post meeting after the central bank decided to maintain its ultra-low rates. JPY sank to 131.58 before recovering to end the week 0.7% w/w stronger vis-à-vis USD to settle at 128.43. Nevertheless, BOJ's stance effectively opens the path for short-term JPY weakness and as such, we are ***Bullish*** on this pair, eyeing a range of 127-133 this week.

- **AUD**: AUD was buoyed by the Chinese reopening story and better than expected Chinese economic indicators before sharply retreating as employment data disappoint on the domestic front. AUD touched the high of 0.7063 earlier in the week before quickly plunging to close the week 0.8% w/w weaker against greenback at 0.6910. We are ***Neutral-to-Slightly Bullish*** on AUD outlook likely in a range of 0.68-0.72 in the week forward. Key data to watch out next week will be the Judo Bank Australia PMI Services and Manufacturing, NAB Business Confidence as well as Westpac Leading Index.

- **SGD**: SGD held on firm at the 1.32-1.33 big figures despite a blip post the weaker than expected plunge in NODX. In view of the long weekend in Singapore as well as lack of catalyst in terms of domestic economic indicators, we are ***Neutral*** on USD/SGD in the week ahead eyeing a range of 1.31-1.34 with USD outlook as the primary driver.



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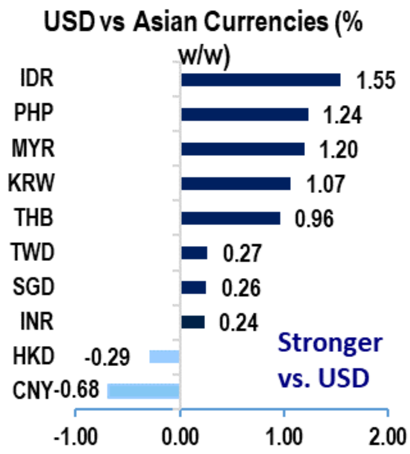


Source: Bloomberg

Forecasts

	Q1-23	Q2-23	Q3-23	Q4-23
DXY	101.4	100.9	99.9	98.9
EUR/USD	1.09	1.10	1.10	1.10
GBP/USD	1.22	1.23	1.23	1.23
AUD/USD	0.69	0.69	0.70	0.71
USD/JPY	128	127	127	126
USD/MYR	4.38	4.36	4.32	4.27
USD/SGD	1.32	1.30	1.28	1.26
USD/CNY	6.93	6.93	6.90	6.83

	Q1-23	Q2-23	Q3-23	Q4-23
EUR/MYR	4.79	4.81	4.76	4.71
GBP/MYR	5.35	5.37	5.32	5.27
AUD/MYR	3.02	3.03	3.03	3.03
SGD/MYR	3.32	3.36	3.37	3.39
CNY/MYR	0.63	0.63	0.63	0.63

Source: HLBB Global Markets Research

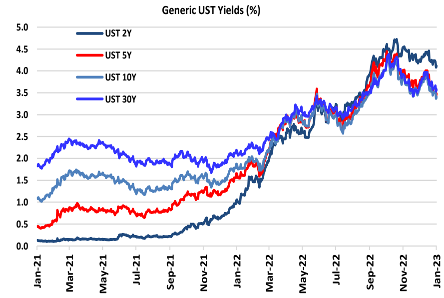
Fixed Income

- **UST:** For the week under review, US Treasuries continued to strengthen post-CPI last week followed by this week's New York Fed's release of a sharp manufacturing decline in January and dovish-tone in the ECB report. The soft economic data covering retail sales, producer prices and industrial production that may cause the Fed to re-think its continuing rate hike measures earlier than expected; also gave bonds a boost. **The UST 2Y eased 4bps to 4.11% whilst the much-watched UST 10Y (which ranged sharply lower; between 3.33-3.55%), slipped 6bps lower to 3.39%.** Treasury's $12b of 20-year bond auction and $17b of 10-year TIPS auction saw strong bidding metrics. Elsewhere, Treasury Secretary Yellen is expected to introduce "extraordinary measures" to prevent the US govt from defaulting on its debt as it climbed to ~$31.4 trillion; crossing the threshold set by Congress more than a year ago.

- **MGS/GII:** Local govvies saw both MGS/GII post strong gains throughout the week (save for Tuesday), whilst taking cue from stronger UST performance, amid easing inflation numbers for December followed by yesterday's surprising decision to stay pat on the OPR at 2.75%. IRS yields moved sharply lower, leading underlying bonds whilst brushing aside concerns over media reports on the elevated government debt of ~RM1.2 trillion (which is about 80% of GDP). The curve shifted lower as overall benchmark MGS/GII yields fell between 9-29bps across. **The benchmark 5Y MGS 11/27 yield plunged 27bps to 3.52% whilst the 10Y MGS 7/32 ended 9bps lower at 3.89%.** The average daily secondary market volume jumped again by 31% w/w to ~RM5.6b w/w with interest seen mainly in the off-the-run 23's and benchmark 3Y MGS/GII, 5Y MGS, 7Y GII and 10Y MGS/GII. Expect local govvies to be well-supported next week amid intermittent profit-taking activities in a holiday-shortened week.

- **MYR Corporate bonds/ Sukuk**: The week under review saw further ramp-up in appetite within the secondary market space with investors searching for yield pick-up following the rally in underlying govvies. **Trades were seen mainly across the GG-AA part of the curve as yields closed mostly mixed-to-lower amid an 80% spike in average daily market volume to RM966m.** Topping the weekly volume were PLUS bonds PLUS34 (AAA)which edged 2bps higher compared to previous-done levels at 4.75%, followed by its 2037 tranche (AAA) which declined 6bps to 4.83%. This was followed by PLUS 35 (AAA) which closed unchanged at 4.78%. High frequency of bond trades was seen in DANAINFRA, LPPSA, CAGAMAS, AMANAT Lebuhraya (ALRB), PLUS, TNB and UEM Sunrise bonds. Odd-lot transactions were seen in UEM Sunrise, YNH Property, AmBank callable and SABAH Dev bank bonds. The prominent issuance for the week consisted of CAGAMAS Berhad's AAA-rated 5Y bonds totaling RM550m with coupon rates of between 4.26-28% and MAXIS Broadband Sdn Bhd's 7Y and 10Y unrated papers with a coupon of 4.62% and 4.80% respectively.

- **Singapore Government Securities:** SGS ended mixed lacking direction w/w. Overall benchmark yields closed mixed between -3 to +9bps across. The SGS 2Y yield closed unchanged at 3.09% whilst the SGS 10Y eased 3bps at 2.80% (the SGS 10Y ranged lower yet tighter between 2.77-2.88%). Singapore's sovereign bonds continued to post a gain of 0.4% w/w versus 0.8% prior week. Meanwhile, the republic will be offering S$3.4b of 10Y bonds due 1st Aug 2032 at the end of this month Elsewhere, Singapore's banks are not expected to exercise non-call features going forward, considering good track record and solid capital bases. The Energy Market Authority (EMA) is looking to launch green, sustainable and transition bonds as part of a $2 billion multi-currency MTN program. Elsewhere, Fitch Ratings has assigned A- to Mizuho Securities and its Singapore subsidiary i.e.; Mizuho Securities (Singapore) Pte Ltd with a Stable Outlook.



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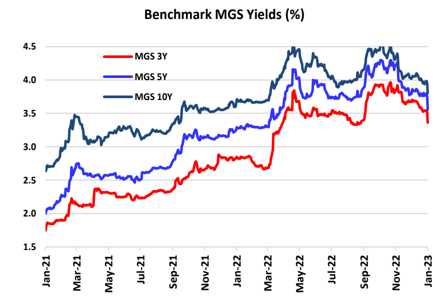

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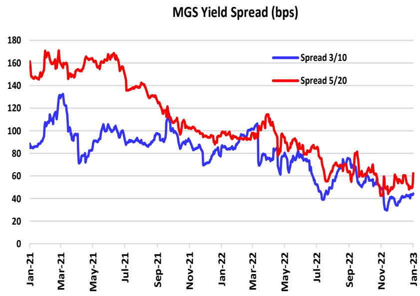

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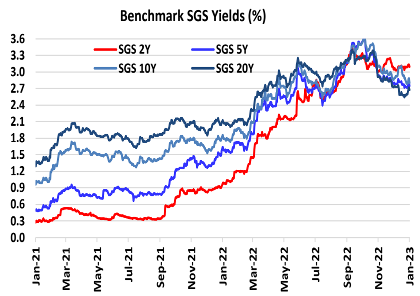

Source: Bloomberg

Issuer	PDS Description	Rating/Outlook	Action
MCIS Insurance Berhad	Insurer Financial strength rating	A1/Stable/P1	Reaffirmed
	RM200 mil Tier 2 Subordinated Debt (2021/2031)	A2/Stable	Reaffirmed
Menara ABS Berhad	RM345 mil Tranche A1 to A4 Sukuk (collectively, the Tranche A Sukuk)	From C3/Negative) to D	Downgraded
Pac Lease Berhad	Medium-Term Notes and Commercial Papers programme with a combined aggregate limit of RM1.5 billion	AA/MARC-1/Stable	Assigned
Alpha Circle Sdn Bhd	Outstanding RM55 million Junior Sukuk remains at CIS	C IS	Affirmed
Malayan Cement Berhad	Senior Sukuk	From B IS/negative to C IS	Downgraded
Kedah Cement Sdn Bhd	RM5.0 bil Sukuk Murabahah Programme (2022/2052)	AA3/Stable/P1	Reaffirmed
YTL Power International Berhad	Sukuk Wakalah Programme (2017/2024)	AA3/Stable/P1	Reaffirmed
YTL Corporation Berhad	RM5 bil Medium-Term Notes Programme (2011/2036	From AA1/Negative AA1/Stable	Outlook upgraded
	RM2.5 bil Sukuk Murabahah Facility (2017/2027)	From AA1/Negative AA1/Stable	Outlook upgraded
	RM2 bil Medium-Term Notes (MTN) Programme (2013/2038)	From AA1/Negative to AA1/Stable	Outlook upgraded
	RM5 bil Commercial Papers Programme and MTN Programme (2019/2044	From AA1/P1/Negative to AA1/P1/Stable	Outlook upgraded
IJM Land Berhad	RM2.0 bil Perpetual Sukuk Programme	A2(s)/Stable	Reaffirmed
IJM Corporation Berhad	RM3 bil Sukuk Murabahah Programme	AA3/Stable	Reaffirmed
UEM Group Berhad	RM2.2 bil Islamic Medium-Term Notes (IMTN) Programme (2012/2042)	AA2/Stable	Reaffirmed
Widad Concession Sdn Bhd	RM310 mil Sukuk Wakalah Facility (2022/2040)	AA1/Stable	Reaffirmed
Poseidon ABS Berhad	RM218.0 mil First Tranche Senior Class A Medium-Term Notes under a RM3.5 bil asset-backed MTN program	AA2/Stable	Assigned

Source: MARC/RAM

Economic Calendar

Date	Time	Country	Event	Period	Prior
23-Jan	23:00	US	Leading Index	Dec	-1.00%
	23:00	EC	Consumer Confidence	Jan P	-22.2
24-Jan	5:30	NZ	Performance Services Index	Dec	53.7
	6:00	AU	Judo Bank Australia PMI Mfg	Jan P	50.2
	6:00	AU	Judo Bank Australia PMI Services	Jan P	47.3
	8:30	JN	Jibun Bank Japan PMI Mfg	Jan P	48.9
	8:30	JN	Jibun Bank Japan PMI Services	Jan P	51.1
	8:30	AU	NAB Business Confidence	Dec	-4
	17:00	EC	S&P Global Eurozone Manufacturing PMI	Jan P	47.8
	17:00	EC	S&P Global Eurozone Services PMI	Jan P	49.8
	17:30	UK	S&P Global/CIPS UK Manufacturing PMI	Jan P	45.3
	17:30	UK	S&P Global/CIPS UK Services PMI	Jan P	49.9
	19:00	UK	CBI Business Optimism	Jan	-48
	22:45	US	S&P Global US Manufacturing PMI	Jan P	46.2
	22:45	US	S&P Global US Services PMI	Jan P	44.7
	23:00	US	Richmond Fed Manufact. Index	Jan	1
25-Jan	7:30	AU	Westpac Leading Index MoM	Dec	-0.13%
	8:30	AU	CPI YoY	Dec	7.30%
	13:00	SI	CPI YoY	Dec	6.70%
	13:00	JN	Leading Index CI	Nov F	97.6
	15:00	UK	PPI Output NSA MoM	Nov	0.90%
	15:00	UK	PPI Input NSA MoM	Nov	0.80%
	20:00	US	MBA Mortgage Applications	20-Jan	27.90%
	21:30	US	Philadelphia Fed Non-Manufacturing Activity	Jan	-17.1
25-31 Jan	0:00	VN	Exports YoY	Jan	-14.00%
	0:00	VN	CPI YoY	Jan	4.55%
	0:00	VN	Industrial Production YoY	Jan	0.20%
26-Jan	7:50	JN	PPI Services YoY	Dec	1.70%
	13:00	SI	Industrial Production SA MoM	Dec	-1.20%
	16:30	HK	Exports YoY	Dec	-24.10%
	21:30	US	Chicago Fed Nat Activity Index	Dec	-0.05
	21:30	US	GDP Annualized QoQ	4Q A	3.20%
	21:30	US	Wholesale Inventories MoM	Dec P	1.00%
	21:30	US	Advance Goods Trade Balance	Dec	-$83.3b
	21:30	US	Core PCE QoQ	4Q A	4.70%
	21:30	US	Initial Jobless Claims	21-Jan	190k
	21:30	US	Durable Goods Orders	Dec P	-2.10%
	23:00	US	New Home Sales MoM	Dec	5.80%
26-27 Jan	0:00	SI	Unemployment rate SA	Dec	2.00%
27-Jan	0:00	US	Kansas City Fed Manf. Activity	Jan	-9
	7:30	JN	Tokyo CPI YoY	Jan	4.00%
	8:00	NZ	ANZ Business Confidence	Jan	-70.2
	8:30	AU	PPI YoY	4Q	6.40%

21:30	US	Personal Income	Dec	0.40%
21:30	US	Personal Spending	Dec	0.10%
23:00	US	Pending Home Sales MoM	Dec	-4.00%
23:00	US	U. of Mich. Sentiment	Jan F	64.6
23:00	US	U. of Mich. 1 Yr Inflation	Jan F	4.00%
23:00	US	U. of Mich. 5-10 Yr Inflation	Jan F	3.00%
23:30	US	Kansas City Fed Services Activity	Jan	-

Source: Bloomberg