

# **WEEK AHEAD**

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### Economic Calendar

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G3 Event Prior Date Country Period Survey 19 Ma -0.7% Leading Index CPI/Core YoY ΕZ 2.2%/2.7% Apr F JΡ Tertiary Industry Index MoM Mai 0.0% ΕZ 20 May ECB Current Account SA Mai 34.3b ΕZ Construction Output MoM Mar -0.5% May P -15.5 ΕZ Consumer Confidence -16.7 21 May JΡ Trade Balance ¥194.8bb ¥559.4b Apr 4.15m 22 May US Existing Home Sales Apr 4.02m US Initial Jobless Claims 229k US Chicago Fed Nat Activity Index Apr -0.03 US Kansas City Fed Manf. Activity May -4.0 unt of April Policy I .IP Core Machine Orders MoM Mar -1 6% 4 3% GF IFO Business Climate/Expectations Mav 87.5/88.0 86 9/87 4

# Week-in-brief: Relief and Restrictions

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23 May

Relief for markets this week came in the form of a 90 day trade truce between US and China with the US lowering tariffs on Chinese imports to 30% and China lowers the tariffs on US goods to 10% to facilitate

Anr

Apr

700k

3.5%/3.0%

724k

3 6%/2 9%

New Home Sales

Natl CPI/Ex Fresh Food, Energy YoY

- negotiations going forward.

   While the reduction appears to be massive from the initial prohibitive levels, one ought to ponder about the effective level of tariffs which implies a de facto trade embargo. This would imply a more
- realistic level of relief afforded to businesses facing increases in cost.

  On that note, PPI undershooting expectations alongside softer retail sales saw UST yields slipped towards the end of the week as retailers pondered about their ability to raise prices with households growing increasingly sensitive to price changes.

  - While household worry about potential price increases, some may begin to hope for US fiscal tax cuts for
- some relief which range from removing tips on taxes and overtime and the ability to deduct interest on car loans from their taxable income. That said, other details such as paring back food stamp programs and healthcare insurance funding also imply that household budgets may feel stretched further next year. Nonetheless, the overall fiscal implications of higher deficits will not be lost on long end UST yields
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  Across the Atlantic, the EU is reportedly revising proposals for a trade deal with details to lower both tariff and non-tariff barriers alongside investments in LNG and purchases of semiconductors. Conceding on energy and critical tech purchases are perhaps the closest to a win-win outcomes.

  Over in India, a ceasefire with Pakistan is welcome news but was insufficient relief to revive the fortunes of the INR which underperformed this week. The underperformance comes as Trump stated that the India government was willing to remove all tariffs which was later cautioned by Indian authorities as being
- premature. Furthermore, Trump picking an issue with Apple producing phone in India also dampens its allure of replacing China as a manufacturing hub.

  In Japan, Q1 GDP disappointed as consumption growth was flat while exports demand fell.

  Down Under, Australia job gains were robust with total of 89k job of which two thirds are of full time nature. Looking ahead, the RBA at their meeting on 20 May is likely opt to persist with calibrated easing which will be framed as lowering restrictiveness of monetary policy amid the backdop of tariff-led disruptions of which a 10% baseline looks increasingly permanent.
- In Indonesia, easing though is too bitter a pill to swallow for Bank Indonesia at this juncture as IDR underperformed regional peers even amid the soft USD backdrop. In short, the IDR will restrict Bank Indonesia policy option to a rate hold.
- We expect Thailand Q1 GDP on Monday to produce a still decent print of around 2.7% amid some Nonetheless, drawdown of inventory and slower consumption spending is expected to drag on growth.

  - All in, while EM-Asia FX has been afforded tailwinds of relief from USD pressures, still in place tariff
- rail ii, while LiveAsa i i i has been anotided talliwhits of felier from GSD pressures, still in place talliferestrictions may begin to make its grip on regional economies and risk assets differentiate along lines of varying US fiscal and tariff relief.

  BI: Easing Not Easy



- Despite Bank Indonesia's easing bias as evidenced in its consistent comments that it is looking for policy room to cut, easing has proven to be a fairly difficult task. The main culprit is the rupiah.

   IDR's performance since "Liberation Day" has been abysmal. Despite DXY weakening by 3% following subsequent tariff relief and EM Asia FX appreciating by a commensurable ~3% on average the USD, IDR is only at similar levels since April 2 (strengthening only by a mere ~0.3%).

   The abysmal performance was despite Bank Indonesia FX intervention efforts, which they have recently characteristic the surprise of the production of the prod

- The abysmal performance was despite Bank Indonesia FX intervention efforts, which they have recently signalled, further underscoring the extent of confidence deficit in the rupiah.

   The underperformance of the IDR is indeed worrying as contracting government expenditure\* in Q1 was unable to alleviate fears surrounding the the country's fiscal outlook.

   While resilient private consumption is somewhat reassuringly, we remain circumspect on the resiliency of household spending given structural factors such as signs of skills mismatch and shrinking middle class. In addition, loans growth below BI's 11-13% forecast range since the start of the year is emblematic of growth woes, and underpins BI's easing bias. Giving more credence to BI's easing bias is contained inflation. Upside risks is expected to be moderate, with good harvest of rice keeping a lid on excessive price increases. Note that inflation returned back to BI's 1.5-3.5% target range in April after the electricity subsidies caseed.
- subsidies ceased.

  All said, we attribute a 80 (hold) 20 (ease) probability at the upcoming meeting. We lean towards the possibility of a hold, with further boost to macroprudential measures to encourage bank lending. In the event BI ease due to growth concerns, we expect depreciation pressure on the IDR, with USD/IDR plausibly moving back to above 16,700 levels.
- nent expenditures and moderating investments growth were the main drivers behind Q1's <5.0% YoY grow

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Date	Country	Event	Period	Survey*	Prior
19 May	CH	Industrial Production/Retail Sales YoY	Apr	5.7%/5.9%	7.7%/5.9%
	CH	Surveyed Jobless Rate Apr		5.2%	5.2%
	CH	New/Used Home Prices MoM	Apr		-0.1%/-0.2%
	CH	Property Investment/FAI YTD YoY	Apr	-9.9%/4.3%	-9.9%/4.2%
	TH	GDP YoY/SA QoQ 1Q		2.9%/0.5%	3.2%/0.4%
	PH	BoP Overall	Apr		-\$1966m
20 May	CH	1Y/5Y Loan Prime Rate		3.00%/3.50%	3.10%/3.60%
	AU	RBA Cash Rate Target		3.85%	4.10%
	MY	Exports/Imports YoY	Apr	7.4%/1.9%	6.8%/-2.8%
	TW	BoP Current Account Balance 10			\$34397m
	TW	Export Orders YoY	Apr	9.1%	12.5%
21 May	ID	BI-Rate		5.50%	5.75%
22 May	ID	BoP Current Account Balance	1Q		-\$1145m
		PMI Mfg/Services (IN, AU)	May P		
	MY	CPI YoY	Apr	1.4%	1.4%
	TW	Unemployment Rate	Apr	-	3.4%
	SG	GDP YoY/SA QoQ	1Q F	3.6%/-1.0%	3.8%/-0.8%
23 May	SG	CPI/Core YoY	Apr	0.9%/0.5%	0.9%/0.5%
	KR	PPI YoY	Apr		1.3%
	TW	Industrial Production YoY	Apr	13.1%	13.7%

### RBA: Imparting Robustness and Removing Restrictions



- For the upcoming RBA meeting, we retain our call for a rate cut to 3.85% but with much lower confidence after the strong employment gains from the latest April jobs report. Unemployment rate stayed very low at 4.10% despite an increase in participation rates as job gains were very robust in April. Nonetheless, it is notable that employment gains YTD of 103K (Jan-Apr) are softer relative to the past few years (2023: 161k; 2024: 127k) and has normalised closer to pre-Covid levels.

   Labour market strength will keep the RBA worried about the potential for further cost passthrough of the recent tariff induced pressures on supply chains. Furthermore, wage price growth in Q1 also remain robust at 3.4% YoY, a tad higher than the 3.2% observed in Q4.

   That said, on the inflation front, with the annual trimmed mean and headline inflation staying below 3% in 2025, we expect that the RBA will take into account fiscal developments such as electricity rebates to reflect that inflation is expected to stay within their tarret range.

- 2025, we expect that the RBA will take into account fiscal developments such as electricity rebates to reflect that inflation is expected to stay within their target range.

  Recent AUD performance will also dampen imported inflation pressures.

  Admittedly, below trend growth remain a key concern as real retail sales stagnated in Q1 (0.0% MoM) due to a drag from lower spending on household goods. That said, it was not entirely dismal as the demand for food retailing and Cafes, Restaurants and Takeaway Food Services remain healthy.

  On balance, RBA Governor Bullock will continue to signal elevated uncertainty to push back against speculation for consecutive cuts. Policy easing at this meeting will also likely be framed as removing some monetary policy restrictions in consideration of the global trade headwinds.

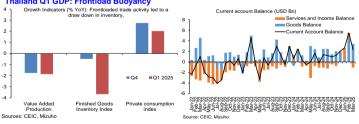
  Specifically, a 10% baseline tariff ought to feature (implicitly at the very least) within the baseline even if negotiations are on-going. All in, this move may well be viewed as one which allows the RBA to be seen as imposing some robustness in the stance, reducing the need to ease in July, barring deeper shocks.

  Thailand Q1 GDP: Frontiload Buoyancy

  Growth Indicators (% VOP): Frontiload Rate activity led to a draw down in inventory.

  8 1

  Current account Balance (USD Br)



- For Thailand Q1 GDP, we expect it to keep a similar sequential momentum of 0.4% QoQ growth which
- implies a mild slowdown of **YoY growth to 2.7%** from Q4's 3.2%.

   Value added production declined 1.9% YoY in Q1 but on seasonally adjusted terms expanded a healthy 0.4% QoQ. The expansion likely reflects the front loading of exports which is observed in the current
- account surplus which reach US\$10.5b in Q1 largely due to the goods balance of US\$8.1bn.

   The substantial drawdown of finished goods inventory also reflects the urgency of exports to front load ahead of possible reciprocal tariffs. Private investment spending is also likely to fall due to the uncertainty from the tariff policies in the US.
- While external demand is likely to have held up, domestic consumption remains weak as private consumption growth (proxied by the PCI indicator) slowed to 2.0% YoY. This is perhaps not surprising as tourist arrivals growth slowed to 1.9% YoY in Q1 2025 from Q4's 16.8% YoY due to declining arrivals from China and Singapore. Notably, the impact of the late March earthquake would also not be taken into
- account.

  All in, this GDP print will still display underlying weakness despite the likelihood of the headline number being made to look relatively robust. As for the THB, these GDP details are unlikely to be a setup for much backstop as gold, yen tailwinds fade and the economic impact of tariffs creep in.

### Forex Rate

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	Close*	Chg^	% Chg^	We	eek For	ecast
USD/JPY	145.2	-0.170	-0.12%	143.50	~	148.00
EUR/USD	1.121	-0.0040	-0.36%	1.108	~	1.140
USD/SGD	1.2961	-0.002	-0.14%	1.2860	~	1.3120
USD/THB	33.188	0.17	0.51%	32.60	~	33.60
USD/MYR	4.2768	-0.0239	-0.56%	4.240	~	4.330
USD/IDR	16438	-77	-0.47%	16,400	~	16,750
JPY/SGD	0.8925	0.000	-0.04%	0.869	~	0.914
AUD/USD	0.6428	0.001	0.22%	0.630	~	0.647
USD/INR	85.65	0.271	0.32%	84.8	~	86.8
USD/PHP	55.645	0.165	0.30%	55.1	~	56.2

# Weekly change. FX: Relief, Albeit Partial

- Relief from the de-escalation in US-China trade tensions was in plain sight
- The DXY mostly buoyant above mid-100 levels. Nonetheless, that relief is at best, partial, is reflected in DXY being still some distance away >103.5 levels before "Liberation Day". Afterall, the concessions thus far in trade talks can mostly been framed as "temporary" (e.g. 90-day stay order) and by no means removed. Things could easily swing either way.
  - In the G10 space, the USD traded mixed against the G10 currencies.
- AUD led gains on CNH spillovers, while robust jobs data reduced the odds of a cut at RBA meeting next
- GBP outperformed on upside surprise to growth outturns
- JPY strengthened amid Japanese FinMin Kato's comments that US and Japan had discused "FX".
   Specifically, Japan confirmed with US FX should be determined by market.
   EUR underperformed as a US-EU trade deal is not in sight yet, with Bessent commenting that the bloc
- suffers from a "collective action problem" which hampers negotiation.

- Perceived breakthroughs in US-China trade tensions saw CNH leading gains, and spilling over to trade-
- ensitive currencies MYR, TWD, KRW, VND and SGD.

  Notably, KRW had an intraday surge of >2% folloiwng reports that US and Korea agreed to share a mutual understnading of the principles they hold for operating FX markets. This followed TWD's surge the week prior amid suspicions that US-Taiwan trade talks involved FX.

  - Meanwhile, THB led losses amid Gold's fall as haven flows ebb on easing tensions; while eanwhile, PHP
- underperformed following mid-term elections saw fewer-than-expected senators elected from President Marcos' camp. Anyhow, the modest weakness does not suggest any "flight-to-safety" concerns.

### Bond Yield (%)

16-May	2-yr	Chg (bp)^	10-yr	Chg (bp)^	Curve
USD	3.938	4.7	4.408	3.0	Flattening
GER	1.862	8.4	2.594	3.5	Flattening
JPY	0.689	6.5	1.438	8.5	Steepening
SGD	2.131	10.3	2.498	8.5	Flattening
AUD	3.549	18.0	4.451	0.1	Flattening
GBP	3.959	6.3	4.619	5.4	Flattening

### Stock Market

	Close	% Chg
S&P 500 (US)	5,916.93	4.54
Nikkei (JP)	37,709.23	0.55
EuroStoxx (EU)	5,412.08	1.93
FTSE STI (SG)	3,891.94	0.41
JKSE (ID)	7,040.16	3.03
PSEI (PH)	6,466.86	0.13
KLCI (MY)	1,573.02	1.71
SET (TH)	1,194.49	-1.36
SENSEX (IN)	82,530.74	3.87
ASX (AU)	8,384.10	1.86

- USTs: Fiscal Concerns
   UST yields rose this week despite a softer than expected retail sales and PPI print amid a mild flattening.
- For the upcoming week, fiscal concerns will take centre stage and as such, yield curve steepening will be the base case, with significant gyrations.
   That said, continued talk about X date (point at which the Treasury runs out of cash and
- special accounting measures to keep within the debt ceiling and still make good on federal obligations on time) may keep shorter term bonds from being in demand as well.
- Furthermore, the lack of first tier US economic data also imply that Fed speakers may
- continue to speak up on near term patience and provide a mild backstop for front end yields.

  All in, we expected 2Y yields to trade in the 3.85-4.05% range while 10Y UST yields hover around 4.3 to 4.6% with upside bias.

- FX Brief:

  1) JPY: Minimal gains as higher UST yields and weaker domestic GDP weighed
- 2) EUR: Unable to make much headway as growth conerns start to way amid the lack of progress on trade talks with the US.
- 3) AUD: Middle of the pack type of mild gains despite a strong jobs report as
- 4) CNH: Fixing allowed for further CNH appreciation and outperformance
- 5) INR: Simmering tensions despite the ceasefire could mean contin underperformance. Hints of India taking a stronger stance against the US could also add depreciation pressure.
- 6) SGD: Significant progress in US-China trade talks unlikely next week; while slow progress in EU-US talks ought to mean middle-of-the-pack performance. Could continue hovering around 1.30 levels
- 7) IDR: Any easing by BI on growth woes may see a break back above 16,700 insofar as growth may come at the expense of weaker government
- 8) THB: Underperformed as gold tailwinds fade and domestic condition singal subdued confidence and fiscal project continue to invite worries on longer term sustainability.
- 9) MYR: Beneficiary of US-China breakthrough and could benefit from news of improving trade environment. However, tail risks of ringgit coming under some pressure should GDP print show domestic consumption slowing
- 10) PHP: Spillovers from mid-term elections ought to fade away, and could see peso playing catch-up with regional peers to outperform next week
- 11) KRW: Managed to make considerable ground as equity inflows aided alongside fears that talks with the US involve FX.
- 12) TWD: Relative outperformance yet again for this week on the back of strong equities inflows as well as news of US-Taiwan talks on trade





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