

# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

6/4/2013

*...The Philippine's annual headline inflation rate eased...  
...The U.S labour market was far weaker...*

## South East Asia

**Malaysian exports dropped** 7.7% y-o-y in February to RM52.46bil due to shorter working days and the Chinese New Year festivities.

**The unemployment rate in Indonesia dropped** from 6.3% in 2011 to 6.1% in 2012, the International Labour Organization (ILO) announced. However, despite the fact that 1.13 million new jobs were available last year, as many as 56% of the unemployed were people under 25, said ILO.

**The Philippine's annual headline inflation rate eased** to 3.2% in March as increments in the prices of food, utilities and communication slowed down, the National Statistics Office (NSO) said. March inflation was lower than the 3.4% recorded in February.

**The Philippines' Gross International Reserves (GIR) rose** to US\$84.1 billion as of end-March, according to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. Preliminary data showed that the country's March GIR was higher by US\$500 million than end-February level.

**The Thai Excise Department is confident of meeting its revenue-collection target** of Bt410 billion this fiscal year after taking in Bt231 billion in the first half, up 28.93% y-o-y, the director general said.

**The Commerce Ministry aims to release** another 6 million to 7 million tonnes of Thai rice this year to reduce its stockpiles under its continuing price-pledging policy..

## North East Asia

**The Bank of Japan announced Thursday a policy overhaul** intended to double the money supply and achieve a 2% inflation target at the "earliest possible time, with a time horizon of about two years", said the BOJ's governor.

## Middle East and North Africa

**Lebanon's Finance Ministry and Central Bank mulled a new medium-term policy** to manage public debt. The new strategy would allow for administering financing needs in different currencies, amid risks arising from fluctuating interest rates, according to a statement.

## Indian Sub-Continent

**With the Indian government aiming to reclaim** its peak high tax-GDP ratio of 11.9% soon, union Revenue Secretary Sumit Bose Friday said boosting up of corporate tax collection is key to improving the crucial ratio.

## Europe

**Germany is confident France will stick to European Union rules on targets to cut its public deficit**, Martin Kotthaus, spokesman for Germany's finance ministry stated.

**German factory orders increased 2.3% m-o-m in February**, the Economy Ministry in Berlin said.

**Britain retained its top AAA credit rating at Standard & Poor's**, which said the government has the capacity to meet its fiscal challenges, though the outlook for the grade remains negative.

## Eastern Europe

**The Central Bank of Russia has intervened to defend** Russia's currency for the first time this year, buying 30 million rubles for hard currency to prevent the ruble from dipping below its target exchange rate corridor, said the central bank.

## North America

**The U.S Commerce Department reported the trade gap shrank** to \$US43 billion, down from the revised \$US44.5 billion in January.

**The U.S labour market was far weaker** than expected in March, with the economy adding only 88,000 jobs, a third of the number in February, according to official data released on Friday.

**A loss of 55,000 jobs** in March pushed Canada's unemployment rate up 0.2 percentage points to 7.2%, its government statistics agency said.

## Australasia

**The New Zealand government's operating deficit** for the eight months to the end of February came in substantially under forecast due to higher than expected

tax revenues, the New Zealand Treasury announced Friday.

## Oil & Gas News

**Natural gas futures in New York surged** the most in four months, settling at a 20-month high, as cold weather helped erase a stockpile surplus and Goldman Sachs Group Inc. raised its 2013 gas price forecast.

**West Texas Intermediate crude capped** the biggest weekly drop in six months as U.S. employers hired less than half the number of workers forecast in March, raising concern that economic growth won't be strong enough to support oil demand.

## Commodities News

**Gold traders are split** on whether bullion will plunge into its first bear market since 2008 as economies improve or rally as central banks buy more debt.

## Currency News

**The dollar declined** to the lowest level in more than a week against the euro after U.S. employers added fewer jobs in March than forecast.

**Asian currencies fell** the most this week since January as policy makers from the Philippines to Japan proposed measures that tend to weaken their exchange rates.

Date	Gold	NYMEX Natural Gas (\$/MMBtu)	Brent Oil (\$/bbl)	oil/nat. gas ratio	EUR	GBP	USD	AUD	Indo RUP	YEN	MYS RM	Phil Peso	Thai Baht	SGX Index
28-Mar-13	1,604.78	4.1	109.96	26.82	1.60	1.88	1.24	1.30	7,827	76.28	2.49	32.98	23.60	3,312.69
06-Apr-13	1,581.25	4.13	104.12	25.21	1.60	1.89	1.24	1.29	7,863	78.10	2.47	33.20	23.62	3,299.78
% Change	-1.47	0.73	-5.31		0.43	0.25	-0.23	-0.78	0.47	2.39	-0.91	0.67	0.08	-0.39

# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

9/4/2013

*...South Korea will adopt all measures available to help boost the economy...  
...The US economy still has far to go...*

## South East Asia

**Singapore's central bank uses the exchange rate** rather than borrowing costs to conduct monetary policy, adjusting the pace of appreciation or depreciation against an undisclosed trade-weighted band of currencies by changing the slope, width and center of the band.

**The Philippines government spent** P174.35 billion in the first two months of the year to settle a portion of its debts, the Bureau of Treasury reported yesterday.

**Vietnamese enterprises are increasingly investing overseas**, especially in Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar and Russia, with their investment reaching US\$2.65 billion in the first quarter, according to Ministry of Planning and Investment.

## North East Asia

**China to cut gasoline, and diesel prices** by 310 yuan (US\$ 49.43) per tonne and by 300 yuan per tonne, respectively starting tomorrow, announced by the National Development and Reform Commission. The new pricing system will adjust prices of oil products every 10 working days and cancel the 4% floating band for oil price changes.

**China's CPI grew** 2.1% y-o-y in March, dropping from 3.2% in February, the National Bureau of Statistics said Tuesday.

**Japan logged its first current account surplus** in four months in February, with profits from the securities investments income account growing to outweigh the trade deficit, government data showed Monday. The surplus in the balance, stood at 637.4 billion yen, the Finance Ministry said in a preliminary report.

**South Korea will adopt all measures available to help boost the economy**, expressing concerns that Asia's fourth-largest economy is losing its vitality. "The government's top priority is to create jobs," Finance Minister Hyun Oh-seok said.

**Taiwan's exports rose** 3.3% y-o-y in March this year to US\$ 27.23 billion, the highest level since August 2011, partly boosted by strong demand on the mainland, the island's finance authority said.

## Middle East and North Africa

**Qatar's carefully selected portfolio of prime assets**, spreading across asset classes and geographies, contributes to economic diversification, financial resources, and reduces risk, HE the Minister of Finance and Economy Yousef Hussein Kamal has said.

## Europe

**The euro has a solid future** and with hope that no more countries in Europe will need bailouts, IMF chief Christine Lagarde said.

**German industrial output returned to growth in February by 0.5%** driven by the manufacturing sector while construction activity fell, official data by the economy ministry showed.

**Portuguese PM Pedro Passos Coelho announced severe cuts in public spending** following a decision by the constitutional court rejecting a number of austerity provisions in this year's budget.

## North America

**The US economy still has far to go** to recover to an acceptable state of health, Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke said. Bernanke has consistently tied tightening monetary policy to a substantial improvement in unemployment.

## Australasia

**Climbing house prices** and a growing proportion of lending at high loan-to-value ratios are stoking fears at the Reserve Bank of New Zealand of a boom that this time will be followed by a destructive bust. Annual growth in housing credit is just over 4%, compared with just over 1% a year ago, according to the RBNZ.

## Oil & Gas News

**Global oil prices have rebounded** after last week's sharp fall on poor US jobs data. New York's main contract, West Texas Intermediate (WTI) light sweet crude for May delivery, added 66 US cents to \$US93.36 per barrel on Monday.

## Commodities News

**Palm oil advanced** to the highest level in more than a week on speculation that inventories in Malaysia probably fell last month as exports from the world's second-largest producer increased.

## Currency News

**The Australian dollar has climbed** back above 104 US cents and extended gains versus the Japanese yen during the overnight offshore session.

**The dollar and yen dropped** against most major peers as traders estimated policy makers in the U.S. and Japan will maintain or expand monetary stimulus measures.

Date	Gold	NYMEX Natural Gas (\$/MMBtu)	Brent Oil (\$/bbl)	oil/nat. gas ratio	EUR	GBP	USD	AUD	Indo RUP	YEN	MYS RM	Phil Peso	Thai Baht	SGX Index
06-Apr-13	1,581.25	4.13	104.12	25.21	1.60	1.89	1.24	1.29	7,863	78.10	2.47	33.20	23.62	3,299.78
09-Apr-13	1,575.03	4.09	104.88	25.64	1.61	1.90	1.24	1.29	7,860	79.38	2.46	33.26	23.56	3,303.10
% Change	-0.39	-0.97	0.73		0.57	0.73	0.09	-0.29	-0.05	1.64	-0.32	0.16	-0.26	0.10

# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

10/4/2013

*...The State Bank of Viet Nam has assigned this year's specific credit growth limits...  
... France's trade deficit widened...*

## South East Asia

**The Asian Development Bank (ADB) remains upbeat about Indonesia's economy**, despite concerns over the country's rising inflation and the widening trade deficit in the past few months. ADB estimates Indonesia's economy will grow by 6.3% and 6.4% in 2013 and 2014 respectively.

**FDI to the Philippines went down** by 45% in January, from \$1.05 billion recorded in the same month last year to \$576 million this year, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) reported Wednesday.

**The Department of Finance and the Bureau of Internal Revenue are working with the Professional Regulation Commission** to obtain new information on tax compliance by the country's professionals, according to Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima.

**The 2013 Asian Development Bank (ADB) report revealed that the Philippines may sustain strong growth** over the next two years but job generation remains a challenge. ADB estimates that the country's GDP will grow at 6% this year, with a similar pace anticipated in 2014.

**Thailand's financial authorities need to come up with new approaches** to handle the baht's appreciation, as the gains will probably continue for up to three years, economists said.

**The State Bank of Viet Nam has assigned this year's specific credit growth limits** to local banks based on their economic health. Banks are permitted to expanding their total credit by a maximum of 12% this year, equal to the credit growth target set for the whole banking sector.

**Vietnamese enterprises have invested** US\$2.65 billion in 12 countries and territories during the first quarter of this year, according to the Foreign Investment Agency (FIA) under the Ministry of Planning and Investment

**New hydropower projects in Laos** has commissioned in 2012 increased national output by more than 650 megawatts, with about 70% of all hydropower generated exported, mainly to Thailand, ADB reported.

## North East Asia

**In the first quarter, China's foreign trade exports and imports combined - increased** 13.4% y-o-y to US\$974.67 billion, the General Administration of Customs (GAC) said Wednesday.

**China's inflation grew** 2.1% in March from a year earlier, down from 3.2% in February, the National Bureau of Statistics said.

**Bank of Japan is resolving by keep printing money** for as long as needed to achieve 2% inflation, signalling his readiness to offer further stimulus or maintain an ultra-easy policy beyond two years if meeting the target by then proves difficult, said the governor.

**The jobless rate stood** at 3.5% last month, down from the previous month's 4%, the highest since February last year, according to the report by Statistics Korea.

## Middle East and North Africa

**The launching implementation of Direct Debit System** will enable customers to make regular, automatic payments from their bank accounts towards mortgage loans or credit card payments or personal loan instalments, the UAE Central Bank said in a circular on Tuesday.

**The inflation rate in the emirate of Abu Dhabi** was 1% in March, while the inflation rate during the first quarter of 2013 was 1.1%, according to the latest data from the Statistics Centre Abu Dhabi (SCAD) on Tuesday.

## Europe

**France's trade deficit widened** to 6 billion euros in February, the widest gap between exports and imports since June 2012, according to Customs data published yesterday.

**Spain would suffer a GDP reduction** of between 0.5 and 0.6% in the first quarter of 2013, Spanish Economy Minister Luis de Guindos on Tuesday said.

## Eastern Europe

**Russia's Gazprom exports to non-CIS countries** increased by 6% in the period from January to March, the State Statistics Services reported.

## North America

**President Barack Obama's fiscal 2014 budget** blueprint ensures that those making US\$1 million a year or more would have to pay at least 30% of their income, after gifts to charity, in taxes, officials said.

## Australasia

**The Australian Treasurer Wayne Swan has warned** that the budget is likely to be in the red for at least the next four years.

**New figures show the value of electronic card spending in retail industries decreased** half a percent for the month. Statistics New Zealand says most of the decrease came from the core retail industries of apparel and durables.

## Oil & Gas News

**Prices fell** as much as 0.8% after the industry-funded API said supplies rose 5.06 million barrels last week.

## Commodities News

**Gold futures fell** most in a week after minutes from a Federal Reserve meeting spurred speculation that stimulus will be curbed, easing the threat of inflation.

## Currency News

**The Canadian dollar strengthened** against the U.S. dollar for the third day as investors seek higher-yielding currencies of commodity-exporting nations.

**The yen fell** to the weakest level versus the dollar since May 2009 as the Bank of Japan reiterated its stimulus program and some officials at the Federal Reserve pushed for pulling back on its bond purchases.

Date	Gold	NYMEX Natural Gas (\$/MMBtu)	Brent Oil (\$/bbl)	oil/nat. gas ratio	EUR	GBP	USD	AUD	Indo RUP	YEN	MYS RM	Phil Peso	Thai Baht	SGX Index
9-Apr-13	1,575.03	4.09	104.88	25.64	1.61	1.90	1.24	1.29	7,860	79.38	2.46	33.26	23.56	3,303.10
10-Apr-13	1,569.29	4.14	105.6	25.51	1.62	1.89	1.24	1.29	7,850	80.06	2.46	33.30	23.36	3,293.25
% Change	-0.36	1.22	0.69	0.35	-0.45	-0.06	0.56	-0.13	0.86	-0.07	0.13	-0.83	-0.30	

# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

11/4/2013

*...China expands VAT reform...  
...Portuguese PM announced severe cuts in public spending...*

## South East Asia

**Malaysia's industrial production index (IPI) fell** 4.5% in February from a year ago due to a decline in output from manufacturing and mining. This decline was steeper than economists' expectations of a 2.5% fall.

**Philippine merchandise exports in February 2013 fell** by 15.6% with earnings amounting to US\$3.741 billion, generally from the double-digit negative growth recorded in electronic products, data from the National Statistics Office showed.

**Philippine's Foreign Direct Investment in January reached US\$576 million**, lower than the previous year level of US\$1.1 billion, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said.

**Indonesia's oil export revenue is falling** far below government expectations as output drops to a more than 40-year low.

**The total assets of the whole Viet Nam's banking industry** by the end of February surged by nearly US\$1.238 billion against the previous month to US\$238.557 billion, State Bank of Viet Nam's data showed.

## North East Asia

**China's imports rose** 14.1% in March 2013 from a year earlier, the highest in more than 10 years, according to the General Administration of Customs.

**China expands VAT reform** to more industries and regions to further reduce tax burdens on businesses starting from August 1st, 2013, according to a statement issued by the State Council after an executive meeting presided over by Premier Li Keqiang.

**Japan's core machinery orders rose** 7.5% in February, rebounding from a sharp fall in the previous month, government data showed.

**South Korea's central bank on Thursday kept its benchmark interest rate on hold** at 2.75% despite government's pressure to cut rates to revitalize the economy, Bank of Korea's Governor Kim Choong-soo said.

## Middle East and North Africa

**Egypt's urban consumer inflation eased** to 7.6% in the 12 months to March, from 8.2% in the 12 months to February, Egypt's statistics agency CAPMAS said on Wednesday.

**The Qatari government has agreed to provide** an additional \$3 billion of aid to Egypt, Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim al-Thani said on Wednesday.

## Europe

**The euro has a solid future** and with hope that no more countries in Europe will need bailouts, IMF chief Christine Lagarde said.

**German industrial output returned to growth in February by 0.5%** driven by the manufacturing sector while construction activity fell, official data by the economy ministry showed.

**Portuguese PM Pedro Passos Coelho announced severe cuts in public spending** following a decision by the constitutional court rejecting a number of austerity provisions in this year's budget.

## Eastern Europe

**Russia signed an agreement** to provide a US\$500 million loan to Serbia on Wednesday, RIA Novosti reported.

**Funds deposited by Russian banks on non-resident bank accounts** increased 17% in March, a growth for the third consecutive month according to the central bank's statistics released Wednesday.

**Russia's foreign trade surplus decreased** 21.3% on the year to US\$15.906 billion in February, the central bank said in a statement on Wednesday.

## North America

**The cash-strapped Federal Housing Administration will probably require** a \$943 million taxpayer bailout to cover expected losses on loans it insured as the U.S. housing bubble was deflating, the Obama administration said Wednesday.

**Job openings climbed** in February to the highest level in almost five years, signalling US employers were preparing to expand before federal government budget cuts took effect last month.

## Australasia

**Australia's unemployment rate rose** to 5.6% in March, from 5.4% in February. The total number of people with jobs fell by more than 36,000, the Australian Bureau of Statistics found.

**The Reserve Bank of New Zealand is continuing to back new rules** to deal with a bank collapse, saying it's the best way to ensure the financial system runs as smoothly as possible following such an event.

## Oil & Gas News

**West Texas Intermediate slid** from the highest price in more than a week after U.S. crude inventories climbed to a 22-year high and OPEC cut its forecast for growth in global demand.

## Commodities News

**The world's biggest iron-ore producers are planning** \$250 billion of new mines, threatening to deepen a price slump for the commodity already forecast to drop for at least the next three years.

## Currency News

**The baht continued** its uptrend yesterday, spiralling by 0.42% to 28.89 per US dollar at 9am, bringing its month-to-date gain to 1.38% and year-to-date gain to nearly 6%.

**Malaysia's ringgit retreated** from an 11-week high as some investors judged its recent gains excessive. The ringgit declined 0.2% to 3.0354 per dollar in Kuala Lumpur.

**China's new yuan-denominated lending stood** at 2.76 trillion yuan (\$441 billion) in the first quarter, up 294.9 billion yuan year-on-year, the People's Bank of China announced on Thursday.

Date	Gold	NYMEX Natural Gas (\$/MMBtu)	Brent Oil (\$/bbl)	oil/nat. gas ratio	EUR	GBP	USD	AUD	Indo RUP	YEN	MYS RM	Phil Peso	Thai Baht	SGX Index
10-Apr-13	1,569.29	4.14	105.6	25.51	1.62	1.89	1.24	1.29	7,850	80.06	2.46	33.30	23.36	3,293.25
11-Apr-13	1,556.57	4.12	105.41	25.58	1.62	1.90	1.24	1.30	7,835	79.97	2.45	33.23	23.42	3,311.95
% Change	-0.81	-0.48	-0.18		0.09	0.21	-0.25	0.49	-0.20	-0.11	-0.44	-0.21	0.25	0.56



# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

13/4/2013

*...Bank of Japan will keep its aggressive quantitative easing policy...  
... Aiding low-income neighbourhoods requires a "multipronged" approach...*

## South East Asia

**"MAS (Monetary Authority of Singapore) will maintain its policy** of a modest and gradual appreciation of the Singapore dollar nominal effective exchange rate policy band," MAS said in its half yearly monetary policy statement.

**Bank Indonesia cut its forecast for the country's economic growth this year** due to the slower-than-expected global economic recovery. Indonesia's GDP is expected to expand within a range of 6.2% - 6.6% this year, lower than its previous forecast of 6.3% - 6.8%.

**Philippines' portfolio investment transactions in March 2013** surged to US\$2.3 billion, higher by 10.1% m-o-m. Year-to-date registered investments reached US\$7.3 billion, surpassing the US\$4.1-billion level in 2012 by 79.1% as investor optimism was buoyed by positive economic developments in the country.

**Higher public investment**, particularly the Bt2-trillion infrastructure plan, funding for which is likely to be disbursed in the final quarter of this year, is the main reason for the higher estimate of economic growth, said Paiboon Kittisrikangwan, assistant governor of the Bank of Thailand and secretary of its Monetary Policy Committee.

**Vietnamese exports grew** nearly 20% in the first quarter of this year, but the achievement is mostly contributed by the foreign-invested sector, the Ministry of Industry and Trade said.

**Just one year after the Credit Bureau Cambodia was formed the positive effects are being felt** in the countries banking sector and the general Cambodian economy according to the National Bank of Cambodia, The International Financial Corporation and the CEO of the new bureau.

**The government's reform measures** are boosting Burma's economic growth, which rose to 6.3% last year and is projected to climb slowly to 6.5% in 2013, according to the Asian Development Bank.

## North East Asia

**China has allocated US\$ 1.25 billion to support spring farming**, an effort to fight drought, prevent plant pests, cultivate new seeds and subsidize farmers, said the Ministry of Finance.

**Japanese and US officials have reached an agreement** in their preliminary negotiations for Japan to join talks on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). Negotiators agreed that the US will gradually lower tariffs on vehicles imported from Japan. They agreed to continue discussing other auto issues in parallel with the TPP negotiations.

**Bank of Japan will keep its aggressive quantitative easing policy** in place until its 2% inflation target is achieved, hinting the monetary experiment may take more than two years to work, Bank of Japan Gov. Haruhiko Kuroda said.

**The Japanese government on Friday left its monthly assessment of the economy unchanged** for the first time in four months, with consumption and housing investment perking up but capital spending showing little movement.

**The government will set aside 1 trillion won** of a yet to be approved supplementary budget, estimated at 17 trillion won, to revive the housing market, Deputy Prime Minister Hyun Oh-seok said Thursday

## Indian Subcontinent

**India's factory output grew** by 0.6% in February from a year ago, but the news, still dismal, was partly offset by a slight easing in retail inflation for March at 10.39%.

**India Finance Minister P Chidambaram asked banks on Friday to gear up for the rollout** of direct cash subsidy scheme to cooking gas (LPG) consumers throughout the country.

**India's policies relating to tariffs**, import policies, government procurement, export subsidies, intellectual property protection are consistent with its international and bilateral obligations, Commerce Ministry official said.

## Middle East and North Africa

**Lebanon needs to generate around 20,000 additional jobs** per year over the next decade, transform its economy into a productive model and reform social protections, the World Bank said.

**Kuwait is expected to achieve budget surplus** for the 15th consecutive year and is expected to reach KD 15.9 billion with 20% increase.

## Europe

**Eurozone finance ministers formally approved the terms of €10 billion Cyprus debt rescue** that will cost Nicosia far more than first thought.

**European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso seeks to negotiate a "living agreement" with the United States** to help deepen economic and trade ties. A "living agreement" means trying to work toward the prevention of regulatory barriers, Barroso said.

**Cyprus eased capital controls it imposed to prevent a run on its stricken banking sector**, ending restrictions on all transactions under €300,000 (\$393,000).

**U.K. house prices rose 0.2% in March** reaching a five-year high, according to Acadametrics and LSL Property Services Plc (LSL) in a monthly report published in London today.

**Portugal and Ireland are to be granted an extra seven years** to pay back their emergency bailout loans by the Eurozone finance ministers.

## Eastern Europe

**Russian banks' corporate loans** rose 0.9%, while retail loans rose 2.2% in March, the Prime reported.

**Russia's broad monetary base** increased 1.4% in March to 8.6 trillion rubles, the central bank said.

## North America

**Retail sales in the U.S. dropped** 0.4% in March by the most in nine months, pointing to a slowdown in consumer spending as the first quarter drew to a close, according to Commerce Department.

**Boston Fed President Eric Rosengren on Friday defended the central bank's dual mandate** of full employment and price stability, and pointed to economic

trends that suggest an even more accommodative policy stance might have been needed since the Great Recession.

**Federal Reserve Chairman Ben S. Bernanke said aiding low-income neighbourhoods** requires a "multipronged" approach focusing on education, jobs and health care as well as housing.

## Australasia

**New Zealand manufacturing grew** at a slower pace in March, although food processing near the end of the season and drought in the North Island saw farmers send more livestock to the meatworks.

## Oil & Gas News

**West Texas Intermediate crude fell** to a one-month low after U.S. retail sales and consumer confidence declined, signaling lower fuel demand.

## Commodities News

**Gold tumbled** to the lowest price since July 2011, slumping into a bear market, on signs that investors are favoring the dollar and equities as the global economy recovers. Silver dropped the most since June.

## Currency News

**The New Zealand dollar is heading** for a 4.3% weekly gain against the yen, adding to last week's 4.2% increase, as investors buy into the Japanese central bank's massive money-printing programme to revive the country's stagnant economy.

**The yen stopped** just short of 100 to the dollar, a level it hasn't reached in four years, as it slid after the Bank of Japan announced unprecedented stimulus measures on April 4 to end 15 years of deflation.

Date	Gold	NYMEX Natural Gas (\$/MMBtu)	Brent Oil (\$/bbl)	oil/nat. gas ratio	EUR	GBP	USD	AUD	Indo RUP	YEN	MYS RM	Phil Peso	Thai Baht	SGX Index
11-Apr-13	1,556.57	4.12	105.41	25.58	1.62	1.90	1.24	1.30	7,835	79.97	2.45	33.23	23.42	3,311.95
13-Apr-13	1,482.75	4.22	103.11	24.43	1.62	1.91	1.24	1.31	7,848	80.37	2.45	33.31	23.47	3,294.19
% Change	-4.74	2.43	-2.18		0.15	0.37	-0.02	0.40	0.17	0.49	0.15	0.25	0.20	-0.54

# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

16/4/2013

*...South Korea drew up an extra budget...  
...Greece and its troika of international creditors have reached agreement ...*

## South East Asia

**Indonesia's crude oil production was 830,900 barrels per day (bpd)** in Q1 2013; 8% lower than the target in the state budget. This is stated to be mainly due to a declining rate of oil production of around 3% to 5%.

**Personal remittances from overseas Filipino workers increased** 6.9% y-o-y in February to US\$1.9 billion in February. Remittances for the first 2 months of 2013 grew by 7.6% from the previous year level to settle at US\$3.7 billion.

**The World Bank maintained its growth projection for the Philippine economy** this year at 6.2%, according to its latest East Asia and Pacific Economic Update report.

**The Viet Nam Coal and Mineral Industries Group has asked the Government to increase the price** of coal sold to power producers, saying that the group is facing difficulties because coal is selling for less than it costs to produce.

**Two-way trade between Viet Nam and Switzerland rose** 11% y-o-y, reaching US\$167 million over the first two months of this year, said Luong Manh Hung, Trade Counsellor at the Vietnamese Embassy in Switzerland.

## North East Asia

**China's Gross Domestic Product growth unexpectedly slowed** to 7.7% y-o-y in Q1 2013, down from 7.9% in Q4 2012, data from the National Bureau of Statistics.

**China's fiscal revenue growth continued to slow** to 6.9% y-o-y in Q1 2013 from the 14.7% in Q4 last year, said the Ministry of Finance.

**Chinese firms recovering confidence in Q1** this year. China's business climate index, a major gauge of the country's macroeconomic outlook, advanced to 125.6 points, up from 124.4 points in Q4 2012, released by the National Bureau of Statistics.

**The Japanese government decided** Monday to make Japanese yen loans easier to use by adopting measures including lower interest rates, aiming to support infrastructure exports by Japanese firms.

**The Bank of Japan simultaneously upgraded** its assessments Monday for all of the country's nine regional economies for the first time since July 2012, with growing hopes of economic recovery yielding an increase in household and corporate spending, boosting domestic demand.

**South Korea's top economic policymaker** called on local business leaders Tuesday to expand investment and hiring in order to help revitalize the country's slowing economy, Finance Minister Hyun Oh-seok said.

**South Korea on Tuesday drew up an extra budget** worth 17.3 trillion won (US\$15.4 billion) for this year in a bid to revitalize its economy faced with gloomy market conditions at home and abroad, which was endorsed by a Cabinet meeting.

## Indian Subcontinent

**Inflation fell to a three-year low in March** at 5.96% raising hopes of an interest rate cut by the Reserve Bank of India.

**The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) today pressed for a 100 basis point** cut in interest rate by the RBI saying that it will push economic growth in the country.

## Middle East and North Africa

**Qatari economy grew** by an average of 13% from 2008 to 2012 due to an increase in hydrocarbon exports, the Premier said.

**The UAE's economy developed more productively** compared with other oil-export West Asian countries, despite a mild 5.2% economic growth rate. Additionally, its inflation rate is only 0.88%, unemployment rate 4% and government debts to GDP ratio as low as 16.89%. With a stable industrial structure and low risky financial environment, the United Arab Emirates ranked high,"Boao report said.

## Europe

**Greece and its troika of international creditors have reached agreement** on its economic recovery efforts, opening the way for the disbursement of 8.8 billion euros (US\$11.5bil) in bailout loans, according to officials.

**Germany does not have the economic strength to launch another stimulus package** now without running the risk of losing market confidence, Chancellor Angela Merkel said.

## Australasia

**The decade-long boom in mining investment** has been largely funded by capital flows from abroad, a tide of money that has also kept the local dollar higher than it would otherwise be, RBA assistant governor Guy Debelle said.

**Sales of new motor vehicles in Australia dipped** 0.6% in March, from February, a third month of modest losses that pointed to a flattening of demand albeit at historically high levels.

## Oil & Gas News

**The selloff in the commodities space continued to drag down oil prices** with Brent crude falling below the

\$100-a-barrel mark in Asian trade Tuesday, while Nymex oil prices slipped to their lowest since December.

## Commodities News

**Gold rose 1%** on Tuesday after a drop to a two-year-low earlier in the session ignited physical buying, but investors frustrated by the metal's lacklustre performance remained cautious amid fears of central bank sales and global growth.

## Currency News

**The U.S. dollar declined** against the Japanese currency Tuesday, extending a sharp loss triggered the previous day by heightened worries about global growth and a plunge in gold prices.

**The New Zealand dollar extended** its slide, falling below 84 US cents as financial markets digested the implications of weaker-than-expected Chinese growth which has weighed on equity markets and commodities.

Date	Gold	NYMEX Natural Gas (\$/MMBtu)	Brent Oil (\$/bbl)	oil/nat. gas ratio	EUR	GBP	USD	AUD	Indo RUP	YEN	MYS RM	Phil Peso	Thai Baht	SGX Index
13-Apr-13	1,482.75	4.22	103.11	24.43	1.62	1.91	1.24	1.31	7,848	80.37	2.45	33.31	23.47	3,294.19
16-Apr-13	1,376.82	4.15	100.39	24.19	1.62	1.90	1.24	1.29	7,853	79.08	2.46	33.35	23.53	3,287.60
% Change	-7.14	-1.66	-2.64		-0.30	-0.53	-0.01	-1.23	0.06	-1.61	0.17	0.13	0.27	-0.20

*...Reserve Bank of India plans to introduce plastic notes...  
...Japan's financial system is stable...*

## South East Asia

**Singapore's exports continued to fall** last month, dropping 4.8% over the year, following a massive 30.6% drop in February.

**Exports of rubber gloves and furniture are expected to be the main product beneficiaries** of expanding trade relations between Malaysia and Latin America, said Malaysia External Trade Development Corp.

**Cocoa grinding in Malaysia for the first quarter of 2013 fell** 3.2% to 72,203 tonnes from 74,562 tonnes in the same period last year, the Malaysian Cocoa Board said in a statement today.

**The Indonesian government is currently formulating a regulation** that will enable the Deposit Insurance Corporation (LPS) to receive funds to support its liquidity, particularly in times of crisis.

**Philippine growth forecasts were maintained by the IMF at 6% this year** before slightly slowing to 5.5% next year. Robust remittance flows and low interest rates should continue to support private consumption and investment in the Philippines, the IMF said in its latest World Economic Outlook for April.

**The double tax avoidance agreement** between Vietnam and Hong Kong that became effective on January 2010 has also helped increase Vietnamese exports to Hong Kong, according to the agency's director.

**Cambodia's economy is projected to grow** by 6.7% in 2013, according to the IMF's report.

## North East Asia

**Chinese officials have called on the United States to reduce barriers** to Chinese investment and turn to talks and negotiations to tackle trade disputes between the two sides, Zhang Qingwei, governor of Hebei province, said.

**China's economic growth and its commitment to urbanization and globalization are stimulating** Chinese investment in the United States, said officials from both countries.

**Japan's lower house approved the 92.61 trillion yen** (US\$945 billion) budget bill for the fiscal year to March 2014, supported by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's ruling coalition.

**Japan's financial system is stable** and capital markets have been improving due to a decline in risk aversion and expectations for domestic policy, Bank of Japan Governor Haruhiko Kuroda said.

**The Bank of Korea is under fire for mismanaging its gold holdings** that may cost the financial institution close to \$800 million amid panicky selling on global markets, BOK governor said.

**South Korea's inflation declined** 0.4% in March from a month earlier after rising 0.7% in February and 0.2% in January respectively, according to the Bank of Korea.

## Indian Subcontinent

**The India government cut the tariff value of gold and silver** to \$499 per 10 grams and \$890 per kg, respectively, taking into account weak global prices of the precious metals, according to the notification issued by the Central Board of Excise and Customs.

**Reserve Bank of India plans to introduce plastic notes** on a trial basis, according to K.C. Chakrabarty, Deputy Governor.

## Middle East and North Africa

**Annual inflation in Saudi Arabia was stable** at 3.9% in March, underpinned by rising food prices, according to the kingdom's statistics agency.

## Europe

**France, the eurozone's second-largest economy, will fall into recession this year** with the economy contracting by 0.1%, reflecting a combination of fiscal consolidation, poor export performance, and low confidence, according to the IMF's World Economic Outlook report.

**New rules called Capital Requirements Directive 4 (CRD4) on bankers' bonuses and the amount of capital that banks must hold as a buffer have been approved** by the European Parliament by a big majority. It is likely to take effect on 1 January 2014.

**The UK is forecasted to growth of just 0.7%**, according to the IMF's World Economic Outlook report.

**The EU's ailing carbon trading scheme has been rejected** by the European Parliament.

## Eastern Europe

**Gold production in Kazakhstan** rose 20% on year in the January–March period, the Prime reported.

**Russia's domestic debt** fell 3.8% to 4.8 trillion ruble in the period from January to March, the State Statistics Service reported.

## North America

**A handful of Federal Reserve policy showed no sign they were prepared** to dial down the central bank's extraordinary accommodation any time soon, even though one gave a highly optimistic outlook that the economy will turn the corner next year.

**There is zero chance of Canadians getting a bigger break** on borrowing costs from Bank of Canada interest rate announcement, but that doesn't mean governor Mark Carney doesn't have an opportunity to adjust policy to impact the economy.

**The case for job shortages in Canada became thinner** with the most recent data showing vacancies actually fell to 200,000 at the start of the year, meaning there were 6.5 unemployed workers chasing each opening, Statistics Canada said.

## Australasia

**The cost of living in New Zealand rose** 0.4% in the quarter to the end of March, driven up by rising tobacco and petrol prices, the government statistics agency announced Wednesday.

## Oil & Gas News

**West Texas Intermediate crude rose** from the lowest level in almost four months as an industry report showed U.S. stockpiles dropped the most this year.

## Commodities News

**Wheat advanced** for a second day on concern that persistent dryness and freezing temperatures will further damage drought-hit crops in some of the biggest growing regions in the U.S., the world's largest exporter.

## Currency News

**The peso slumped** to its weakest level versus the greenback for nearly six months yesterday as investors shunned risky assets due to developments in the US and China, the world's two largest economies.

**The pound fell** to a one-month low against the euro after a report showed consumer-price inflation stayed above the Bank of England's target at the same time as growth stagnates.

Date	Gold	NYMEX Natural Gas (\$/MMBtu)	Brent Oil (\$/bbl)	oil/nat. gas ratio	EUR	GBP	USD	AUD	Indo RUP	YEN	MYS RM	Phil Peso	Thai Baht	SGX Index
16-Apr-13	1,376.82	4.15	100.39	24.19	1.62	1.90	1.24	1.29	7,853	79.08	2.46	33.35	23.53	3,287.60
17-Apr-13	1,381.11	4.19	100.39	23.96	1.62	1.89	1.24	1.28	7,855	78.73	2.46	33.40	23.52	3,299.77
% Change	0.31	0.96	0.00		-0.03	-0.04	0.04	-0.53	0.03	-0.44	-0.07	0.13	-0.04	0.37

# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

18/4/2013

*...France presented a plan to get its public deficit back under the EU limit...  
...UK unemployment rose to 7.9% or 2.56 million...*

## South East Asia

**Malaysia's CPI rose 1.6%** to 106.2 compared with a year ago mainly due to a 3.3% increase in the food and non-alcoholic beverages index, the Statistics Department said in a statement.

**The Malaysia's rubber industry contributed RM36.4 billion** to the country's exports last year, said Deputy Minister of Plantation Industries and Commodities, Datuk Hamzah Zainuddin.

**Indonesia produced nearly 100 million tons coal in Q1 2013**, in line with targets. Around 80% of the coal were exported to major importing countries, such as China and India.

**Philippines' government spending for infrastructure and other capital outlays increased 40.8% y-o-y** to P9.4 billion as of February 2013. This is mainly due to increased spending by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH).

**The value of the Bank of Thailand's gold reserves has also fallen**, from \$8.185 billion at the end of last year to \$7.8 billion as of April 5, according to BOT's governor.

**Vietnam runs a \$540 million trade deficit** in March this year after enjoying a \$900 million surplus in the previous month. The total value of imports and exports of the country reached \$22.6 billion, according to the latest statistics from the General Department of Customs.

**Vietnamese export revenues rose 54.3% month-on-month** to \$11.03 billion, while import revenues surged 59.9% over February to \$11.57 billion, said the General Department of Customs.

**The State Bank of Viet Nam has moved** to eliminate inefficient credit institutions during the 2013-15 periods, said the central bank.

## North East Asia

**China's state-owned enterprises (SOEs) saw their combined profits expand 7.7% y-o-y** to 513.73 billion yuan (82.2 billion U.S. dollars) in the first quarter of the year, the Ministry of Finance announced Wednesday.

**Beijing's economy expanded 7.9%** in the first quarter, with its GDP totaling US\$66.4 billion, the capital's statistics bureau announced Wednesday.

**Japan registered its biggest ever trade deficit of 8.17 trillion yen** in the 2012 fiscal year through March. The value of Japanese exports dropped 2.1% in fiscal 2012 from the previous year to 63.94 trillion yen and that of imports rose 3.4% to 72.11 trillion yen, the ministry said in the report.

**South Korea's finance minister has promised to step up cooperation with the World Bank** in helping improve the lender's aid-delivery system and sharing its development experience with other poor countries, his office said Thursday.

## Indian Sub-continent

**The Reserve Bank of India has recommended that the government insert a special clause** in its foreign direct investment policy to prevent foreign funds from surreptitiously flowing into the tobacco sector under the garb of "brand building and marketing activities".

## Middle East and North Africa

**The IMF is very close to reaching an agreement with Tunisia** on providing a precautionary credit line worth \$1.75 billion, a senior IMF official told reporters.

**The IMF expects Jordan's economy to grow** by 3.3% this year and to expand by 3.5% in 2014.

## Europe

**Car sales across Europe were 10.3% lower y-o-y in March**, figures from the Association of European Carmakers (Acea) showed.

**UK unemployment rose to 7.9% or 2.56 million between December and February**, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has said.

**France presented a plan to get its public deficit back under the EU limit by 2014**, having decided to let debt grow further as it tries to jumpstart a sputtering economy. The plan aims to bring the deficit below 3.0% of GDP including higher taxes along with savings within the social security system.

## Eastern Europe

**Ukraine imported 200 million cubic meters of Russian gas** in March, which was then transited to other countries, Ukraine's Energy and Coal Industry Minister Eduard Stavitsky said on Wednesday.

**Russia's GDP** rose 1.1% in the January–March period, while rising 2.3% in annual terms in March, the Prime reported.

## North America

**The U.S. economic expansion remained “moderate”** amid gains in manufacturing, housing and autos that offset weakness in defense-related industries in some regions, the Federal Reserve said.

**Canada's central bank has held its key lending rate at 1%**, saying it expects only modest global economic growth this year.

**Mexico's auto production has almost doubled** since 2009. Now its steel industry is trying to catch up by spending almost \$3 billion on new and improved factories. “Auto exports are going to be the new oil for the Mexican economy,” Marco Oviedo, chief economist of Barclays in Mexico.

## Australasia

**Housing affordability remains a concern** for many Australian families, Housing and Homelessness Minister Mark Butler said.

## Oil & Gas News

**West Texas Intermediate crude fell** to the lowest level in four months as U.S. fuel use declined and production climbed to a two-decade high. OPEC said it doesn't plan to hold an emergency meeting on prices.

## Commodities News

**Copper slumped to its lowest** since October 2011, while gold and oil dropped, dragging shares of Asian materials producers to their biggest four-day loss in nine months.

## Currency News

**The central parity rate of Chinese currency Renminbi, or the yuan, gained** 66 basis points to an all-time high of 6.2342 against the U.S. dollar on Wednesday, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trading System.

**The Thai baht pulled back** from a 16-year high as a technical indicator signaled a possible rebound in the dollar and amid concern the central bank will intervene to slow the currency's gains.

Date	Gold	NYMEX Natural Gas (\$/MMBtu)	Brent Oil (\$/bbl)	oil/nat. gas ratio	EUR	GBP	USD	AUD	Indo RUP	YEN	MYS RM	Phil Peso	Thai Baht	SGX Index
17-Apr-13	1,381.11	4.19	100.39	23.96	1.62	1.89	1.24	1.28	7,855	78.73	2.46	33.40	23.52	3,299.77
18-Apr-13	1,362.63	4.19	97.6	23.29	1.63	1.89	1.23	1.28	7,870	79.58	2.45	33.47	23.47	3,299.48
% Change	-1.34	0.00	-2.78		0.52	0.02	-0.32	-0.48	0.19	1.08	-0.07	0.23	-0.21	-0.01



# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

20/4/2013

*...India is the largest recipient of remittances in the world...  
...Philippines' Balance of Payments stood at US\$1.5 billion...*

## South East Asia

**Indonesia's pulp and paper exports rose** 2.0% y-o-y to Rp 5.45 trillion (US\$561 million) in Q1 2013. The implementation of the Indonesian Wood Legality Verification System helped boost the exports.

**Philippines' Balance of Payments stood at US\$1.5 billion** for end-March 2013. This was US\$500 million higher than the surplus in February.

**The Bank of Thailand is facing growing pressure** to cut its policy rate, a move backed by both the government and exporters as a quick fix to the baht's continued appreciation, which is taking a toll on the export sector.

**Domestic Vietnamese companies have increased their overseas investments** in the agro-forestry and aquaculture sectors, with about 150 ongoing projects valued at nearly US\$2.5 billion, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

## North East Asia

**China's first-quarter overseas direct investment increased** 44% y-o-y, a slower pace compared to the same period last year, official data showed.

**Hong Kong's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased** from 3.4% in December to February to 3.5% in January to March, the city's statistics department said.

**The value of imports was up 3.4% to ¥72.11 trillion** for the third straight yearly increase as those of liquefied natural gas jumped 14.9% and of crude oil 5.3%, the Finance Ministry of Japan said.

**IMF MD Christine Lagarde on called on Japan to reduce public debt** and carry out structural reforms. The Bank of Japan's new monetary easing policy launched earlier this month is "a positive step," Lagarde said.

**South Korea is seeking to increase its contribution in the trade insurance fund** this year to strengthen its support for small and medium companies, a government official said.

## Indian Sub-continent

**Increasing foreign direct investment (FDI) in the insurance sector is top priority** for the ruling United Progressive Alliance, (UPA), Finance Minister P Chidambaram said on Saturday, hoping that a bill to address the issue will be passed in the upcoming Parliament session.

**India is the largest recipient of remittances in the world**, receiving USD 69 billion in 2012, the World Bank has said.

**In the latest Annual Supplement 2013-14 the Union Government of India has tried to implement** measures to revive the interest of the investors in Social Economic Zones (SEZs) as well as to boost exports.

## Middle East and North Africa

**Qatar plans to increase its non-oil exports** to close to 4 billion Qatari riyals (QR) a year by 2016 from a little over QR1 billion two years ago in a major initiative to diversify the economy away from the key energy sector, Gulf Times said on Thursday.

**Iran exported 8.4 billion cubic meters of natural gas**, worth \$3.5 billion, in the past Iranian calendar year, IRNA quoted National Iranian Gas Company Managing Director Javad Owji as saying.

## Europe

**The European Union said that a first round of talks with Japan made a good start** in the search for what could be one the world's biggest free trade deals, according to chief EU negotiator Mauro Petriccione.

**Britain has its top triple-A rating stripped** as a weaker economic outlook continues to push up the country's debt, said the ratings agency Fitch.

**The UK's growth numbers are "not particularly good"** and there are renewed concerns over the health of the UK economy, Christine Lagarde, head of the IMF has stated.

**The UK government has launched a legal challenge against plans for a European financial transactions tax (FTT).** The FTT, which aims to raise public funds and discourage speculative trading, will be adopted by 11 EU states - but not by the UK.

**Cyprus President Nicos Anastasiades unveiled a package of measures** aimed at keeping Cypriots in employment as the massive costs of a Eurozone bailout deliver a huge blow to the island's economy.

## Eastern Europe

**Russia's foreign trade surplus** fell 17% in the January-February period, according to data released by the State Statistics Services.

**Russia's gold reserves** rose 0.6% to 983 tonnes in March, the Prime reported.

## North America

**The number of Americans filing new claims for unemployment benefits increased** 4,000 to a seasonally adjusted 352,000 the Labor Department said.

**The federal government of Canada is investing** up to \$1.75 million in three Ottawa business startups — plus another \$100,000 aimed at persuading private investors to step forward.

## Oil & Gas News

**Crude advanced** for a second day, paring its third weekly drop, on speculation that declines were excessive and as the euro increased against the dollar.

## Commodities News

**Gold futures topped** \$1,400 an ounce on signs that jewelers and other users of the metal are taking advantage of the biggest slump in prices in three decades. Gold futures for June delivery climbed 0.2% to settle at \$1,395.60.

## Currency News

**The Vietnamese dong could be devalued** by as much as 2% against the US dollar this year, said Governor of the State Bank of Viet Nam Nguyen Van Binh.

**The New Zealand dollar fell** as weaker US data and disappointing earnings stoked concerns global growth may be slowing and weighed on stocks and risk appetite.

Date	Gold	NYMEX Natural Gas (\$/MMBtu)	Brent Oil (\$/bbl)	oil/nat. gas ratio	EUR	GBP	USD	AUD	Indo RUP	YEN	MYS RM	Phil Peso	Thai Baht	SGX Index
18-Apr-13	1,362.63	4.19	97.6	23.29	1.63	1.89	1.23	1.28	7,870	79.58	2.45	33.47	23.47	3,299.48
20-Apr-13	1,403.79	4.41	99.65	22.60	1.61	1.89	1.24	1.27	7,857	79.67	2.46	33.29	23.24	3,294.05
% Change	3.02	5.25	2.10	-0.68	-0.68	-0.26	0.15	-0.17	-0.17	0.12	0.15	-0.54	-1.00	-0.16

*...France and Spain fell short of their budget deficit goals...  
...China's external financial assets expanded...*

## South East Asia

**The Philippines is seeking new markets** for sugar and bananas to boost agro-based exports, the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) said.

**Investments in Philippines' mining sector surpassed government targets this year**, as companies started to inject more money following the lifting of the moratorium on the acceptance of new mining permits. The investments from priority mining projects in various stages of development reached US\$791.69 million in 2012, exceeding revised target of US\$509.24 million.

**Indonesia's KADIN-Roy Morgan Consumer Confidence index fell** to 151.9 in March — down 3.6 points from February 2013 — but is still 9.4 points higher than it was a year ago in March 2012. The fall was driven primarily by falling confidence in buying major household items.

**Thailand has postponed indefinitely a tender** to sell up to half-a-million tonnes of rice from bulging stockpiles as it tries to avoid low prices against the backdrop of rising world supplies, a senior Commerce Ministry official said yesterday.

**Paiboon Kittisrikangwan, an assistant governor of the Bank of Thailand, conceded that the baht** had risen too quickly, but signalled that the BOT preferred to wait a little longer before taking any action.

**The logistics sector is expected to grow** by 10-15% this year despite the many challenges thrown up by the economic downturn, according to the Viet Nam Freight Forwarders Association.

**The investment by foreign companies in the Savanh-Seno Special Economic Zone** of Lao PDR is showing a positive sign following the presence of some global companies, according to local official.

## North East Asia

**China's external financial assets expanded** 9% to reach 5.17 trillion U.S. dollars by the end of 2012, the State Administration of Foreign Exchange (SAFE).

**China's crude steel production** for March 2013 was 66.3 Mt, up by 6.6% compared to March 2012.

**As the Bank of Japan prepares to boost its inflation** forecasts this week, analysts from Goldman Sachs Group Inc. to JPMorgan Chase & Co. say the estimates may themselves be used as a tool for ending deflation.

**South Korea's major business organizations on Tuesday expressed opposition** to raising the retirement age of workers by five years to 60, citing additional financial burden of companies and negative effects on job creation for younger generations.

**Korea is expected to post the lowest economic growth rate** among major Asian countries this year, according to the Asian Development Bank. On Sunday, it lowered the nation's GDP growth projection from 3.4% to 2.8%.

**Orders for Taiwan's exports unexpectedly shrank** 6.6% in March from a year earlier, contracting for the second straight month, pointing to faltering global demand for hi-tech products and signalling the trade-reliant economy may be losing momentum.

## Middle East and North Africa

**The Oman's economy is projected to grow** 4.2% in 2013 and 3.5% in 2014, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

## Europe

**The German economy, which contracted** at the end of last year, likely returned to growth in Q1 this year and the upward trend looks set to continue, the German central bank Bundesbank said.

**David Lipton, the IMF's first deputy managing director calls for Britain** to slow the pace of its austerity programme and said the "pace of consolidation" should be reconsidered in light of the weaker than expected British economy.

**France and Spain fell short of their budget deficit goals** last year and debt levels swelled across the euro zone but the pressure may be easing on Paris and Madrid as the European Commission signals an end to sharp spending cuts.

## North America

**Alberta was the third-largest province in terms of manufacturing**, with sales of \$74.829 billion in 2012, according to a report released Monday by Statistics Canada.

## Oil & Gas News

**Natural Gas futures on India's Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) is negative** and if commodity breaks 232 level then it may touch 228 during intraday trade.

## Commodities News

**World crude steel production** for the 63 countries reporting to the World Steel Association (worldsteel) was

135 million tonnes (Mt) in March 2013, an increase of 1.0% compared to March 2012.

**Silver prices may average \$26/oz** in 2013 and \$24/oz in 2014 and find better support at lower levels as industrial demand recovers, stated London based Barclays in its recent market analysis.

## Currency News

**The yen rose** versus all 16 major peers after a private report signaled a slowdown in Chinese manufacturing, underscoring concern the largest Asian economy is faltering and boosting demand for the safest assets.

**The pound rose** against the euro, following three weeks of losses, before a government report this week that economists said will show the U.K. avoided falling into a triple-dip recession last quarter.

Date	Gold	NYMEX Natural Gas (\$/MMBtu)	Brent Oil (\$/bbl)	oil/nat. gas ratio	EUR	GBP	USD	AUD	Indo RUP	YEN	MYS RM	Phil Peso	Thai Baht	SGX Index
20-Apr-13	1,403.79	4.41	99.65	22.60	1.61	1.89	1.24	1.27	7,857	79.67	2.46	33.29	23.24	3,294.05
23-Apr-13	1,428.96	4.24	100.08	23.60	1.62	1.89	1.24	1.28	7,848	80.66	2.46	33.22	23.14	3,291.30
% Change	1.79	-3.85	0.43		0.26	-0.22	0.17	0.04	-0.12	1.23	-0.07	-0.21	-0.43	-0.08

# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

24/4/2013

*...FDI in China in March rose...  
...Singapore's inflation in March eased...*

## South East Asia

**Singapore's inflation in March eased** to 3.5%, compared with the surge of 4.9% for February, the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) and the Ministry of Trade and Industry jointly announced on Tuesday.

**Philippines' Bureau of Internal Revenue issued recently two revenue regulations (RR)** to improve collection of taxes from transfers that usually go unregulated.

**The Indonesian economy is expected to grow at a slower pace** in Q1 2013 as the global economy has not fully improved, according to the Finance Ministry. The ministry has predicted the first-quarter economic growth will range from 6.2% to 6.3%.

**The Indonesian government will limit the subsidized oil fuel consumption** by the four-wheeled private-owned cars that will be enacted in the near future, the Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs Hatta Radjasa confirmed.

**Thailand's export shipment in March grew** 4.55% y-o-y to US\$20.76 billion, as monetary easing in the US and Japan raised demand for Thai products.

## North East Asia

**China's companies still face difficulties** in operating their businesses as well as problems of overcapacity, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology said.

**China's Purchasing Managers' Index for April** fell to 50.5 in April from 51.6 in March, but was still stronger than February's reading of 50.4.

**FDI in China in March rose** 5.65% from a year earlier to \$12.42 billion, the second consecutive monthly growth after February reversed an eight-month slump with a rise of 6.3%, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

**The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) yesterday backed Japan's bid** to end years of deflation, but called on Tokyo to step up efforts to shrink its huge debt pile.

**Taiwan received over \$139 million of investment** from Chinese mainland businesses in the first quarter of 2013, up 34% from a year earlier, the island's economic authority said Tuesday.

**Rating agency Standard & Poor's said it saw more than a one-third chance** that it would downgrade Japan's sovereign ratings because of uncertainty about whether the government's push to revive growth and end deflation will succeed.

**South Korean banks saw their combined net profit from overseas operations shrink** 11.8% last year from a year earlier due mainly to a profit decrease in stocks and bonds investment, the financial regulator said Tuesday.

**South Korea's economic growth probably ticked up** in the first quarter but fell short of achieving a firm recovery at a time of heightened risks from a falling yen and North Korea's war threats.

## Middle East and North Africa

**Egypt said its economy will grow** by 3.8% in the fiscal year starting in July as ministers outlined the 2013/14 budget to parliament on Tuesday.

## Indian Sub-continent

**India's worst economic slowdown** in a decade has bottomed out and growth is expected to pick up to 6.4% in the current fiscal year.

## Europe

**Activity in the Eurozone's services and manufacturing sectors continued to fall** in April with German output declining, according to Markit's composite purchasing managers' index (PMI).

**German business confidence fell** for a second month in April after winter weather hindered the recovery in Europe's largest economy, according to the Ifo institute's business climate index.

**The Portuguese government announced Tuesday new measures** including increase of economic investment and financing support for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to promote growth and job creation in the heavily indebted country.

## North America

**U.S. sales of new homes rose** in March to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 417,000, the Commerce Department said.

**Canadians spend more money on taxes** than basic necessities, according to a report by the Fraser Institute.

**Saskatchewan's retail sales** hit a record \$1.5 billion in February, an increase of 5% over the same period last year, according to a report released Tuesday by Statistics Canada.

## Australasia

**Australian inflation** was 0.4% in the March quarter, below expectations for a second consecutive period, underscoring softness in the economy and spurring talk of an interest rate cut.

**New Zealand's central bank left interest rates at a record low** of 2.5% on Wednesday, predicting they

would remain there for the rest of 2013 with low inflation and a surging local currency.

## Oil & Gas News

**West Texas Intermediate crude rose** as much as 70 cents to \$89.88 a barrel. Brent for June settlement gained as much as 49 cents, or 0.5%, to \$100.80 a barrel.

## Commodities News

**Gold gained** after the biggest fall in a week yesterday, advancing for the sixth time in seven days as increasing physical purchases tempered shrinking assets in exchange-traded products. Gold for June delivery rose as much as 1.1% to \$1,424.90 an ounce.

## Currency News

**China's currency closed slightly stronger** on Tuesday, approaching the record high touched last week, after the central bank set a stronger midpoint in response to a fall in the dollar overnight.

Date	Gold	NYMEX Natural Gas (\$/MMBtu)	Brent Oil (\$/bbl)	oil/nat. gas ratio	EUR	GBP	USD	AUD	Indo RUP	YEN	MYS RM	Phil Peso	Thai Baht	SGX Index
23-Apr-13	1,428.96	4.24	100.08	23.60	1.62	1.89	1.24	1.28	7,848	80.66	2.46	33.22	23.14	3,291.30
24-Apr-13	1,425.70	4.23	100.9	23.85	1.62	1.89	1.24	1.27	7,839	79.57	2.46	33.27	23.21	3,305.25
% Change	-0.23	-0.24	0.82		-0.06	0.40	0.24	-0.51	-0.12	-1.34	0.22	0.14	0.32	0.42

# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

27/4/2013

*... Unemployment rate in Spain and France rose to a new high ...  
... United States' economy grew 2.5% in Q1 ...*

## South East Asia

**Singapore's industrial production contracted** at a slower pace in March, with manufacturing output falling 4.1% on-year. This is down from the re-stated 16.3% contraction in February.

**Indonesia is maintaining its efforts to place two of its agriculture-based products** — palm oil and rubber — on APEC list of environmentally friendly goods despite rejection by some members.

**Philippine merchandise imports fell further in February 2013.** Imports were down 5.8% y-o-y to US\$4.708 billion.

**The Philippine economy is seen to maintain its momentum** as it is projected grow 6.5% this year before slowing down to 6.3% in 2014, according to Standard & Poor's, adding that it will be the second fastest growing economy in Asia next to China.

**Vietnam's flagging economy and slowing inflation** has prompted strategists to forecast more interest-rate cuts, which have already driven government bond yields to the lowest in four years.

## North East Asia

**China's oil demand increased by only 1.9% y-o-y in March 2013,** the lowest since October, said the New York-based energy and metals information provider Platts.

**China's industrial profits grew 12.1%** in Q1 this year from a year ago.

**China's financial and capital account surplus surged in Q1** as looser monetary policies in developed economies and expectations of yuan gains spurred inflows of funds.

**Hong Kong weak deposit growth weighed on China's banks in Q1,** forced lenders including the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China Ltd to pay more for savers' money and eating into their margins.

**Japanese inflation is likely to rise to around 2%** during the latter half of the coming three-year period covered in the Bank of Japan's latest semi-annual economic and price outlook, the central bank said.

**Takehiko Nakao, a former Japan vice minister for finance,** has been elected as the President of Asian Development Bank.

## Middle East and North Africa

**Oman's central bank** plans to issue rules to boost lending to small and medium-sized firms, a new move to help bring unemployment down in the sultanate.

## Europe

**The German government insisted its economy could "look to the future with optimism",** as Berlin's growth forecast for the current year rose to 0.5% from a previous prognosis of 0.4%, stated Economy Minister Philipp Roesler.

**The UK economy has avoided falling back into a recession** after its first estimate showed GDP grew 0.3% during Q1 2013, the Office for National Statistics said.

**The number of unemployed people in France rose to a fresh high last month,** 11.5% increase y-o-y, according to data by the labour ministry said.

**Spain's unemployment rate soared to a new record of 27.16%** of the workforce in Q1 2013, data from the National Statistics Institute indicated.

**Spain's government has revised down its forecast and expects the economy to contract by 1.3% in 2013,** compared with its earlier estimate of -0.5%.

## North America

**The US economy expanded by 2.5% in Q1 of the year,** though a sharp fall in government spending and tepid growth in March meant the rebound from a lacklustre fourth quarter was weaker than expected.

## Australasia

**New Zealand reported a bigger-than-expected trade surplus in March**, driven by increased meat and wood exports.

## Oil & Gas News

**Brent crude oil fell on Friday, following a two-day, US\$3 rally**, as weak economic data from the United States sounded a note of caution on growth prospects in the world's largest oil consumer.

## Commodities News

**Cash and US gold futures rose more than 1%** to the highest since April 15 above US\$1,484 an ounce on Friday.

## Currency News

**Malaysia's ringgit advanced** 0.1% to 3.0314 per dollar in Kuala Lumpur.

**China's yuan strode to another record high on Friday**, as the central bank set its midpoint sharply higher as part of an apparent effort to guide the spot rate closer to equilibrium level in advance of a possible widening of the daily trading band.

**The pound jumped the most in nine months against the dollar this week** as a government report showed the U.K. economy avoided a recession last quarter, damping speculation the Bank of England will boost stimulus.

Date	Gold	NYMEX Natural Gas (\$/MMBtu)	Brent Oil (\$/bbl)	oil/nat. gas ratio	EUR	GBP	USD	AUD	Indo RUP	YEN	MYS RM	Phil Peso	Thai Baht	SGX Index
24-Apr-13	1,425.70	4.23	100.9	23.85	1.62	1.89	1.24	1.27	7,839	79.57	2.46	33.27	23.21	3,305.25
27-Apr-13	1,461.92	4.15	103.16	24.86	1.61	1.91	1.24	1.28	7,857	80.15	2.45	33.29	23.65	3,337.71
% Change	2.54	-1.89	2.24		-0.29	0.99	-0.27	0.53	0.24	0.72	-0.32	0.06	1.89	0.98