

# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

4/2/2014

*...Indonesian trade surplus rises...  
...U.S. Treasury Secretary urged Congress to lift debt ceiling...*

## South East Asia

**Indonesia's trade balance remained in surplus for the third month in December, improving to US\$1,525 million from the revised US\$789 million.**

The improvement in the trade balance was mostly driven by exports growth, with improvements in exports exceeding imports.

**Inflation in Indonesia was up in January** as bad weather and flooding drove up food prices. Inflation surged 1.07% m-o-m in January, taking y-o-y inflation to 8.2%, the Central Statistics Agency reported.

**CPI in Thailand rose to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 1.93%, from 1.67% last month,** Ministry of Commerce Thailand reported.

**Thai power tariff is expected to go up further in the next four-month period starting in May** after rising THB 0.05 per kilowatt hour this month. The Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand said yesterday, the fuel adjustment charge is likely to be raised further due to factors including the depreciation of the baht and maintenance shutdowns of natural gas pipeline.

**Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas may implement stricter guidelines on banks' exposure to the real estate sector** as the country's property market continues to boom. Latest central bank data showed local banks' exposure to the property sector amounted to PHP 900.1 billion as of June last year, up 7% from end-March.

## North East Asia

**China saw its aggregate volume of natural gas imported from overseas jump 25% y-o-y in 2013,** approaching one-third of its apparent consumption. The country imported 53 billion cubic meters of natural gas last year, 31.6% of its domestic gas output plus imported volume, according to a report released by the country's state-owned oil giant.

**Bank of Japan Governor Haruhiko Kuroda today stressed that the country will see 2% inflation** around the latter half of fiscal 2014 through early fiscal 2015.

**South Korea's consumer prices in January rose at the same pace as in the previous month** due to stabilised agricultural product prices. The CPI rose 1.1%

on the year in January-- the same pace as in December, according to Statistics Korea.

## Australasia

**Australian Building approvals were up nationally by 15.7% for 2013,** according to Australian Bureau of Statistics figure. Housing Industry Association senior economist Shane Garrett it was the first year of significant growth since 2010.

**New Zealand commodity prices rose to a record in January, led by gains in butter.** The ANZ Commodity Price Index advanced 1.2% to 334.3 from December. The index is 23% above January 2013.

## Indian Sub-Continent

**In January, India's manufacturing sector expanded** the most this financial year, while inflation, particularly on the raw material front, rose, according to the widely-tracked HSBC Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI). The PMI for January rose to 51.4 points from 50.7 in December.

## Middle East and North Africa

**Turkey's inflation rate for January rose by 7.48% y-o-y,** the Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat) said. The hike in January consumer price index was mainly attributed to higher prices for food, alcoholic beverages, tobacco and transportation service.

**Egypt's budget deficit was 89.4 billion Egyptian pounds (US\$12.84 billion)** or 4.4% of economic output in the first half of this fiscal year, less than in same period a year before, Finance Ministry reported.

**Saudi inflation edged up in 2013, averaging 3.6%** in the first 10 months, mainly driven by higher food and housing costs, National Bank of Kuwait said.

**The unemployment rate in Bahrain shrank in the Q4 of 2013 to 4.3%,** compared with 4.6% in the Q3 of the same year, Minister of Labor said in a statement.

## Western Europe

**The decline in French manufacturing activity eased in January.** Data compiler Markit said its French

purchasing managers' index rose to 49.3 in January from 47.0 in December, its highest reading since September.

**Sales of new cars in France saw positive performance at the start of 2014** with growing sales of French brands, official data showed on Monday. According to French Car Sales Federation (CCFA), French and foreign car-makers offered 125,477 units at the end of January, up 0.5% from the same month a year earlier.

**Rises in new orders, output and employment drove the strongest growth in German manufacturing in January.** Markit's Purchasing Managers' Index for the German manufacturing sector, rose to 56.5 in January from 54.3 in December.

## North America

**U.S. Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew urged Congress on Monday to lift the debt ceiling without delay**, as the government will run out of its borrowing authority on Friday. Lew said as the temporary suspension of the debt limit will end in just a matter of days, the Treasury Department will have to start using extraordinary measures after Friday to avoid a first- ever default on the national debt.

## South America

**Argentina's tax revenue rose 37.5% in January** from a year earlier, as the top tax official said rising export

fees brought relief to public accounts. Tax revenue rose to 90.3 billion pesos (US\$11.2 billion).

**Brazil posted a trade deficit of US\$ 4.057 billion in January**, the Trade Ministry said. Brazil's trade deficit in January was the biggest on record, after a rise in raw material exports failed to offset greater imports of consumer and capital goods.

## Oil & Gas News

**WTI for March delivery was at \$96.58 a barrel, up 15 cents**, in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange at 12:43 p.m. Sydney time.

## Commodity News

**Copper for delivery slid** in three months on the London Metal Exchange as much as 0.3% to \$7,016 a metric ton.22q

## Currency News

**The pound fell 0.7%** to \$1.6322 at 4:24 p.m. London time after sliding to \$1.6319, the lowest level since Jan. 17.

**The yen fell 0.3% to 101.26 per dollar** as of 1:06 p.m. in Tokyo after gaining as much as 1.2 percent to 100.78 yesterday, the strongest level since Nov. 21.

Date	Gold Spot	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
30-Jan-14	1,264.60	5.4	107.97	19.99	1.74	2.11	1.27	112.07	9552.92	81.08	2.61	35.47	25.83	3,016.15
04-Feb-14	1,256.82	5.05	105.98	20.99	1.72	2.10	1.28	111.82	9576.71	80.12	2.62	35.51	25.75	2,969.18
% Change	-0.62	-6.48	-1.84		-0.84	-0.49	0.39	-0.22	0.25	-1.19	0.37	0.13	-0.33	-1.56

# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

5/2/2014

*...UK shop prices fell...  
...New Zealand's unemployment rate at 8.5%...*

## South East Asia

**Indonesia's economy grew 5.78% last year**, the slowest since 2009, as the global economic fallouts eroded demand for the country's exports, the statistics bureau said.

**Thailand's central bank warned of "substantially increased" risk to economic growth** after the weekend's disrupted general election did nothing to restore stability in the country.

**The Philippines' government infrastructure spending rose** by 20.5% on year to 223.3 billion pesos (US\$4.91 billion) from January to November 2013, the Department of Budget and Management said.

**The Philippines' inflation rose** to 4.2% at the beginning of the year, compared to 4.1% in December 2013 and 3.1% in January 2013, as the cost of food and beverage lifted prices higher, the National Statistics Office reported.

## North East Asia

**Japan's Ministry of Finance has begun producing 1-yen coins** for the first time in four years ahead of an expected increase in demand after the consumption tax goes up from 5% to 8% on April 1.

**South Korea will step up market monitoring** and remain ready to take necessary action to minimise the impact of the recent U.S. move to ease its economic stimulus efforts, Finance Minister Hyun Oh-seok said.

## Australasia

**Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) kept the overnight cash-rate target** at 2.5%, saying that "the most prudent course is likely to be a period of stability in interest rates", Governor Glenn Stevens said in a statement in Sydney.

**New Zealand's unemployment rate stood at 8.5%**, unchanged since Q3 2013. Of the 2.614 million in New Zealand's workforce, an estimated 223,000 were unemployed and looking for work.

## Indian Sub-Continent

**India is better prepared for "any eventuality" in the economy now** than it was six months ago, Reserve Bank of India Governor Raghuram Rajan said.

**India received proposals for investments worth Rs 65,000 crore** (US\$10.4 billion) in the area of semiconductor and electronics manufacturing, of which Rs 13,800 crore (US\$2.2 billion) are under an incentive scheme, the department of electronics and information technology reported.

## Middle East and North Africa

**Total capital investment of registered companies in Bahrain is now more than US\$40 billion**, a growth of nearly 20% since 2008, Industry and Commerce Minister Dr Hassan Fakhro said.

**The Turkish economy likely grew 3.8% last year**, making it one of the five fastest growing countries in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan said.

## Western Europe

**The number of people registered as unemployed in Spain rose** by 113,097 in the first month of 2014 to a total of 4.8 million, the Ministry of Employment and Social Security data showed.

**Italy's CPI for January rose** for the second month in a row, climbing 0.2% from December, largely as a result of higher prices for fresh vegetables, the national statistics institute Istat said.

**Prices in Britain's shops fell** to 1% last month, from 0.8% in December, according to the British Retail Consortium/Nielsen shop price index, as January sales were deeper than usual.

## North America

**New orders for manufactured goods fell** 1.5% to US\$489.2 billion in December, the biggest in five months, the Commerce Department reported. The decrease was led by orders of transportation equipment, which went down 9.7% to hit US\$73.1 billion.

## South America

**A December slump limited Brazil's rise in 2013 industrial production to an annual 1.2%**, government statistics agency IBGE said. December saw a 3.5% fall over November.

**A tightening of fiscal policy would enhance the credibility of Brazil's overall macroeconomic policy framework** and help in placing the government's debt dynamics on stronger footing, according to Fitch Ratings. This would be supportive of Brazil's 'BBB' sovereign rating.

## Oil & Gas News

**Futures for March delivery fell** 2.3% to US\$5.252 per million British thermal units on the New York Mercantile Exchange and were at US\$5.344 at 3:30 p.m. Singapore time.

## Commodity News

**Raw sugar for March delivery climbed** 2% to settle at 16.06 cents a pound yesterday on ICE Futures U.S. in New York.

## Currency News

**The euro dropped** 0.4% to 136.84 yen as of 7:02 a.m. in London. It touched 136.23 yesterday, the weakest since Nov. 22.

Date	Gold Spot	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
04-Feb-14	1,256.82	5.05	105.98	20.99	1.72	2.10	1.28	111.82	9576.71	80.12	2.62	35.51	25.75	2,969.18
05-Feb-14	1,255.17	5.33	105.98	19.88	1.72	2.07	1.27	112.40	9597.85	79.62	2.63	35.74	25.88	2,967.37
% Change	-0.13	5.54	0.00		-0.34	-1.29	-0.53	0.52	0.22	-0.63	0.34	0.64	0.54	-0.06

# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

6/2/2014

*...Australia's retail trade rose...  
...China's consumer market boomed during first days of Lunar New Year...*

## South East Asia

**South East Asia's largest economy was hit hard by the tapering panic that gripped markets last year**, but Indonesia's finance minister said the country's current account deficit would not be an issue this year.

**Thai's consumer confidence index on the economy in January dropped** to 61.4, the lowest in the past 26 months, from 63.2 last December, the Thai Chamber of Commerce's Consumer Confidence Index survey in January showed.

**Investment pledges approved by the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (Peza) surged** by 250% to P20.58 billion in January this year, from P5.88 billion a year ago. Peza Director General Lilia de Lima said that the projects approved by the board were mostly in the manufacturing sector.

**Vietnam's trade deficit was US\$100 million in January** this year, of which both exports and imports fell compared to the previous month and over the same period in 2013, the General Statistics Office reported.

## North East Asia

**China's consumer market boomed during the first days of the Lunar New Year holiday** despite falling luxury gift sales, according to the Ministry of Commerce said. In the first four days of the week-long Spring Festival holiday, consumer market sales expanded steadily.

**The Japanese economy can withstand the pain from a sales tax hike in April** as exports and capital expenditure will gradually pick up and offset the drop in household spending, Bank of Japan Deputy Governor Kikuo Iwata said.

**The government of Japan wants companies to raise salaries** as corporate earnings and investments increase to spur its reflationary efforts as business and union leaders began negotiations on annual wages.

**Imported car sales in South Korea rose** 20.3% on-year as foreign brands continue to make inroads into the country's market, the Korea Automobile Importers and Distributors Association said.

**South Korea's economy is showing signs of "moderate" recovery**, helped by improving domestic demand and exports, the Korea Development Institute said.

**South Korea's service sector is excessively regulated**, with 10 times more restrictions than manufacturing, which can hinder the country's drive to create more jobs, the Federation of Korean Industries reported.

## Australasia

**Australia's trade balance returned to surplus** in the final two months of 2013, helped by a strong rise in mining exports. Australia's trade surplus was A\$468 million in December, following a surplus of A\$83 million in November. The November figure was revised from a deficit of A\$118 million.

**Australia's retail trade rose** 0.5% in December, seasonally adjusted, and was up 0.9% in the December quarter, a sign that another non-mining sector of the economy is gaining strength, Australian Bureau of Statistics figures show.

## Middle East and North Africa

**IT spending by the Middle East and Africa government sector totalled US\$7.43 billion** in 2013 and is set to see double-digit growth in 2014.

**Oman's public sector revenue grew** by 4.5% to RO14.08 billion in 2013, compared with RO13.48 billion at the end of 2012, according to figures published by the National Center for Statistics and Information.

## Eastern Europe

**Russian inflation decelerated** in January at 6.1% from a year earlier compared with 6.5% in December for the first time in four months as food costs eased, the Federal Statistics Service in Moscow said.

**Russia's service sector activity barely increased** in January as companies continued cutting staff, data from the HSBC Purchasing Managers' Index showed. The headline services activity PMI index dropped to 50.2 in January, from 53.6 in December.

## Western Europe

**European Central Bank policymakers face a dilemma after a surprise fall in inflation** brought the euro zone closer to slipping into deflation. Annual inflation in the currency bloc slowed to 0.7% in January, well below the ECB's target of just under 2%.

**Italy's service sector shrank** in January. The Markit/ADACI Business Activity Index, which covers companies from cafes to insurers, rose to 49.4 from December's 47.9.

**Spain's services sector saw the fastest growth in activity** in the first month of the year. Markit's Purchasing Managers' Index climbed from 54.2 points in December to 54.9 points in the first month of 2014.

## North America

**Mexico became only the second country in Latin America to earn a coveted "A" grade sovereign rating** after Moody's upgraded it yesterday, citing major economic reforms that President Enrique Pena Nieto has pushed through Congress.

## South America

**Industrial capacity utilisation in Brazil declined** to 81.4% in December on a seasonally adjusted basis, from 81.9% in November and from 82.6% from December 2012, reflecting still sluggish economic growth, the country's National Confederation of Industry said.

## Oil & Gas News

**Brent for March settlement gained** 13 cents to US\$106.38 a barrel on the London-based ICE Futures Europe exchange.

## Commodity News

**Silver for immediate delivery rose** 0.7% to US\$20.033 an ounce, and traded at US\$19.9888 at 3:23 p.m. Singapore time.

## Currency News

**Japan's yen has climbed** 6.5% versus its Korean counterpart this year, the biggest gain among 31 major currencies, reaching a more than two-month high of 10.771 won on Feb. 4.

Date	Gold Spot	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
05-Feb-14	1,255.17	5.33	105.98	19.88	1.72	2.07	1.27	112.40	9597.85	79.62	2.63	35.74	25.88	2,967.37
06-Feb-14	1,257.80	5.22	106.36	20.38	1.72	2.07	1.27	112.83	9603.38	79.90	2.62	35.72	25.82	2,986.89
% Change	0.21	-2.06	0.36		-0.09	0.05	-0.09	0.38	0.06	0.36	-0.34	-0.06	-0.26	0.66

# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

8/2/2014

*...US Unemployment Rate Fell in January...  
...Foreign Exchange Reserves in the Philippines and India Fell...*

## South East Asia

**The Indonesian government and Bank Indonesia will continue to coordinate** to safeguard inflation in 2014, which has been targeted at 4.5% plus minus 1%, by preparing a sufficient supply of food commodities so that prices remain stable.

**Malaysia's exports and imports both surged by more than 14% in December** from a year earlier, strengthening expectations that a robust trade performance will support the Southeast Asian economy this year amid a cooling of consumer demand.

**Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas kept its key interest rates steady** based on the Monetary Board's assessment of manageable inflation. Overnight borrowing and lending rates were maintained at 3.5% and 5.5%, respectively. Interest rate on special deposit accounts and reserve requirement ratios were also left unchanged.

**Philippines' foreign exchange reserves hit a 19-month low** of US\$78.9 billion in January. The January level was US\$4.3 billion lower than the US\$83.2 billion posted in December 2013.

## North East Asia

**China will reform its pension scheme** by unifying the two separate systems for urban and rural residents to allow people better access to social benefits, according to an executive meeting of the State Council.

## Australasia

**Economic growth in Australia is expected to pick up pace in 2014** due to a lower exchange rate and stronger activity in the housing and retail sectors, according to the central bank.

## Indian Sub-Continent

**India's foreign exchange reserves fell** to US\$291.07 billion as of January 31, from \$292.24 billion in the previous week, Reserve Bank of India said.

**Indian plastic notes in the denomination of Rs 10 will be introduced on a pilot basis**, Minister of State for Finance Namo Narayan Meena said.

## Middle East and North Africa

**Egyptian government has US\$70 billion internal debts** after military coup of July 2013, according to a report by Egypt's Ministry of Finance.

**Standard & Poor's cut its outlook on Turkey's ratings from stable to negative** 'BB+' long-term foreign currency and 'BBB' long-term local currency ratings, saying that it saw risks of a hard economic landing and that the country's policy environment was becoming less predictable.

## Eastern Europe

**Russia's economy showed no growth in December** compared with the previous month. In 2013, the economy grew 1.3% y-o-y. Evaporating investment activity together with weaker demand for Russia's exports were behind the slowdown from a 3.4% growth rate in 2012.

## Western Europe

**France saw a narrowed trade deficit in 2013 at €61.2 billion euros** (US\$83 billion). Compared to 2012, the figure decreased by €6 billion despite a gloomy global business climate.

**French government lowered the budget deficit by €12.3 billion** (US\$16.68 billion) last year thanks to tight-belt policy and high fiscal income, the Budget Ministry said. For the whole year of 2013, France's gap stood at €74.9 billion down by 14% from 2012 data.

**Britain's industrial output increased only by 0.5% in Q4 2013** compared with the previous quarter, indicating a low productivity in the country, according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

**The British economy will grow 2.5% in 2014** and 2.1% next year, after it achieved a 1.9% expansion last year, the fastest since 2007, according to a state run think-tank, National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR).

**The Spanish industrial production in 2013 fell by 1.8% y-o-y** on annual average. Production of durable goods, such as cars or buildings, suffered the biggest fall decreasing by 12.1%.



**The European Central Bank (ECB) decided to keep interest rates unchanged.** The interest rate on the main refinancing operations and the interest rates on the marginal lending facility and the deposit facility will remain unchanged at 0.25%, 0.75% and 0.00% respectively.

## North America

**U.S. economy added 113,000 jobs in January** and the unemployment rate edged down to 6.6%, the Labor Department reported.

**The U.S. labour productivity rose in Q4 2013**, while labour costs fell. Labour productivity of the U.S. nonfarm business sector increased at an annual 3.2% rate during October-December, slowing down from a rise of 3.6% in the previous quarter.

**The Canadian economy in January recouped 29,400 of the 44,000 jobs lost in December**, and the unemployment rate fell to 7% from 7.2%, diminishing talk of a possible interest rate cut by the central bank.

## South America

**Brazil's consumer prices rose to 0.55%** last month from 0.92% in December.

**Chilean consumer prices rose 0.2% in January**, leaving annual inflation in the lower half of the target range, at 2.8%.

**Peru posted a US\$365 million trade deficit in 2013**, the first negative reading in more than a decade as the Andean country's mineral exports slumped on lower prices and weak global economic growth, the central bank said.

## Oil & Gas News

**Natural gas for March delivery fell 15.6 cents** to \$4.775 per million British thermal units on the New York Mercantile Exchange, the lowest settlement price since Jan. 23.

## Commodity News

**Copper futures for March delivery gained 0.2%** to settle at \$3.236 a pound at 1:23 p.m. on the Comex in New York. This week, the price has climbed 1.2%, the most since Dec. 27.

## Currency News

**The peso climbed 0.7%** to 44.99 per dollar in Manila. Thailand's baht added 0.7% to 32.80, while the ringgit advanced 0.5% to 3.33 versus the greenback, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. Indonesia's rupiah strengthened 0.4% to 12,160.

Date	Gold Spot	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-Feb-14	1,257.80	5.22	106.36	20.38	1.72	2.07	1.27	112.83	9603.38	79.90	2.62	35.72	25.82	2,986.89
08-Feb-14	1,267.27	4.78	109.57	22.92	1.72	2.07	1.27	113.45	9586.81	80.40	2.62	35.56	25.88	3,013.14
% Change	0.75	-8.43	3.02		0.47	-0.15	-0.12	0.55	-0.17	0.62	0.03	-0.46	0.23	0.88



# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

11/2/2014

*...German manufacturing sales down in December...  
...South Korea's economy facing many structural problems...*

## South East Asia

**The Malaysian Distributive Trade sector registered a sales value of RM227 billion for the Q4 2013**, a 7.7% growth compared with the corresponding quarter in the previous year. Within the sub-sectors, retail trade recorded the highest percentage growth in sales value at 10.5% growth.

**Consumer loans in the Philippines continued to rise in Q3 2013** as more Filipinos turned to banks to pay for their houses and other properties. Total consumer loans extended by universal, commercial, and thrift banks amounted to Php 702.56 billion as of September last year; higher by 3.3% compared to the previous quarter.

**Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) in the Philippines continued to rise in November last year.** Net FDI inflows surged 54.9% to US\$286 million in November from US\$185 million in the same period in 2012.

## North East Asia

**Japan's outstanding government debt rose** to ¥1,017 trillion at the end of last year, data from the finance ministry showed. Japan's debt burden, at twice the size of its US\$5 trillion economy, is the worst among industrialised nations.

**Japan's current-account deficit widened to ¥638.6 billion in December** from ¥592.8 billion, the Finance Ministry said. The yen's slide and increased demand for foreign energy due to nuclear plants closures are causing imports to outstrip exports.

**South Korea's economy is showing signs of recovery but still faces many structural problems** such as inefficient resource distribution and restrictions that hamper entrepreneurship, the Finance Minister said.

**South Korea's trade surplus in the information technology sector widened last month** by 0.2% from the from a year earlier to US\$13.13 billion as its exports inched up while imports shrank, according to the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy.

## Australasia

**The number of home loans granted fell a seasonally adjusted 1.9% to 51,692 in December**, according to

the Australian Bureau of Statistics. However, total housing finance by value rose 0.2% in December, seasonally adjusted, to AU\$27.050 billion.

## Middle East and North Africa

**Egypt will inject EGP33.9 billion** to boost struggling economy as a second stimulus package since last August, the Egyptian interim government said.

## Western Europe

**German manufacturing sales declined 1.5% in December** following an increase of 2.4% in the previous month, according to German Federal Statistical Office. For the whole year of 2013, German manufacturing sales declined by 0.2%. Domestic turnover went down by 1.6%, while foreign sales were up by 1.4%.

**An unimpressive finish to 2013 for France's industrial sector as output fell 0.3% m-o-m in December.** The decline followed growth of 1.2% in November. Manufacturing output, said the country's statistics agency Insee, was stable in December, improving 0.5% over the last quarter of 2013.

**Italian industrial production in 2013 fell 3% compared to 2012**, the Italian statistics agency Istat reported. Industrial production contracted 0.7% in December compared to 12 months earlier.

**Italy's non-performing loans exceeded €150 billion in December 2013** - a whopping increase of almost 25% over the same period one year earlier.

## South America

**The Brazilian official inflation rate was 0.55% in January**, lower than December 2013's 0.92% and January 2013's 0.86%. Over the last 12 month-period, the Extended Consumer Price Index (IPCA) stands at 5.59% from February 2013 to January 2014.

## Oil & Gas News

**WTI for March delivery was at \$100.05 a barrel** in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange, down 1 cent, at 12:50 p.m. Sydney time.

## Commodity News

**Bullion for immediate delivery rose as much as 0.8%** to \$1,284.34 an ounce, the highest price since Nov. 18, and traded at \$1,284.08 by 10:29 a.m. in Singapore.

**Wheat futures for March delivery climbed 1.5%** to \$5.86 a bushel at 11:58 a.m. on the Chicago Board of Trade.

## Currency News

**The pound was little changed at \$1.6423** at 4:51 p.m. London time after rising 0.6% in the previous two days.

**The Australian currency rose 0.7%** to 90.09 U.S. cents as of 9:08 a.m. in Singapore, and touched the highest since Jan. 14 at 90.15.

Date	Gold Spot	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
08-Feb-14	1,267.27	4.78	109.57	22.92	1.72	2.07	1.27	113.45	9586.81	80.40	2.62	35.56	25.88	3,013.14
11-Feb-14	1,282.90	4.6	108.68	23.63	1.73	2.08	1.27	113.43	9586.81	80.72	2.63	35.44	25.86	3,042.39
% Change	1.23	-3.77	-0.81		0.24	0.53	-0.02	-0.02	0.00	0.40	0.26	-0.33	-0.07	0.97

# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

12/2/2014

*...China's trade surplus rose...  
...New Zealanders spent less on credit and debit cards...*

## South East Asia

**The Philippines' merchandise exports hit an all-time high in 2013** amid growth in shipments of non-electronic products. Data from the Philippine Statistics Authority recently released showed the country's merchandise exports reached US\$53.978 billion last year.

**Rebounding exports, weakening currency and brighter global demand likely kept Malaysia's economic growth steady** in the last three months of 2013, making up for a tail-off in domestic demand as the government tightens fiscal policy.

**Thailand's GDP to grow 4% in 2014** thanks to export expansion, according to the World Bank's office in the Thai capital Bangkok.

**Viet Nam's rice shipments in January fell** by 24% compared with the same period last year even as export prices of the grain rose by 38.28%. According to figures released by the Viet Nam Food Association, Viet Nam exported 307,255 tonnes of rice at US\$415.14 per tonne in January.

## North East Asia

**China's trade surplus rose** 14% y-o-y in January to US\$31.86 billion, rebounding from a decline the previous month. Exports increased 10.6% to US\$207.13 billion, while imports were up 10% at US\$175.27 billion, the General Administration of Customs said.

**China will aim to increase the share of non-fossil fuels in its overall energy consumption** to 10.7% in 2014, in an effort to further improve its energy mix, the national energy authority said.

**Japan's core machinery orders suffered a steep drop** in December. The 15.7% decline in orders, a leading indicator of capital expenditure, was the largest since comparable data available from 2005.

**South Korean jobless rate stood at 3.5%** last month, up from 3.4% a year earlier and 3% in December, Statistics Korea said. A total of 705,000 new jobs were created in January, up from 322,000 a year earlier and up from 560,000 the previous month.

**Household loans extended by South Korean banks declined** in January as households' balance sheets improved on the back of year-end bonuses, as well as a fall in mortgage lending, the central bank said. Outstanding household loans by local banks, including home-backed and credit loans, reached 477.8 trillion won (US\$448 billion) as of end-January, down 2.6 trillion won from the previous month, according to the Bank of Korea.

## Australasia

**New Zealanders spent less on their credit and debit cards** in January, snapping three months of gains, with apparel showing the sharpest decline. The value of electronic card spending on retail fell 0.5% in January, according to Statistics New Zealand.

## Middle East and North Africa

**Egypt's GDP declined** to 1% in the first quarter of the current fiscal year, compared with 2.5% in the same period last year, marking a 60% drop, the Finance Ministry said.

## Western Europe

**Britain's economy is still too weak** for the Bank of England (BOE) to risk any interest rate rise in the near future, BOE Governor Mark Carney warned.

**France runs a "significant risk" of overshooting its budget deficit target for 2013** and must do more to cut spending, national auditors warned.

**The total number of new business created in Spain increased** by 7.1% in 2013 in comparison with 2012, according to latest data published by the National Institute of Statistics (INE). The INE reported that a total of 93,363 new businesses were created in 2013.

## North America

**US Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen reiterated the central bank's plan to taper its stimulus exit** despite recent weakness in the economy. US Federal Reserve will continue to implement the monetary policy made by former Chair Ben Bernanke, she added.

**Finance Minister Jim Flaherty introduced a fiscal blueprint** that projects the federal treasury will enjoy a comfortable surplus of US\$6.4 billion in 2015-16.

**US House of Representatives approved a bill with no provisions attached to extend the limit on the federal government's borrowing authority.** The legislation would suspend the debt ceiling until 15 March 2015, allowing the Treasury Department to issue new debt above the current US\$17.2 trillion cap.

**US small business' confidence improved slightly** in January as more business owners planned to increase employment. The National Federation of Independent Business said its Small-Business Optimism Index edged up 0.2 point to 94.1 in January.

## South America

**Argentina's central bank added US\$17 million to its foreign currency reserves,** pushing them slightly higher to US\$27.755 billion while the peso was little changed in light trading.

## Oil & Gas News

**WTI for March delivery rose** 54 cents to \$100.60 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange after the release of the API report at 4:30 p.m. in Washington.

**Natural gas for March delivery rose** 24.5 cents to settle at \$4.824 per million British thermal units on the New York Mercantile Exchange

## Currency News

**The ringgit strengthened** 0.3%, the biggest gain since Feb. 4, to 3.3228 per dollar, trimming its three-month loss to 3.4%, data compiled by Bloomberg showed.

**The rupiah rose** 0.4% to 12,102 per dollar as of 10:07 a.m. in Jakarta, prices from local banks show. It touched 12,095 earlier.

Date	Gold Spot	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-Feb-14	1,282.90	4.6	108.68	23.63	1.73	2.08	1.27	113.43	9586.81	80.72	2.63	35.44	25.86	3,042.39
12-Feb-14	1,285.49	5	108.74	21.75	1.73	2.08	1.27	114.35	9579.46	80.50	2.63	35.44	25.83	3,042.60
% Change	0.20	8.70	0.06		0.38	0.12	0.07	0.81	-0.08	-0.27	0.26	0.01	-0.09	0.01

# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

13/2/2014

*... Australia's unemployment rate rose ...  
... India's retail inflation slowed...*

## South East Asia

**Malaysia's economy grew** 5.1% in Q4 2013 as exports picked up, the central bank reported. Exports rose 2.4% y-o-y in 2013, picking up in the second half due to demand from Malaysia's neighbours, as well as its largest trading partner China.

**The Philippines' manufacturing output continued to rise** in December. Volume of Production Index grew 26.5% in December, up from the revised 25.4% in November. This could be attributed to the constant expansion in production output registered by chemical products (230.6%), and furniture and fixtures (186%).

**Trade between Indonesia and the US rose** 7.6% y-o-y in 2013, reaching US\$28 billion, with Indonesia enjoying a trade surplus of US\$10 billion.

**Viet Nam's enterprises have invested US\$4.4 billion** in foreign countries and territories in 2013, according to the Ministry of Planning and Investment.

## North East Asia

**China's foreign trade in services in 2013 rose** 14.7% y-o-y, hitting a new high of US\$540 billion, data from the Ministry of Commerce showed. Exports of services rose 10.6%, while imports of services, rose 17.5%.

**The Bank of Japan will not hesitate to adjust quantitative easing** if upside or downside risks to the economy and prices appear, Governor Haruhiko Kuroda said. He strongly expects the government to continue with efforts to repair public finances given the large outstanding debt burden.

**More South Koreans were working in January**, rising by 705,000 from a year before, bringing the total to 24.76 million, according to data released by Statistics Korea.

## Australasia

**Australia's unemployment rate rose** to 6.0% in January, from 5.8% in December, according to data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

## Indian Sub-Continent

**India's retail inflation slowed** in January. Cooler food prices helped bring down the overall retail inflation to 8.79% last month.

**India's industrial production shrunk** 0.6% in December after contracting a revised 1.3% in November, dragged down by weak investment and consumer demand, data from the federal statistics ministry showed.

## Middle East and North Africa

**Egypt's net domestic debts rose** 19% y-o-y by the end of December 2013, according to a report from the Ministry of Finance. This was attributed to a rise in the net total issued treasury notes and bonds, and the issuance of a new pension fund bond.

## Eastern Europe

**Russian households' net demand for foreign currency rose** to US\$4.3 billion in December, from US\$1.19 billion in November, a record high since January 2009, the central bank said.

## Western Europe

**French exports of food rose** by 3.3% in 2013, reaching €11.5 billion. French Agriculture Minister Stéphane Le Foll said that these are very encouraging results of the strategy of export development in all emerging markets, including Asia and Latin America.

## North America

**The US budget deficit narrowed** by 37% in the first four months of the fiscal year compared with a year earlier as spending declined and a stronger economy helped increase revenue, the Treasury Department said.

## Oil & Gas News

**Global demand will rise** by 1.09 million barrels per day (bpd) this year, up 40,000 bpd from its previous forecast, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) said in a monthly report.

## Commodity News

**Bullion for immediate delivery rose** and traded at US\$1,291.55 an ounce at 10:23 a.m. in Singapore from US\$1,291.18 yesterday.

## Currency News

**The dollar fell** 0.4% to 102.10 yen as of 2:39 p.m. in Tokyo from yesterday. It slipped 0.1 percent to US\$1.3611 per euro. The shared currency weakened 0.3 percent to 138.93 yen.

**The Australian dollar rose** to as high as 92.974 yen yesterday, its strongest level since Jan. 16, and was at 91.17 yen at 5:01 p.m. in Sydney.

Date	Gold Spot	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
12-Feb-14	1,285.49	5	108.74	21.75	1.73	2.08	1.27	114.35	9579.46	80.50	2.63	35.44	25.83	3,042.60
13-Feb-14	1,290.01	4.94	108.35	21.93	1.72	2.08	1.27	114.62	9567.55	81.06	2.63	35.55	25.83	3,044.36
% Change	0.35	-1.20	-0.36		-0.59	-0.15	-0.32	0.24	-0.12	0.69	-0.21	0.29	0.00	0.06

# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

15/2/2014

*...Indonesia's balance of payments swung to a surplus...  
...Italy's economy began a gradual recovery...*

## South East Asia

**Indonesia's balance of payments swung to a surplus in the last quarter of 2013**, partly due to a shrinking current account deficit. The balance of payments was in surplus of US\$4.41 billion in Q4, the only quarterly surplus in 2013.

**Singapore retail sales fell 5.5% in December** from a year ago as fewer people bought cars and other motor vehicles, the Department of Statistics said on Friday.

**Thai government subsidy payments to farmers under the rice-pledging scheme will begin next week**, Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra said.

## North East Asia

**China's CPI rose 2.5% y-o-y** in January, the same as the previous month. Food prices, which account for roughly a third of CPI, rose 3.7% in January from a year ago, while prices of non-food products edged up 1.9%, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said.

**China's producer price index (PPI) contracted 1.6% y-o-y in January**, following a 1.4% drop in December, data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) showed.

**South Korea's total public sector debt stood at 821.1 trillion won** as of the end of 2012, announced the Ministry of Strategy and Finance yesterday. That works out to around 16 million won per person.

## Australasia

**The amount of people out of work in Australia has grown to 6% over January**, according to official figures. The amount of people in employment fell by 3,700 to 11.46 million in the month, the Australian Bureau of Statistics said.

## Indian Sub-Continent

**India's inflation rate fell to 5.05%** in January y-o-y. The drop was largely attributed to slower increase in food and vegetables prices, as food inflation eased to 8.8% in

January from a high of 13.7% in the previous month, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry said.

## Middle East and North Africa

**Saudi Arabia's annual inflation eased marginally to 2.9% in January**, from 3% in December, data from the Central Department of Statistics showed.

## Western Europe

**GDP in the Eurozone grew 0.3% in the Q4 of 2013**, European Union (EU) statistics office Eurostat said. Meanwhile, the economy in the 28-nation European Union (EU) also expanded, by 0.4% from the previous quarter, the office said.

**The German economy accelerated at the end of 2013**. Q4 gross GDP grew 0.4% on the previous quarter supported by robust exports, when GDP rose by 0.3%, the Federal Statistical Office said.

**Inflation in Germany eased in January** owing to a fall in energy prices. The CPI in Europe's largest economy rose by 1.3% in January from a year ago, the German Federal Statistical Office said.

**France secured a 0.3% economic growth in 2013**, national statistics bureau Insee said. GDP rose 0.3% in the Q4.

**Italy's economy began a gradual recovery in the Q4 of 2013 with 0.1% growth** - the first positive result after its longest post-war recession, official data from the Istat agency has shown.

**Spain posted a sluggish rise in consumer prices in January** as the spectre of deflation hung over the Eurozone economies. CPI rose by just 0.3% over the year to January, the National Statistics Institute said.

**Spanish banks borrowed €193.4 billion** (US\$264 billion) from the European Central Bank in January, down from €206.8 billion in December, the Bank of Spain said.



## North America

**The number of Americans initially applying for unemployment aid rose**, the Labour Department said. In the week ending Feb. 8, the advance figure of seasonally adjusted initial claims for jobless benefits rose by 8,000 to 339, 000.

**US manufacturing output fell in January** and recorded its biggest drop since 2009 as cold weather disrupted production. Factory production fell 0.8% last month, the largest decline since May 2009, the Federal Reserve said.

## South America

**Argentina's consumer prices rose 3.7% in January** compared to December, Economy Minister Axel Kicillof said.

**Economic activity in Brazil fell sharply in December.** The Brazilian central bank's IBC-Br economic activity index declined 1.35% in December from November in seasonally adjusted terms, central bank data released yesterday.

**Peru's central bank kept borrowing costs unchanged at 4%** after cutting reserve requirements for a sixth time in seven months to fuel a rebound in growth.

## Oil & Gas News

**Natural gas for March delivery fell** 0.9 cent to settle at \$5.214 per million British thermal units on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

**WTI for March delivery dropped** 5 cents to settle at \$100.30 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

## Commodity News

**Gold futures for April delivery rose 1.4%** to settle at \$1,318.60 an ounce at 1:42 p.m. on the Comex in New York.

**Silver futures for March delivery jumped 5%** to \$21.421 an ounce. The price reached \$21.445, the highest for a most-active contract since Nov. 11.

## Currency News

**The U.S dollar dropped 0.4%** to 101.80 yen and slipped 0.5% on the week. The U.S. currency dipped 0.1% to \$1.3693 per euro after declining to \$1.3715.

**The pound gained 0.4%** to \$1.6731 at 4:32 p.m. London time, extending this week's advance to 2%, the most since the period ended June 7.

Date	Gold Spot	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-Feb-14	1,290.01	4.94	108.35	21.93	1.72	2.08	1.27	114.62	9567.55	81.06	2.63	35.55	25.83	3,044.36
15-Feb-14	1,318.66	5.21	109.08	20.94	1.73	2.11	1.27	113.80	9396.73	80.44	2.62	35.43	25.72	3,038.71
% Change	2.22	5.47	0.67		0.40	1.25	0.02	-0.72	-1.79	-0.76	-0.18	-0.32	-0.45	-0.19

# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

18/2/2014

*...Germany and France to revive a project to tax financial transactions...  
...Singapore's tourism revenues hit a new high...*

## South East Asia

**Indonesia's oil production in 2013** averaged 825,000 barrels per day; 98.3% of the target set in the 2013 state budget. Production of gas only reached 1,218,000 BOEPD or 98.4% of target. As a result, state revenues from the oil and gas sector totalled only US\$31.4 billion, falling short of the target of US\$31.7 billion set in the state budget.

**Thailand's economic growth slowed significantly in the final quarter of 2013** at seasonally adjusted 0.6% in October-December from the previous three months for full-year 2013, the planning agency, NESDB, said growth was 2.9%.

**Malaysia recorded an investment of RM 38.7 billion last year**, the highest in the country's history. International Trade and Industry Minister Mustapa Mohamed told that the amount is inclusive of both foreign and local investments.

**Singapore's tourism revenues hit a new high of S\$23.5 billion** (US\$18.7 billion), an increase of 1.6% over 2012, the Singapore Tourism Board said.

**Home sales in Singapore's fell in January**, as fewer projects were sold by developers after government efforts to curb the property market reduced demand. There were just 565 new private homes that were sold in January, higher than 259 units posted in December.

**Remittances from Filipinos working and living abroad grew faster than expected in 2013**, hitting a new record high of US\$22.76 billion from US\$21.39 billion in 2012. 2013's figure represented a growth rate of 6.4% y-o-y, surpassing the BSP's 5% growth target.

## North East Asia

**China drew US\$10.76 billion in FDI in January**, up 16.1% from a year earlier, the Commerce Ministry said, a sign that confidence in the world's second-largest economy remains firm even as growth cools.

**The Q4 economic growth data at 0.3% confirmed a moderate recovery** in the Japan's economy, Finance Minister Taro Aso said.

**The Bank of Korea will strengthen its monitoring of changes in monetary policies** in major economies and market movements in emerging markets. It will also continuously check its contingency plans over the possibility of financial and economic instability.

**South Korean's product price index (PPI) rose 0.2% in January** from a month earlier due to higher farm goods prices caused by cold weather after gaining by the same rate in the prior month, the Bank of Korea said.

## Australasia

**The Australian economy is gaining strength** due to the falling Australian dollar and the impact of previous interest rate cuts, the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) said. RBA also said that it will not be cutting the cash rate in the coming months.

## Indian Sub-Continent

**The Indian government presented an interim budget** in which indirect taxes on cars, two-wheelers and mobile phones have been slashed in a bid to boost economic growth.

**Indian fiscal deficit was estimated to be 4.6% of GDP for fiscal year (FY) 2013-14** during the parliament session, Indian Finance Minister P. Chidambaram said.

## Middle East and North Africa

**Saudi Arabia exported 240 million barrels of oil in January of 2014** whose proceeds amounted to SAR 96.4 billion. Meanwhile, domestic consumption during the same period stood at nearly 58.9 million barrels, or 20% of the total output.

## Eastern Europe

**Russia will increase oil production this year by 0.3% to 525 million tons** and boost its natural gas output by 4.8% to 700 billion cubic meters, the country's Deputy Energy Minister said.

## Western Europe

**The Bank of England has revealed that it will analyse income and wages before deciding to hike up interest rates**, despite previously saying that unemployment falling to a 7% threshold would trigger an increase.

**Germany and France will lead a face-saving bid this week to revive a flagging project to tax financial transactions in 11 euro zone countries** and relieve fears it could hamper economic recovery. The tax is expected to be scaled back from an original plan to introduce it from January to raise €35 billion (US\$48 billion) annually.

**The German central bank has said it sees the national economy picking up momentum.** The Bundesbank said demand for domestic products was growing in foreign markets, including the Eurozone.

**French president François Hollande appealed to foreign business leaders to invest in France**, offering them simpler and more stable tax policies as his government tries to spur growth and create jobs.

**The European Commission warned yesterday there would be no easing of pressure on Italy** to adhere to fiscal targets as it prepared to form its fourth government in two years.

**The Spanish public debt reached €961.555 billion in 2013**, which represented 94.02% of the country's GDP, according to Bank of Spain.

## Commodity News

**Bullion for immediate delivery dropped as much as 0.9%** to \$1,316.39 an ounce and was at \$1,317.64 at 2:12 p.m. in Singapore.

**Palm oil for May delivery advanced as much as 1%** to 2,708 ringgit a metric ton on the Bursa Malaysia Derivatives.

**Global gold demand declined to 3,756.1 metric tons in 2013**, from 4,415.8 tons a year earlier, the London-based council said today in a report.

## Currency News

**Japan's currency lost 0.7%** to 102.62 per dollar as of 7:06 a.m. in London after earlier touching 102.74, the weakest since Jan. 31.

**The pound gained 0.1%** to \$1.6733 at 7:41 a.m. London time after rising to \$1.6823 yesterday, the highest since November 2009.

Date	Gold Spot	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
15-Feb-14	1,318.66	5.21	109.08	20.94	1.73	2.11	1.27	113.80	9396.73	80.44	2.62	35.43	25.72	3,038.71
18-Feb-14	1,317.86	5.53	109.09	19.73	1.73	2.12	1.26	114.06	9277.30	80.72	2.62	35.36	25.69	3,071.49
% Change	-0.06	6.14	0.01	-0.23	0.39	-0.46	0.23	-1.27	0.35	-0.26	-0.19	-0.11	1.08	

# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

19/2/2014

*...Youth Unemployment in Malaysia is low...  
...Australia Wages rise 0.7% in Q4...*

## South East Asia

**Brunei will introduce new guidelines for its Islamic insurance (takaful) sector by June**, in order to standardise the way agents are managed by firms. The guidelines will regulate commission rates payable to agents and the qualifications required for them to sell takaful products.

**Singapore's median household income from work rose to S\$7,870 in 2013**, up 4% from the year before. Taking inflation into account, the real income growth is 1.6%, according to the Department of Statistics.

**Youth unemployment in Malaysia is considered low** compared to some developed countries due to the high education level and economic stability of the country. According to Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) Executive Director of Education about 75 million youth globally were jobless or unemployed.

## North East Asia

**China will ban new projects in steel, cement, electrolytic aluminum, flat glass and shipbuilding industries before 2017**, while gradually eliminating existing projects that were found to be below standards, Industry and Information Technology Ministry vice minister Mao Weiming revealed at a press conference.

**China's central bank has removed nearly US\$8 billion from the money markets** in a bid to control the amount of credit in the country's financial system.

**The Bank of Japan surprised the market on Tuesday by doubling incentives** designed to spur bank lending, weakening the yen and lifting Tokyo stocks at a time when the nation's economy is showing signs of trouble.

**The Bank of Japan left its monetary policy unchanged** in the range of zero to 0.1% at its monetary policy board meeting and will continue to conduct money market operations so that the monetary base will increase at an annual pace of ¥60 to ¥70 trillion.

**The South Korean government will unveil a three-year economic growth plan next week** that President

Geun-hye outlined in her New Year's news conference with a pledge to nearly double South Korea's per capita national income.

## Australasia

**Australian wages rose** modestly in Q4 as the resource-rich economy softens and unemployment ticks up as a long mining boom slows. Wages excluding bonuses rose a seasonally adjusted 0.7% in Q4 from the prior quarter and rose 2.6% from a year earlier, the Australian Bureau of Statistics said.

## Indian Sub-Continent

**The finance minister P Chidambaram chided the central bank over its focus on fighting inflation**, saying the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) also needed to abide by the government policy to promote economic growth.

## Middle East and North Africa

**Dubai's inflation in January rose 0.5%** compared to previous month while annual inflation rate increased to 2.2% over same period last year, according Dubai Statistics Center.

**Turkey's central bank held its key interest rates steady.** The bank said the overnight lending rate was kept at 12%, while the borrowing and one-week repo rate were left at 8% and 10%.

## Eastern Europe

**Russia's economic growth is unlikely to recover this year** as previously expected due to high volatility in global markets and the possible decline of commodity prices, the Bank of Russia said.

## Western Europe

**Employment rate in Germany hit record high in the last quarter of 2013** and its employment for the whole year increased by 0.6% to a record level of 41.84 million,

helping drive German economy to expand by 0.4%, German Federal Statistical Office (Destatis) said.

**Fears of a property bubble in the euro zone's largest economy are mounting**, with the German central bank warning that house prices in Germany have spiked 25% in as many as 125 cities.

**Non-performing loans in the Spanish banking sector climbed** from 13.08% in November to 13.61% in the last month of 2013. The default rate in December 2012 stood at 10.44%, according to Bank of Spain.

**Switzerland's decision to limit immigration will hurt economic growth**, according to economists. The Swiss government will have to set a cap for foreigners within the next three years after 50.3% of voters embraced an initiative by the euro-skeptic Swiss People's Party SVP against mass immigration.

**United Kingdom's CPI dipped** to 1.9% in January from 2% in December, prompting experts to herald the start of a long run of below-target inflation which will help ease the burden on stretched family finances. January's fall in inflation also boosts the Bank of England's case for keeping interest rates at record lows of 0.5%.

**Britain's Unemployment figures are on a downward trend** but many of the jobs are part-time. Less than 20% of the workforce is in true full time work. More people now work between 16 and 30 hours a week than are employed for over 45 hours.

## North America

**U.S. President Barack Obama's plan to raise the minimum wage** to 10.10 U.S. dollars per hour would cost 500,000 jobs in 2016, according to a report released by the Congressional Budget Office on Tuesday.

## South America

**Brazil's central bank is keeping a very close eye on consumer prices** and will continue to make sure inflation slows down in 2014 and beyond, central bank chief Alexandre Tombini said.

## Oil & Gas News

**WTI for March gained** 29 cents in late morning trade to US\$102.72, while Brent North Sea crude eased 26 cents to US\$110.20 for its April delivery.

**Natural gas for March delivery rose** 33.7 cents to \$5.551 per million British thermal units on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

## Commodity News

**Global rice prices will extend declines** as Thailand is forced to offload grain from record stockpiles accumulated under a state-buying program, according to the Vietnam Food Association.

**Bullion for immediate delivery lost** 0.4% to \$1,316.91 an ounce and was at \$1,318 in Singapore.

**Silver for immediate delivery rose** 1.1% to settle at \$21.9348 an ounce in New York.

## Currency News

**The baht weakened** 0.5% to 32.63 per dollar in Bangkok.

**The dollar was at \$1.3766 per euro** in Tokyo from yesterday, after earlier touching \$1.3773.

Date	Gold Spot	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-Feb-14	1,317.86	5.53	109.09	19.73	1.73	2.12	1.26	114.06	9277.30	80.72	2.62	35.36	25.69	3,071.49
19-Feb-14	1,318.33	5.60	110.19	19.68	1.73	2.11	1.26	114.35	9387.91	81.12	2.61	35.33	25.69	3,086.31
% Change	0.04	1.27	1.01		0.19	-0.19	0.17	0.25	1.19	0.50	-0.08	-0.11	0.00	0.48

# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

20/2/2014

*... Japan records a trade deficit...  
...Italy's Economic recovery slows...*

## South East Asia

**The Indonesian government will hike electricity tariffs for large-scale industrial users** by 8.6%-13.3%, effective on a bi-monthly basis, starting 1 May 2014. The ministry is drafting a regulation as a legal basis to impose the power tariff hike.

**Malaysia's CPI index in January rose** 3.4% from a year earlier, reflecting a rise in prices of food, transport and electricity, data from the Statistics Department.

**Philippines' balance of payments position in January registered a deficit** of US\$4.48 billion. The BOP deficit for the month was a reversal of the US\$2.04 billion surplus recorded in the same month last year.

**Tax collections of Philippines' Bureau of Internal Revenue grew** 15% last year, falling short of its 2013 goal of PHP 1.253 trillion. Of the total collections, tax revenue amounted to PHP 1.18 trillion or an increase of 15.9% from the 2012 level.

**Non-oil domestic exports in Singapore** shrank 6% in 2013, a worse performance than the 4 to 5% contraction that had been projected by trade agency IE Singapore. Exports had grown a marginal 0.5% in 2012.

**Singapore's total trade declined** 0.5% to S\$980.2 billion in 2013. The decline in trade fell short of previously projected forecast range of between 1.0 and 2.0%, said International Enterprise (IE) Singapore.

**Singapore's GDP rose** an annualized 6.1% in the three months through December from the previous quarter, when it climbed a revised 0.3%, the trade ministry said.

## North East Asia

**A Chinese manufacturing index fell 48.3 points**, adding signs of a factory slowdown that will limit growth in the world's second- largest economy.

**China has launched yuan-denominated cross-border payment services** in its first free trade zone (FTZ), the central bank said, in an effort to facilitate trade and further internationalisation of the Chinese currency.

**Japan suffered a record trade deficit in January** standing at a deficit of 2.79 trillion yen as a weak yen pushed up the cost of imports and failed to substantially raise exports.

**Japan's government described consumer prices as "rising moderately"**, a sign that the economy is making steady progress towards exiting 15 years of stubborn deflation.

## Australasia

**New Zealand consumer confidence fell** to 133 from 135.8 in January, amid a pickup in inflation expectations and the prospect of interest rate increases.

## Middle East and North Africa

**Tourism is being ranked a top priority for Saudi tourism officials.** The Saudi government is investing heavily in its tourism sector, principally to provide employment opportunities for Saudi graduates.

## Eastern Europe

**Russia and Iraq are boosting crude shipments to a Chinese market** where oil demand is growing at its slowest in more than 20 years, forcing rival suppliers to divert cargos elsewhere.

## Western Europe

**The real GDP in member states of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) increased** by 0.6% in Q4 of 2013, the same rate as in the previous two quarters. In the last three months of 2013, GDP growth remained strongest in the United States and Britain, with 0.8% and 0.7% respectively, a slight deceleration compared with the previous quarter.

**Italy's economic recovery is extremely slow** and recent data shows that industrial production in the Eurozone's third-largest economy is close to stalling, according to a report released by Italian employers' association Confindustria.

## North America

**The Federal Reserve has confirmed its intention to trim the US quantitative easing (QE) programme** by \$10bn (£5.98bn) each month, according to official minutes released yesterday.

## South America

**Brazil's service sector registered growth** of 8.5% in 2013, lower than the two-digit growth in 2012, official figures showed. The tertiary sector grew by 8.4% y-o-y in December 2013, said the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics.

## Oil & Gas News

**WTI for March delivery was at \$103.12 a barrel**, down 19 cent. Brent for April settlement slid 59 cents to \$109.88 a barrel.

**Natural gas futures dropped in New York** amid speculation that the biggest gain in 20 months was excessive. Futures for March delivery fell as much as 2% to \$6.026 per million British thermal units.

## Commodity News

**Bullion for immediate delivery traded at \$1,310.74 an ounce** from \$1,311.60 yesterday, when prices dropped 0.8%.

## Currency News

**The baht fell** 0.2% to 32.60 per dollar in Bangkok, taking the three-day decline to 1.1%.

**The yen rose** 0.4% to 101.94 per dollar in Tokyo.

Date	Gold Spot	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
19-Feb-14	1,318.33	5.60	110.19	19.68	1.73	2.11	1.26	114.35	9387.91	81.12	2.61	35.33	25.69	3,086.31
20-Feb-14	1,311.00	6.04	109.84	18.19	1.74	2.11	1.26	113.74	9333.58	80.95	2.62	35.36	25.79	3,088.92
% Change	-0.56	7.86	-0.32		0.42	-0.24	0.08	-0.53	-0.58	-0.21	0.05	0.10	0.38	0.08



# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

22/2/2014

*...Singapore Expected to Record a Small Overall Budget Deficit in FY2014...  
...UK Government Finances Showed a Surplus...*

## South East Asia

**Indonesia posted slower growth in its total foreign debts**, in both the public and private sectors, throughout 2013 as the country's economic growth decelerated. Total amount of foreign debt rose 4.6% y-o-y to US\$264.1 billion, whereas in 2012, foreign debt surged 12%.

**The Malaysian government will distribute 1Malaysia People's Aid (BR1M) to almost six million people** today to help ease the cost of living for those in the low-income bracket. According to sources, the aid would involve about RM3 billion.

**Singapore is expected to record a small overall budget deficit** of S\$1.2 billion in financial year 2014 as authorities spend more on healthcare and social services. According to revenue and expenditure estimates, government spending will rise by S\$4.3 billion, or 8.3%, surpassing the expected 4.1% rise in operating revenue.

**Singapore plans to allocate billions of dollars to support the elderly and low-income families** in the coming fiscal year. The budget for 2014/15 includes steps to support citizens born by 1949 via subsidies to help cover health-care costs. It will set aside S\$8 billion (US\$6.33 billion) in the year starting 1 April to help its "Pioneer Generation".

## North East Asia

**China will offer customized financial services to new farming practices** to push agricultural modernisation, China's central bank said. Financial institutions should give more credit support to innovative farming entities such as family farms and agricultural cooperatives by adjusting loan rates, maturity length and collateral.

**China ranked the third among Vietnam's export destinations** in January after the United States and Japan, with a total value of US\$1.01 billion, said General Department of Vietnam Customs.

**South Korean household income grew 2.1% on-year in 2013** partly due to improved labour market conditions. The monthly income of households consisting of two members or more stood at an average of 4.16 million won (US\$3,875) last year, up from 4.07 million won tallied a year earlier.

## Australasia

**Treasurer Joe Hockey used the G20 focus to warn that Australia will run out of money for health and education**, and must therefore consider unpopular options such as lifting the retirement age, introducing big new taxes, and redesigning the economic system.

**The OECD has backed the Australian government's push to enhance investment in infrastructure** to ensure the economy's generally good economic performance can be sustained in the long run.

## Indian Sub-Continent

**The Indian government did not have any outstanding loans with the central bank** as on 14 February, the Reserve Bank of India said. State governments had loans of US\$52.04 million outstanding with the central bank in the week to 14 February.

## Middle East and North Africa

**Saudi Arabia will provide Egypt with US\$3 billion in aid soon**, mostly in the form of petroleum products, to help stabilize the country's economy. Sami Khallaf, adviser to the Egyptian minister of finance said.

## Eastern Europe

**Russia's economy is slowing and stagnation is likely to last through Q1 2014**, the country's deputy economy minister said. The economy contracted by 0.5% in January compared with the previous month and grew by 0.7% compared with a year earlier.

**Russian economy came under pressure last year**, hit by evaporating investment and weakening demand for its exports. In 2013, Russia's GDP grew by 1.3%, its weakest growth rate since the global financial crisis in 2008.

## Western Europe

**French core inflation fell sharply last month**, heightening concerns of a deflation trap. French prices fell 0.6% in January from a month earlier.

**Britain recorded a borrowing surplus for January.** Public sector net borrowing showed a surplus of £4.7

billion last month, compared to a surplus of £9.8 billion in the same month of 2013.

**Spanish overseas shipments in 2013 increased 5.2% from a year earlier** to €234.2 billion. Imports declined 1.3% to €250.2 billion as domestic demand remained weak. As a result, the trade deficit narrowed 48.1% to €16.0 billion.

**The IMF suggested that the banks of Spain should lend more money** into the Spanish economy by raising capital from the stock exchange market.

## North America

**The number of Americans seeking U.S. unemployment benefits fell** a slight 3,000 last week to a seasonally adjusted 336,000.

**U.S. consumer prices rose just 0.1% in January**, down from a 0.2% gain in December, as a sharp increase in energy costs was offset by cheaper clothing, cars and air fares.

**Canada's CPI rose 1.5% y-o-y in January**, its biggest jump since the summer of 2012. The gain compared with a CPI gain of 1.2% in December, Statistics Canada said.

**Canadian retailers ended 2013 with their biggest one-month drop in a year** amid severe weather that hampered the nation's expansion in December. Sales fell 1.8% to \$40.2 billion, Statistics Canada said.

**Mexico's GDP expanded 0.2% in Q4 2013**, due to slower growth in industrial sectors. The growth was significantly below market expectations for 0.6%, leading to concerns over the health of the economy. In 2013, the economy grew at a 1.1% rate, down sharply from a 3.9% expansion in 2012.

## South America

**The Brazilian government has not ruled out increasing taxes this year** to meet its fiscal savings target, Finance Minister Guido Mantega said.

**Brazil's 12-month current-account deficit increased** to US\$11.59 billion in January from US\$8.68 billion in December. The balance now represents 3.67% of GDP. Foreign investment in January totalled US\$5.1 billion, bringing the 12-month total to US\$65.4 billion.

## Oil & Gas News

**WTI for April delivery fell 55 cents** to settle at \$102.20 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

**Natural gas for March delivery gained 7.1 cents** to settle at \$6.135 per million British thermal units on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

## Commodity News

**Gold futures for April delivery added 0.5%** to settle at \$1,323.60 an ounce at 1:37 p.m. on the Comex in New York.

## Currency News

**The pound dropped 0.2%** to \$1.6618 at 5:01 p.m. London time.

**The dollar rose 0.2%** to 102.51 yen at 5 p.m. in New York.

Date	Gold Spot	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-Feb-14	1,311.00	6.04	109.84	18.19	1.74	2.11	1.26	113.74	9333.58	80.95	2.62	35.36	25.79	3,088.92
22-Feb-14	1,324.25	6.14	109.85	17.89	1.74	2.11	1.27	113.74	9315.32	80.98	2.61	35.28	25.70	3,099.93
% Change	1.01	1.66	0.01	-0.09	0.04	0.23	0.00	-0.20	0.04	-0.23	-0.24	-0.32	0.36	

# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

25/2/2014

*...South Korea will seek to increase exports by small and medium-sized enterprises...  
...Iran to extend oil contracts to 20 years...*

## South East Asia

**Indonesian Public Work Ministry increased the amount of budget funds for infrastructure next year.** Public Work Minister Djoko Kirmanto said that the Ministry push up the amount of the fund to IDR121 trillion (about US\$10.317 billion), against IDR84.18 trillion (about US\$7.178 billion) approved for this year.

**The Thai National Rice Policy Committee will today ask the Cabinet to allocate THB20 billion from THB 10 billion** from the central budget as an urgent measure to help farmers owed payments under the rice-pledging programme.

**Singapore's CPI increased 1.4% in January** from the previous year, slower than the 1.5% pace in December as the rise in food prices failed to keep up with lower costs of transportation.

**The small banks' bad loan ratio eased to 7.33% as of September 2013** from 7.53% in the same period in 2012, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) said. The improvement came on the back of a 15% rise in the banks' total loan portfolio to P617.49 billion, while soured loans went up by 11% to P45.29 billion.

**Vietnam's CPI rises by 0.55% in February 2014** over the previous month, and 4.65% over a year earlier, the General Statistics Office reported.

## North East Asia

**South Korea will seek to increase exports by small and medium-sized enterprises** and expand its trade territory around the globe through new free trade deals. The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy said it will also work to boost the country's overall exports to over US\$600 billion, up 7.21% from a record high of US\$559.6 billion posted in 2013.

**South Korea and Australia have signed a currency swap deal worth US\$4.5 billion**, Seoul's central bank said, in a move to boost trades and help curb currency swings.

**South Korea's imports of Iranian crude oil in January plunged 66.1%** to 1.997 million barrels, or 64,419 b/d, compared with 5.896 million barrels a year earlier.

## Indian Sub-Continent

**Reserve Bank of India's focus is to bring down inflation** to boost investor confidence. The governor expressed hope that a stable government after the elections will continue the broad fiscal policies of the current regime and India may finally get the Goods and Services Tax (GST).

**India's Current Account Deficit (CAD) is expected to be around 2% of GDP** during the current fiscal on the back of slackening imports and increased shipments, Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council Chairman C Rangarajan said.

## Middle East and North Africa

**Iran will extend the length of its oil and natural gas field development contracts** with foreign companies to about 20 years, as part of efforts to ease the entry of foreign investment and get economic sanctions on the nation lifted.

**Saudi Arabia's central bank expects the annual inflation rate to fall further** below 3% in the Q1 of this year.

**The Turkish manufacturing industry capacity utilisation rate decreased 0.6 percentage points** in February compared to the previous month, the Central Bank reported.

**Bahrain attracted US\$114 million in foreign direct investment (FDI) last year**, a 12% increase on the level of investment secured in 2012, the Economic Development Board said.

## Western Europe

**The 18-nation Eurozone's annual inflation rate remained stable** at a low 0.8% in January 2014, the same as in December 2013, Eurostat said. The annualised inflation rate for the wider 28-nation European Union dropped from 1% in December 2013 to 0.9% in January 2014, the agency said.

**German business morale rose in February** to its highest level since July 2011. The Munich-based Ifo think tank's business climate index increased to 111.3.

## North America

**Canadian consumer confidence rose** for a second week as prices for commodities including crude oil and gold advanced. The Bloomberg Nanos Canadian Confidence Index (SPTSX) rose to 57.6 in the week ending Feb. 21 from a previous reading of 57.1.

**Mexican annual inflation cooled in early February** off an 8-month high, bolstering bets the central bank will leave interest rates on hold throughout the year. Inflation for the 12 months through the first half of February eased to 4.21%.

**Mexico drew a record US\$35.2 billion in foreign direct investment (FDI) last year**, the country's Economy Ministry said, nearly double the level seen in 2012.

## Oil & Gas News

**Brent for April settlement slid 11 cents, or 0.1%**, to \$110.53 a barrel on the London-based ICE Futures Europe exchange.

**Natural gas for March delivery slumped 69 cents** to settle at \$5.445 per million British thermal units on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

## Commodity News

**Bullion for immediate delivery was at \$1,336.68** an ounce at 9:29 a.m. in Singapore from \$1,336.98 yesterday.

## Currency News

**The euro was little changed at 82.44 pence** at 11:20 a.m. in Tokyo from yesterday.

**The pound was little changed at \$1.6639** as of 4:52 p.m. London time after falling to \$1.6584.

Date	Gold Spot	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
22-Feb-14	1,324.25	6.14	109.85	17.89	1.74	2.11	1.27	113.74	9315.32	80.98	2.61	35.28	25.70	3,099.93
25-Feb-14	1,333.14	5.47	110.49	20.20	1.74	2.11	1.27	113.64	9236.17	80.73	2.60	35.22	25.72	3,108.81
% Change	0.67	-10.91	0.58		0.28	0.08	0.13	-0.09	-0.85	-0.31	-0.21	-0.17	0.08	0.29

# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

26/2/2014

*... Growth in China's home prices continued to slow ...  
... Australian construction work fell ...*

## South East Asia

**Thailand's exports fell** 1.98% y-o-y in January to US\$17.9 billion, said the Commerce Ministry. Imports also declined by 15.5% to US\$20.42 billion, which meant the country recorded a trade deficit of US\$2.52 billion in the first month of this year.

**Philippines' merchandise imports in 2013 posted flat growth from a year earlier**, indicating sluggish demand in the domestic economy. Aggregate imports fell 0.7% to \$61.7 billion, compared with \$62.1 billion in the same period of last year.

**Bilateral trade between Viet Nam and the UK rose** 19.5% y-o-y to US\$4.27 billion in 2013, Viet Nam's Department of Customs' statistics showed.

**Vietnamese commercial banks' asset values rose** 13% over the previous year to value at US\$271.43 billion at the end of last year, State Bank of Viet Nam said.

## North East Asia

**Growth in China's home prices continued to slow** in January, adding to signs of a cooling property sector. Month-on-month average growth in new home prices fell 0.49% in January, from 0.51% in December, the National Bureau of Statistics said.

**Japanese demand fell again** in Q4 2013, but at a smaller rate than in the previous three months, the Cabinet Office said. The output gap stood at minus 1.5%, equivalent to ¥8 trillion in demand shortfall in Q4 2013, compared to minus 1.6% in Q3, the government agency said.

**South Korea's president pledged to invest US\$3.7 billion in startups** over the next three years to spark economic growth, the AFP reported.

## Australasia

**Australian construction work fell** 1% to US\$53.10 billion in the December quarter, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

## Middle East and North Africa

**Iran exported 11.886 million tons of condensate** during the first 11 months of the current fiscal year which began March 20, Iran Custom Administration said.

**Turkey slashed its gold holdings** by 31.171 tons in January, representing the steepest decline in a list of countries' gold reserves compiled by the International Monetary Fund.

## Western Europe

**The French budget deficit was equivalent to 4.2% of GDP** last year and will be 4% of GDP in 2014, the European Commission report showed.

**German's GDP increased modestly** by 0.4% seasonally-adjusted in the final quarter of 2013, compared with 0.3% during the previous three months, the Federal Statistics Office reported.

**Germany is set to accelerate away from France and Italy in 2014** as the fragmented eurozone economy gradually recovers from its worst crisis, the European Commission said.

**Retail sales in Italy fell** by a record 2.1% in 2013 as the country struggled to pull out of a deep recession and consumers cut spending.

**Spain has outlined plans to ease taxes for low-income households** and to make it cheaper for companies to hire, with changes aimed at stimulating consumption and cutting one of Europe's highest jobless rates as Spain emerges from recession, Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy said.

## North America

**Canadian families have become wealthier over the past several years**, with net worth rising despite the well-documented growth in household debt and a setback from the recession, Statistics Canada study showed.

**Mexican retail sales increased** 2.2% y-o-y in December, as job creation helped support the economy even as growth slows, the nation's statistics agency reported.

## South America

**Argentina's foreign reserves held steady** by ending at US\$27.682 billion, compared with US\$27.679 billion a day earlier, the central bank said.

## Oil & Gas News

**Natural gas for March delivery dropped** 34.9 cents to US\$5.096 per million British thermal units on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

**Brent for April settlement lost** 1% to US\$109.51 a barrel on the London-based ICE Futures Europe exchange yesterday.

## Commodity News

**Bullion for immediate delivery fell** to US\$1,338.70 an ounce at 9:40 a.m. in Singapore, from US\$1,340.64 yesterday.

## Currency News

**The yen strengthened** 0.3% to 102.25 per dollar as of 10:34 a.m. in Tokyo from yesterday.

**The pound jumped** 0.3% to US\$1.6699, after advancing to US\$1.6823 on Feb. 17.

Date	Gold Spot	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
25-Feb-14	1,333.14	5.47	110.49	20.20	1.74	2.11	1.27	113.64	9236.17	80.73	2.60	35.22	25.72	3,108.81
26-Feb-14	1,338.64	4.98	109.58	22.00	1.73	2.10	1.26	113.90	9211.50	81.24	2.59	35.31	25.74	3,091.49
% Change	0.41	-8.96	-0.82		-0.41	-0.27	-0.39	0.23	-0.27	0.63	-0.34	0.26	0.07	-0.56

# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

27/2/2014

*...Limited gains for rupiah...  
...India's policy interest rate is appropriately set...*

## South East Asia

**The rupiah probably will trade around current levels and gains will be limited**, Indonesian central bank Governor Agus Martowardojo said. Businesses should not hope for interest-rate cuts as the trend in developed nations over the next few years is for higher borrowing costs, he added.

**Indonesia ranked second after Singapore** in terms of size of real estate markets between 2011 and 2031 compared to other Southeast Asian countries, according to data from Asia Pacific Real Estate Association (APREA). The size of the commercial property market in Indonesia reached US\$189 billion in 2011 and is predicted to increase to US\$1.9 trillion in 2031.

**Indonesia's sugar firm is planning to import 100,000 tonnes of raw sugar this year**, due to difficulties securing domestic sugarcane supplies.

**Singapore's manufacturing output grew 3.9% in January** compared with the same month last year, helped by the performance of the chemical sector and the electronics industry. But on a seasonally adjusted m-o-m basis, manufacturing declined 8.1%.

**Viet Nam gained a trade surplus of US\$244 million in the first two months** of this year, the General Statistics Office (GSO) reported. The nation saw a y-o-y increase of 12.3% in total export value to reach US\$21.06 billion and of 17% in total import value to reach US\$20.816 billion.

**Foreign investors have disbursed US\$1.12 billion in FDI projects in Vietnam** in the first two months of this year, up 6.7% from a year ago. But new investment pledges dropped 19.3% to US\$831 million in the period.

## North East Asia

**China's on-grid wind power generation capacity will hit 90 million kilowatt (kw) at the end of 2014**, from 77.16 million kw in 2013, the National Energy Administration (NEA) said.

**Japanese automakers are boosting their domestic production** ahead of a consumption tax hike in April, due in part to strong demand for new models. Eight major

automakers said that last month they produced about 817,000 units, up 14% from a year earlier.

**South Korea's seasonally adjusted current account surplus fell to US\$7.53 billion in January** from a revised US\$8.07 billion in December, central bank data showed.

**Hong Kong's economy grew by 2.9% in 2013**, higher than the previous year's economic growth rate over 1.5%, Hong Kong's Financial Secretary John Tsang said.

**Taiwanese jobless rate improved** to 4.02% last month, from 4.08% in December last year, Directorate General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics (DGBAS) said. There were 462,000 people unemployed last month, a drop of 7,000 from the previous month.

**Taiwan's manufacturing sector's combined revenue rose** 0.61% last quarter to NT\$3.26 trillion (US\$107.8 billion) from the Q4 of 2012, ending three quarters of contraction, the Ministry of Economic Affairs said.

**Taiwan's real average wage** stood at NT\$44,739 (US\$1,471) in 2013, lower than 1998's real average wage of NT\$44,798 following adjustments for inflation, according to DGBAS.

## Australasia

**The New Zealand's trade surplus was NZ\$306 million in January** as sales of dairy products drove record exports to China, from a revised NZ\$493 million in December, according to Statistics New Zealand.

## Indian Sub-Continent

**India's policy interest rate is appropriately set.** Rather than administer shock therapy to a weak economy, the Reserve Bank of India prefers to dis-inflate over time rather than abruptly, while being prepared to do what is necessary if the economy deviates from the projected inflation path, said RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan.

**India is ready to pay US\$1.5 billion to Iran** to clear part of a backlog of payments for shipments of oil following the partial easing of western sanctions on Tehran, Oil Secretary Vivek Rae said.



## Middle East and North Africa

**Morocco's plan to reform its public sector pension fund** will cost the state around 5 billion dirhams (US\$611 million) during an initial phase and workers will also pay in more.

## Western Europe

**The number of people out of work in France rose by 8,900 in January.** Labour Ministry data showed on that the number of people registered as out of work reached 3,316,200 in mainland France, up 0.3% over a month and 4.4% over a year.

**British economic growth for 2013 was revised down to 1.8%.** The Office for National Statistics (ONS) in its second estimate report also revised down the GDP in volume terms for the Q4 of last year to 2.7% compared with the same period of 2012.

## North America

**U.S. consumer confidence, which had increased in January,** dropped moderately in February, the Conference Board said in a report. The Consumer Confidence Index stood at 78.1 in February, down from 79.4 in January.

**U.S. home sales in January jumped 9.6%** from revised December rate to a seasonally adjusted annual

rate of 468,000 units. It rose 2.2% compared with January 2013.

**Mexico posted a US\$2.221 billion trade deficit in January** when adjusted for seasonal swings. In non-seasonally adjusted terms, Mexico posted a trade deficit of US\$3.195 billion.

**Mexican factory exports fell in January.** Non-oil manufactured exports fell 1.78% in January compared with December, according to seasonally adjusted data by the national statistics agency.

## Oil & Gas News

**Brent for April settlement rose 1 cent** to \$109.52 a barrel yesterday on the London-based ICE Futures Europe exchange.

## Commodity News

**Bullion for immediate delivery traded at \$1,328.70** an ounce at 8:52 a.m. in Singapore from \$1,330.57 yesterday.

## Currency News

**The U.S. dollar was at \$1.3684 per euro** as of 8:40 a.m. in Tokyo after strengthening 0.4% yesterday.

Date	Gold Spot	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
26-Feb-14	1,338.64	4.98	109.58	22.00	1.73	2.10	1.26	113.90	9211.50	81.24	2.59	35.31	25.74	3,091.49
27-Feb-14	1,328.49	4.53	109.52	24.18	1.74	2.11	1.26	113.87	9211.50	80.97	2.59	35.27	25.76	3,093.11
% Change	-0.76	-9.04	-0.05		0.20	0.27	0.17	-0.03	0.00	-0.34	-0.08	-0.11	0.06	0.05