

# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

2/3/2013

*...The Eurozone unemployment rose to 11.9%...  
...Cambodia's trade with Vietnam and Thailand rose sharply...*

## South East Asia

**Loans to households expanded by RM6.4bil in January**, driven mainly by loans for the purchase of residential and non-residential property, securities and passenger cars, Bank Negara Malaysia said.

**Indonesia's monthly inflation rose to 0.75% in February.** The figure took y-o-y inflation to 5.31%; close to the central bank's limit of 5.5%. This is said to be a one-shot increase, and was mainly caused by volatile food prices affected by bad weather and government prohibition imports of several horticulture products.

**The Philippines' money supply growth accelerated in January** as a result of the two successive actions of monetary authorities during the period.

**Commercial banks' total outstanding loans increased by 15.4% y-o-y**, a slower pace of growth compared to end-December's 16.2%, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported that for January.

**Thai industrial output rose 10.1%** in January on y-o-y from the low base a year earlier when severe flooding devastated industry, said the Industry ministry.

**Vietnam's consumer gold demand, including jewellery and investment bars, dropped 24%** to 77 tonnes last year from 100.8 tonnes in 2011 after the government moved to curb gold speculation that had contributed to the dong's volatility, GFMS reported.

**Cambodia's trade with Vietnam and Thailand rose sharply last year.** Cambodia's trading with Vietnam reached about \$3.3 billion in 2012, up 18% from 2011 while total trade with Thailand in 2012 was valued at \$3.8 billion, up 40% y-o-y, official data release Friday indicated.

## North East Asia

**Last year, Chinese companies invested a record US\$26.8 billion in overseas markets** through mergers and acquisitions, according to the commerce ministry. China's overseas investment surged at an average annual growth rate of 44% between 2008 and 2011.

**Japan's jobless rate fell to 4.2% in January** from 4.3% in December, the Internal Affairs Ministry said on Friday.

**Japan's consumer prices fell 0.2% in January** from a year earlier for the third straight month of decline, due mainly to a drop in household durable goods, including air conditioners, the government said Friday.

**The country's exports came to US\$43.32 billion in February**, down 8.6% from a year earlier, with imports narrowing by 10.7% on-year to \$40.26 billion, according to the Ministry of Knowledge Economy.

## Middle East and North Africa

**Iraq's Basra Provincial Council has said it will discuss a proposal to open around 25% of the oil pipeline project** with Jordan for initial public offering to be owned by citizens of both countries, Jordan Times has reported.

**Qatari investments in the UK currently stand at more than QR124bn**, the Peninsula has reported.

## Indian Sub-Continent

**Indian central bank has asked banks to impose monetary limit for international transactions** on credit and debit cards and refrain from issuing cards with global access unless specifically sought by the customer, the Reserve Bank of India said.

## Europe

**The eurozone unemployment rose to 11.9% in January** from 11.8% in December, the statistics agency Eurostat said, with the highest rate was 27% in Greece and the lowest rate was 4.9% in Austria.

**The eurozone inflation had fallen to 1.8% in February**, the lowest for two years putting it in line with the ECB's inflation target of below, but close to 2%.

**The EU's proposed cap on banker bonuses the move was "self-defeating"** and will drive business away from London at the expense of a struggling EU, Boris Johnson, the mayor of London, has said.

**U.K. house prices increased 0.2% m-o-m in February** to £162,638 (\$247,000) as the Bank of England's credit-easing program helped lower mortgage rates, Nationwide Building Society said.

## Eastern Europe

**Russia's Reserve Fund**, which protects the budget against a fall in oil prices, increased 0.15% in February to 2.593 trillion rubles, the Finance Ministry said on Friday.

**The National Wealth Fund**, designed to secure Russia's pension system, gained 0.15% in February to 2.683 trillion rubles, the Prime reported.

## North America

**Construction spending in the U.S. unexpectedly fell in January at about 2.1%**, the biggest decrease since July 2011, to a \$883.3 billion annual rate, a Commerce Department report showed today in Washington.

**Consumer spending in the U.S. rose in January** even as incomes dropped. Household purchases, which account for about 70% of the economy, climbed 0.2% after a 0.1% gain the prior month, the Commerce Department reported.

**Canada's GDP grew at a 0.6%** annualised pace from October to December, Statistics Canada said today from Ottawa. The quarter ended with a 0.2% decline in output in December, led by manufacturers and retailers.

## Australasia

**Home prices rose by an average of 0.3%** in the month, following a 1.2% rise in January, according to the monthly RP Data/Rismark Home Value index released on Friday.

**New Zealand's terms of trade unexpectedly fell 1.3%** in the fourth quarter from three months earlier, according to Statistics New Zealand.

## Oil & Gas News

**Oil futures fell 1.5%** after data showed China's manufacturing growth slowed for a second month while factory output declined in the euro area and the U.K.

## Commodities News

**Copper and aluminum fell** to three-month lows on signals that manufacturing may sag in China, the world's biggest consumer of industrial metals.

**Cocoa futures dropped** to a nine-month low on mounting concern that a recession is weakening demand in Europe, the world's biggest consumer.

## Currency News

**The U.S dollar led gains in world markets last month**, beating global measures of bonds, stocks and commodities, as the threat of U.S. budget cuts proved no barrier to investors snapping up American assets.

**The pound weakened through \$1.50** for the first time since July 2010 after an industry report showed U.K. manufacturing unexpectedly shrank in February.

Date	Gold	NYMEX Natural Gas (\$/MMBtu)	Brent Oil (\$/bbl)	oil/nat. gas ratio	EUR	GBP	USD	AUD	Indo RUP	YEN	MYS RM	Phil Peso	Thai Baht	SGX Index
28-Feb-13	1,600.54	3.44	111.85	32.51	1.62	1.87	1.24	1.27	7,825	74.27	2.50	32.92	24.10	3,266.81
01-Mar-13	1,576.18	3.46	110.4	31.91	1.62	1.88	1.24	1.27	7,823	74.92	2.50	32.90	24.04	3,269.50
% Change	-1.55	0.58	-1.31		0.06	0.39	-0.04	0.00	-0.03	0.88	-0.13	-0.06	-0.25	0.08

# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

5/3/2013

*... Inflation in South Korea Slowed ...*  
*... Registered Unemployment in Spain reached 5 million ...*

## South East Asia

**Palm oil stockpiles in Malaysia**, which held near a record in January, probably shrank by the most in 10 months in February as output declined in the second-largest supplier, according to a Bloomberg survey.

**Indonesian government is optimistic** that the nation will book an almost US\$5 billion surplus in non-oil and gas trade in 2013. The figure will be up 27% from last year.

**Thailand's budget** to subsidise rice pledging for the 2012-13 crop year may be cut from an earlier proposal of 405 billion baht, with drought expected to reduce the harvest of the second crop of paddy this year.

**Myanmar pledged a new era of transparency** in its oil and gas industry, as it courts foreign investors after decades of secretive rule by a junta accused of plundering natural resources.

## North East Asia

**China set its economic growth target** for this year at 7.5%, unchanged on 2012, ahead of the opening Tuesday of the annual parliament session of the world's second-largest economy.

**China's government** promised its people deficit-fueled spending to fight corruption, improve the despoiled environment and address other quality-of-life issues that a growing number of Chinese are demanding.

**South Korea's industrial output shrank for the first time in five months in January** amid worries that industrial activities might be slowing amid toughened economic conditions.

**South Korean inflation** unexpectedly slowed in February. CPI rose 1.4% last month from a year earlier, down from a 1.5% gain in January.

## Indian Sub-Continent

**India's budget for the next fiscal year** offers a "realistic" plan to meet the country's fiscal deficit target, and should be a credit positive for its sovereign ratings, according to Moody's Investor's Service.

## Europe

**Eurozone finance ministers** are confident of agreeing a bailout worth up to €17bn (\$22bn) for Cyprus by the end of March, Eurogroup head Jeroen Dijsselbloem said.

**A free-trade agreement between the US and European Union** would boost its growth by as much as 1%, leading to many more jobs, EU Trade Commissioner said. The EU aims to have negotiations done by 2014, before a new European Commission is seated.

**Bank of Ireland has recorded a loss** of €1.8bn (£\$2.3bn) for 2012, as it saw little respite in the rate at which it had to write off bad loans due to the property crash.

**The Spanish economy contracted** 0.8% in Q4 2012 as consumer spending continued to weaken, the National Statistics Institute said.

**Registered unemployment in Spain** surpassed 5 million for the first time in February. The overall unemployment rate stood at 26.02% in Q4 2012 – the highest level since 1975.

## Middle East

**A slide in Egypt's foreign reserves** slowed sharply in February, but their low levels kept Cairo under heavy pressure to secure an IMF loan. The central bank, which has been tightly rationing dollar supplies, said on its website that reserves slipped to \$13.5 billion at the end of last month from \$13.6 billion at the end of January.

## Eastern Europe

**Russia's revenue from the household property tax** may grow to 120 billion rubles from the current 20 billion rubles after the government revalues the real estate and land, Deputy Finance Minister Sergei Shatalov said.

**Russia's net private capital outflow** may amount to U.S. \$10–15 billion in 2013, Finance Minister said.

## North America

**Congressional Republicans** announced a plan on Monday to avoid a US government shutdown later this month, seeking to calm the waters after months of budget

fights that ended in a failure last week to halt damaging spending cuts.

## Australasia

**The Reserve Bank of Australia** has kept official interest rates on hold for the second month in a row today, leaving the official cash rate at 3%.

**The Reserve Bank of New Zealand** has opened consultation on its proposed macro-prudential framework, a set of fiscal tools aimed at tightening credit supply amid soaring house prices.

## Oil & Gas News

**U.S. crude inventories** probably rose 788,000 barrels last week, according to the median estimate of 10 analysts surveyed by Bloomberg. Gasoline stockpiles decreased 250,000 barrels and distillate supplies slid 1 million barrels, the survey showed.

## Commodities News

**Farmers** are preparing to plant a record rice crop that will boost inventories held by the world's biggest exporters to the highest ever.

**Demand for palm oil**, the world's most used vegetable oil, is poised to rebound as the worst losing streak in almost seven years spurs record buying by refiners in India, according to Ruchi Soya Industries Ltd.

## Currency News

**The euro fell** against the yen before data forecast to show the region's economy shrank and as Italy edged closer to a new election after an inconclusive vote.

**The yen strengthened** against most major counterparts after testimony from deputy governor nominees to the Bank of Japan (8301) failed to raise expectations for expanded monetary stimulus.

Date	Gold	NYMEX Natural Gas (\$/MMBtu)	Brent Oil (\$/bbl)	oil/nat. gas ratio	EUR	GBP	USD	AUD	Indo RUP	YEN	MYS RM	Phil Peso	Thai Baht	SGX Index
1-Mar-13	1,576.18	3.46	110.4	31.91	1.62	1.88	1.24	1.27	7,823	74.92	2.50	32.90	24.04	3,269.50
5-Mar-13	1,581.10	3.56	110.53	31.05	1.62	1.87	1.24	1.26	7,800	75.08	2.50	32.78	23.96	3,245.52
% Change	0.31	2.89	0.12		0.13	-0.36	0.53	-0.17	-0.30	0.20	-0.20	-0.38	-0.35	-0.73

# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

6/3/2013

*... Australia's Economy Expanded in 2012...  
... Korea's Real Unemployment Rate Higher than Official Figures ...*

## South East Asia

**Singapore's share of GDP going to wages** has risen slightly over the past three decades. In the 1980s, wages made up 41.8% of GDP on average. This rose to 41.9% in the 1990s, and to 42.5% between 2000 and 2009.

**The Ministry of Finance of Indonesia's debt management failed to meet its target** in the offering of Islamic bonds (sukuk) on Tuesday, the second time since mid-February, as investors demanded yields higher than the government's offer due to accelerating inflation.

**The Philippine's government sustained its double-digit revenue increase in 2012** with total collection grew 12.9% y-o-y. The full-year deficit of 2012 amounted to 2.3% of GDP.

**The Philippine's annual headline inflation rate** jumped to 3.4% in February because of the annual gains in the prices of food, alcohol and cigarettes, the National Statistics Office (NSO) said. The February inflation was higher than the 3% recorded in January

**Myanmar will let foreign companies** bid for full control of new offshore oil and gas blocks that could be offered in April, removing a requirement that they take a local partner, a senior Energy Ministry official said.

## North East Asia

**Korea's trade volume reached US\$1.07 trillion in 2012**, overtaking Italy's \$986.9 billion and rising by one notch from ninth to eighth place, the Ministry of Knowledge Economy said citing WTO statistics.

**Korea's real unemployment rate** is estimated to have reached 7.5% last year, more than double the government's official jobless rate of 3.2%, according to a National Assembly report.

## Indian Sub-Continent

**India's current account deficit widened to a record high of 5.4% of GDP** in Q3 2012 as export growth slowed more sharply than imports, with a similar gap expected in Q4 2012 likely to prolong weakness in the rupee.

**Indian services growth eased** off the accelerator last month. The HSBC services Purchasing Managers' Index fell to 54.2 in February from a one-year high of 57.5 in January. It was the biggest one-month fall in nearly a year.

## Europe

**U.K. retail sales rose** 2.7% y-o-y at the fastest pace in more than three years in February as demand for clothes and home furnishings increased, the British Retail Consortium said.

**U.K. services unexpectedly accelerated** last month as demand strengthened, indicating the economy may stave off a recession this quarter, Markit Economics and the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply said. A gauge of activity increased to 51.8 from 51.5 in January.

**Spain will likely need no more money from Brussels** to fix its financial industry after receiving €41.4 billion (\$54 billion) to shore up its banks, the European Commission said.

## Middle East

**Egypt will begin to reduce fuel subsidies in April**, the country's minister of petroleum and mineral resources said. The system would be based on electronic 'smart' cards and would form part of the reform package intended to gain a \$4.8 billion loan from the IMF.

**Inflation rate in Kuwait averaged 2.9% in 2012** as interest rate is predicted to remain unchanged in the next years, the Kuwait Finance House (KFH) said in a report.

**Oman's actual fiscal surplus** rocketed to one of its highest levels in 2012 after the budget recorded a deficit in the previous year and official data showed the 2012 balance was a result of a massive rise in revenue.

## Eastern Europe

**Russia's unemployment grew** by 3.3% in February on the month to 1.1 million people, the Labor Ministry said in a report.

**Russia's CPI rose** 0.6% in February, the Federal State Statistics Service said. The 12-month CPI reached 7.3% in February, the service said.

## North America

**The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) of the U.S.** forecasts federal tax revenues are set to hit a record \$2.7 trillion this year, going past the previous record of \$2.6 trillion that was set in fiscal year 2007, before the recession began.

**State and local funding for public universities and colleges in the U.S. fell** 7% to US\$81.2 billion in 2012 from a year earlier, driving up a measure of tuition to record levels, according to an annual survey.

## Australasia

**Australia's economy grew 0.6%** last quarter as government investment and exports increased, taking growth for the year to 3.1%. The annual growth was the highest since 2007, when the economy grew by 3.8%.

**Building activity slowed** to a walk in Q4 2012, with commercial building growth outpacing housing, after a surge in Q3 2012. Building work "put in place" rose a seasonally adjusted 1.5%.

## Oil & Gas News

**Brent oil rose** a second day, widening its premium to West Texas Intermediate, as a North Sea pipeline system stayed shut and Venezuela, OPEC's fourth-biggest crude producer, reported the death of President Hugo Chavez.

## Commodities News

**Corn declined** for the second time this week as snowfall in the U.S., the biggest producer, improved prospects for the crop before the planting season starts in April.

**Gold climbed** for a second day as physical demand picked up and investors weighed the continuation of stimulus measures by central banks against improving economic data. Silver, platinum and palladium advanced.

## Currency News

**The dollar fell** for a second day against most of its 16 major counterparts before a private jobs report in the U.S. forecast to show companies added positions.

**Thailand's baht rose** for a second day as gains in U.S. equities and economic indicators boosted risk sentiment and brightened the outlook for Asian exports.

Date	Gold	NYMEX Natural Gas (\$/MMBtu)	Brent Oil (\$/bbl)	oil/nat. gas ratio	EUR	GBP	USD	AUD	Indo RUP	YEN	MYS RM	Phil Peso	Thai Baht	SGX Index
5-Mar-13	1,581.10	3.56	110.53	31.05	1.62	1.87	1.24	1.26	7,800	75.08	2.50	32.78	23.96	3,245.52
6-Mar-13	1,578.30	3.54	111.85	31.60	1.62	1.88	1.24	1.27	7,797	74.89	2.49	32.72	23.94	3,277.36
% Change	-0.18	-0.56	1.19		0.10	0.68	0.04	0.81	-0.04	-0.25	-0.22	-0.18	-0.06	0.98

# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

7/3/2013

*... Eurozone Economy Shrank ...  
... Australia's Trade Deficit Widened in January ...*

## South East Asia

**Indonesia's logistics industry is expected to grow** by 14.5% to Rp 1,634 trillion (US\$168.3 billion) throughout this year, mainly fueled by a robust economy and maturity in the sector, according to recent research by business consulting firm Frost & Sullivan.

**Philippine economic growth** could hit 5.9% this year before slightly slowing down to 5.7% in 2014, S&P said in a report. The outlooks were up from the original forecasts of 5% and 4.8%, respectively.

**Myanmar's Ministry of Energy** will put about 25 offshore oil and gas exploration blocks up for auction in April, a Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE) official announced at the Myanmar Upstream Summit oil and gas conference.

**Thailand's government will have to sell off its rice stockpile** amassed under the rice pledging scheme at market prices, PM's Office Minister admitted.

## North East Asia

**China's property curbs in the past decade** have been unsuccessful and the new round of measures will slow property sales, said billionaire Vincent Lo, also a member of the government's advisory board.

**Korea's foreign reserves** stood at slightly above US\$327 billion, down less than 0.5% from a month earlier, the Bank of Korea announced.

**The Bank of Japan wrapped up its last policy meeting** under Governor Masaaki Shirakawa on Thursday, announcing no fresh policy measures but offering an upbeat assessment of the economy.

**Japan has nominated Takehiko Nakao**, its deputy finance minister for international affairs, to become president of the Asian Development Bank.

## Indian Sub-Continent

**The share of merchandise exports in India's GDP** has increased from 13.9% in 2009/10 to 17.7% in 2011/12.

**The Indian government** is looking to cut withholding tax rate for foreign investments in all types of corporate bonds, as it eyes fresh measures to top up the budget proposals when the finance minister replies to the debate in parliament.

## Europe

**The European Union and Thailand** announced the launch of talks on a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), seeking to boost annual commerce already worth some €30 billion (\$39 billion).

**The Eurozone shrank 0.6% in Q4 2012** as the debt crisis continued to exact a heavy price, the Eurostat data agency said.

**Germany shrank 0.6% in Q4 2012** after a gain of 0.2% in Q3 2012, data from the Eurostat indicated.

**The British government should split the Royal Bank of Scotland** into "good" and "bad" bank divisions to return it more quickly to the private sector, Bank of England Governor Mervyn King said.

## Middle East

**Jordan must tackle a soaring energy import bill** by reducing power subsidies to get its economy back on track, the IMF said.

**The World Bank has granted Jordan** \$70 million to provide small loans to young people in depressed rural areas who have borne the brunt of the country's sluggish economic growth.



## Eastern Europe

**Russia's net demand for foreign currency** down 34% in January, the central bank said.

## North America

**The Republican-controlled House of Representatives** approved legislation Wednesday to prevent a U.S. government shutdown on March 27 and blunt the impact of deep spending cuts on the Defense Department.

**The United States** is committed to implementing the 2010 quota and governance reform of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), U.S. Treasury Department said on Wednesday.

## Australasia

**Australia has posted a seasonally adjusted trade deficit of \$1.06 billion in January**, with exports falling 1% and imports rising 1% over the month.

**Kiwis are slowly loosening the grip on their wallets**, spending particularly on cars, speciality food and taxis. The latest figures from payments provider Paymark showed an increase in overall spending of 0.9% in February over the previous month.

## Oil & Gas News

**West Texas Intermediate oil** traded near the lowest level in two days after U.S. crude stockpiles rose almost five times more than forecast. The Brent pipeline system remained shut a fifth day.

## Commodities News

**Iron ore** is poised to decline over the rest of the year as global supply increases and a rally spurred by restocking in China ends, according to Morgan Stanley.

**Wheat futures fell** to the lowest since June as rain boosted prospects for the U.S. winter crop set to emerge from dormancy. Corn prices tumbled the most in five months.

**Gold** snapped two days of gains as investors weighed mixed U.S. economic data against the potential for more stimulus measures from central banks around the world. Silver fell for the first time in three days.

## Currency News

**The Canadian dollar** approached its weakest point in eight months against its U.S. counterpart after the Bank of Canada indicated it won't raise interest rates anytime soon with inflation slowing more than expected.

**Thailand's baht fell** from a five-week high on speculation importers increased dollar purchases to take advantage of a more favorable exchange rate.

Date	Gold	NYMEX Natural Gas (\$/MMBtu)	Brent Oil (\$/bbl)	oil/nat. gas ratio	EUR	GBP	USD	AUD	Indo RUP	YEN	MYS RM	Phil Peso	Thai Baht	SGX Index
6-Mar-13	1,578.30	3.54	111.85	31.60	1.62	1.88	1.24	1.27	7,797	74.89	2.49	32.72	23.94	3,277.36
7-Mar-13	1,584.92	3.48	110.89	31.86	1.63	1.88	1.24	1.28	7,786	74.88	2.49	32.69	23.90	3,290.71
% Change	0.42	-1.69	-0.86	0.85	0.23	0.04	0.00	0.48	-0.13	-0.01	0.12	-0.08	-0.17	0.41



# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

9/3/2013

*... Japan Escapes from Recession in Q4 ...  
... US' Unemployment Rate Fell to its Lowest Level since 2008 ...*

## South East Asia

**The Indonesian foreign exchange reserves fell** US\$3.6 billion in a month to US\$105.18 billion by the end of February.

**The Philippines' Gross International Reserves** stood at US\$83.8 billion as of end-February. Preliminary data showed that the end-February level was lower by US\$1.5 billion than end-January level.

**Singapore resale prices of non-landed private residences** grew 2.7% in February this year over January, the latest Singapore Real Estate Exchange (SRX) report showed.

## North East Asia

**The People's Bank of China and the Monetary Authority of Singapore** has signed an agreement of doubling the size of a currency-swap arrangement to \$48 billion, which will be effective for three years.

**China's exports grew** 21.8% in February from a year ago, the Customs Administration said, ahead of market expectations for a 10.1% rise.

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

**Japan posted its 3<sup>rd</sup> straight current account deficit in January**, as trade losses swelled on the weakening yen and strong energy imports, the government said.

**Japan upgraded its annualized growth figure** for Q4 2012 to 0.2%. Preliminary data had reported a 0.4% contraction from a year earlier.

## Indian Sub-Continent

**The Indian government** put the rate cut ball in the Reserve Bank of India's court with indian finance minister saying the government had done its bit on fiscal consolidation.

## Europe

**The ECB kept eurozone interest rates unchanged** at 0.75% for the eighth month in a row.

**French Prime Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault asked ministries to slash spending by €5 billion (US\$6.5 billion)** next year to help balance the budget amid low growth, spiralling unemployment and mass layoffs.

**Norway's Government Pension Fund**, the world's largest sovereign wealth fund, posted a return of 13.4% in 2012. Assets were worth 3.8 trillion kroner (€517 billion or US\$672 billion) at the end of last year.

**The IMF is open to changing the terms of Ireland's bailout programme**, IMF chief Christine Lagarde has stated.

**The international ratings agency Fitch downgraded Italy's sovereign debt rating** by one notch to "BBB+" from "A-" and added that the outlook was negative.

## Middle East

**Dubai recorded over 10 million visitors in 2012**, marking a 9.3% jump from the previous year, boosting hotel revenues by 18% to Dh18.82 billion in the period (Dh15.97 billion in 2011), the Dubai Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM) said.

**Saudi Arabia's economy continued its robust growth** above the pre-crisis average level of 3% last year, with real GDP registering 6.8% annual growth, driven by the oil sector and non-oil sector, according to Saudi Economic Developments and Outlook report.

## Eastern Europe

**Russian central bank** net dollar purchases stood at \$119 million in February, the Prime reported.

**Russia's GDP** is forecast to grow 3.0–3.3% this year and is unlikely to reach the earlier projected 5% forecast, the Economic Development Ministry said.

## North America

**The February U.S. jobless rate fell** to 7.7% from 7.9% in January. The U.S. gained a net 236,000 jobs, the US Labor Department said.

## Australasia

**The Australian government is being urged to cut into more than 900 agencies and bodies** that add to spending and slow down decisions, amid a growing political row over ways to slash government waste.

## Oil & Gas News

**West Texas Intermediate for April, settled at US\$91.95 a barrel**, a gain of 39 cents from Thursday's close. A barrel of Brent North Sea crude for delivery in April dropped 30 cents to US\$110.83 in London trade.

## Commodities News

**Gold futures rose in New York.** Gold futures for April delivery gained 0.1% to settle at \$1,576.90 an ounce.

## Currency News

**India's rupee posted the biggest gain in Asia this week.** The rupee climbed 1.1% during the five days to 54.2925 per dollar in Mumbai. The yuan rose 0.14% to 6.2147 and Thailand's baht advanced 0.2% to 29.71.

Date	Gold	NYMEX Natural Gas (\$/MMBtu)	Brent Oil (\$/bbl)	oil/nat. gas ratio	EUR	GBP	USD	AUD	Indo RUP	YEN	MYS RM	Phil Peso	Thai Baht	SGX Index
7-Mar-13	1,584.92	3.48	110.89	31.86	1.63	1.88	1.24	1.28	7,786	74.88	2.49	32.69	23.90	3,290.71
9-Mar-13	1,576.90	3.63	110.85	30.54	1.63	1.87	1.25	1.28	7,770	76.45	2.49	32.66	23.85	3,289.53
% Change	-0.51	4.31	-0.04		0.48	-0.70	0.21	-0.20	-0.21	2.10	-0.10	-0.11	-0.22	-0.04

# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

12/3/2013

*...Malaysia's exports rebounded...  
...The UAE remains second largest Arab economy in 2012...*

## South East Asia

**The Philippines' foreign direct investment in 2012 reached US\$2 billion**, higher by 9.8% than the previous year's (revised) level of US\$1.9 billion, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) said.

**Philippines' consumer prices is seen to climb slightly in 2013 as the inflation rate is expected to average at 3.8%**, according to the latest report of the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS).

**Malaysian export activity rebounded 3.5% in January** from a dip a month earlier as demand from neighbours and the giant Chinese market picked up.

**Malaysia's industrial production** in January rose 4.6% from a year earlier.

**The Singapore Tourism Board (STB) is expecting tourism receipts to hit between \$23.5 and \$24.5 billion this year** while visitor arrivals are slated to increase to between 14.8 and 15.5 million.

**The Singaporean government will ramp up the supply of rental flats to 60,000**, a 20% increase from the 50,000 last year.

## North East Asia

**China's inflation rose by 1.1% in February** due to rising food prices and soaring property sales, the National Bureau of Statistics said, outpacing economists' expectations of a 0.8% increase.

**The Japanese government's** choice to lead the country's central bank promised to move quickly to implement fresh monetary stimulus to lift the struggling economy.

**Foreign currency deposits at South Korean banks rose in February** as Korean trade surplus remained in the black and corporate sales of overseas bonds gained, the central bank said.

**The proportion of people currently working or seeking work in Korea's labor market** is expected to fall below the 60% threshold for the first time in 24 years.

## Indian Sub-Continent

**Car sales in India slumped 25.7% in February**, the biggest fall in more than 12 years and the fourth consecutive monthly slide, an industry body said, as sluggish economic growth continues to weigh on demand.

**Indian exports rose for a second straight month in February**, narrowing the country's trade deficit to its lowest level in 10 months.

## Europe

**Germany's exports increased by a seasonally-adjusted 1.4% m-o-m in January to €91.9bn**, whereas imports rose 3.3% to €76.2bn, the national statistics office Destatis said.

**Britain's state-rescued Lloyds bank would seek to sell 20% of its holding in investment manager St James's Place**, as part of ongoing restructuring efforts.

## Middle East

**Lebanon recorded a primary deficit of LL166 billion (\$110 million) in the first 12 months of 2012** compared to a surplus of LL2.505 trillion in the same period of 2011.

**The UAE maintained its position as the second largest Arab economy in 2012** after its gross domestic product (GDP) swelled by \$23 billion in current prices, according to a US report.

## Eastern Europe

**Russia's non-CIS oil exports fell 3.4% on year in January**, the Federal Customs Service reported. On the other hand, Russia's non-CIS gas exports rose 1.1% in the same period.

## North America

**U.S. wholesalers boosted their stockpiles in January by 1.2% m-o-m**, the Commerce Department said.

## Australasia

**Business conditions weakened slightly in February**, even as the economy overall showed encouraging signs of responding to near-record-low interest rates, according to a survey by National Australia Bank.

**New Zealand property prices rose in February** but a supply shortage in some regions is starting to take its toll on overall sales volumes.

## Oil & Gas News

**Oil rose in New York.** Crude oil for April delivery gained 11 cents to \$92.06 a barrel. Brent oil for April settlement dropped 63 cents, or 0.6%, to end the session at \$110.22 a barrel.

## Commodities News

**Gold traded little changed after dropping 5.6% this year.** Spot gold was at \$1,582.30 an ounce in Singapore from \$1,581.55 yesterday.

## Currency News

**The dollar traded at almost the strongest since August 2009 versus the yen** as signs the American economy is gaining momentum boosted demand for U.S. assets.

**Thailand's baht rose 0.4 %** to 29.61 per dollar in Bangkok.

**The yen sank further** after the nominee to lead the Bank of Japan reiterated his vow to ramp up monetary easing and pursue higher inflation, while the euro gained slightly on the US dollar.

Date	Gold	NYMEX Natural Gas (\$/MMBtu)	Brent Oil (\$/bbl)	oil/nat. gas ratio	EUR	GBP	USD	AUD	Indo RUP	YEN	MYS RM	Phil Peso	Thai Baht	SGX Index
9-Mar-13	1,576.90	3.63	110.85	30.54	1.63	1.87	1.25	1.28	7,770	76.45	2.49	32.66	23.85	3,289.53
12-Mar-13	1,582.38	3.65	110.22	30.20	1.62	1.86	1.25	1.28	7,757	76.98	2.49	32.59	23.83	3,312.29
% Change	0.35	0.55	-0.57		-0.53	-0.39	0.17	-0.01	-0.17	0.69	-0.05	-0.21	-0.09	0.69

# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

13/3/2013

*... India's Consumer Price Inflation among the highest in the world ...  
... China plans to extend subsidies for new energy cars for 3 years ...*

## South East Asia

**Philippine merchandise exports in January fell by 2.7%** to \$4.011 billion as receipts for electronic products posted negative growth, data from the National Statistics Office showed.

**Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas** is considering reducing further the reserve requirement imposed on banks to temper the peso's appreciation and bring relief to the troubled export sector.

**Vietnam plans to boost domestic debt sales to a record VND150 trillion (US\$7.2 billion) in 2013** as falling property prices and stagnant bank lending supports demand for the government notes, according to the State Treasury.

## North East Asia

**China's auto industry are seeking to extend subsidies for new energy cars for 3 years**, said China's Minister of Industry and Information Technology.

**Japanese consumer confidence improved in February**, suggesting the country's economic recovery is gradually broadening to wider areas.

**Korean President Park Geun-hye's nominee for the Finance Ministry Chief** said the government needs to review diverse measures including fiscal and financial steps to stimulate the economy which remains in a "serious" condition.

**South Korea's jobless rate jumped in February** from a month earlier and job creation also slowed sharply, raising worries that labor market conditions will remain bleak down the road.

## Indian Sub-Continent

**India's annual consumer price inflation accelerated to 10.91% in February** from the previous month, government data showed.

**India's industrial output grew by a better-than-expected 2.4% in January from a year earlier**, data showed.

## Europe

**The European Commission agreed negotiating guidelines for talks with the United States on the world's biggest Free Trade Agreement**, stressing a pragmatic approach to even sensitive subjects.

**Inflation in Germany increased 1.5% y-o-y in January and 0.6% m-o-m in February**, the Federal Statistics Office Destatis data indicated.

**French President Francois Hollande publicly renounced his government's goal of cutting the public deficit to the EU limit of 3% of output this year**, and indicated that it would probably amount to 3.7%.

**Britain's manufacturing output slumped by 1.5% m-o-m in January**, the Office for National Statistics indicated.

## Middle East

**UAE's major Cabinet reshuffle**, replacing the Energy Minister, creating Ministry of Development and International Cooperation and merging of Economy and Foreign Trade ministries, was approved by President His Highness Shaikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

## Eastern Europe

**Retail deposits with Russian banks rose 2.3%** in February, the Prime reported.

## North America

**The United States job openings rose 2.2 % in January from December to 3.69 million**, the Labour Department said.

**Global economic conditions remain subdued** despite a recent rally in financial markets and policymakers need to act to address underlying stability risks, including dealing with weak banks, IMF official said.

## Australasia

**Australian home loans for owner-occupied homes rose 1.3%** to A\$13.8 billion after seasonal adjustments. The value of loans for investment homes rose 4.4% to A\$7.7 billion.

## Oil & Gas News

**West Texas Intermediate oil traded near the highest level** in two weeks after an industry report showed crude stockpiles fell for the first time since February in the U.S. WTI for April delivery was at \$92.78 a barrel, up 24 cents.

## Commodities News

**Gold traded near the highest level in almost two weeks** on prospects for additional stimulus from central banks in Europe and Japan and signs of increased physical demand in Asia. Spot gold traded at \$1,593.20 an ounce in Singapore from \$1,592.80 yesterday.

## Currency News

**The Malaysian ringgit rebounded yesterday in line with regional currencies** as improving global risk appetite intensified short-covering. The ringgit was also higher against other major currencies.

Date	Gold	NYMEX Natural Gas (\$/MMBtu)	Brent Oil (\$/bbl)	oil/nat. gas ratio	EUR	GBP	USD	AUD	Indo RUP	YEN	MYS RM	Phil Peso	Thai Baht	SGX Index
12-Mar-13	1,582.38	3.65	110.22	30.20	1.62	1.86	1.25	1.28	7,757	76.98	2.49	32.59	23.83	3,312.29
13-Mar-13	1,593.35	3.64	109.68	30.13	1.63	1.86	1.25	1.28	7,772	77.43	2.49	32.55	23.73	3,298.92
% Change	0.69	-0.27	-0.49		0.06	-0.28	-0.10	0.46	0.20	0.58	0.00	-0.11	-0.43	-0.40

# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

14/3/2013

***Gold declined from a two-week high...  
The European Parliament has demanded further negotiations...***

## South East Asia

**The Indonesian government is open to raising the price of subsidized fuel**, but it would first try other ways to curb rapidly rising consumption, a senior official said.

**The stagnation in the manufacturing sector of the Philippines has contributed to a higher poverty incidence** compared with its neighbouring countries, according to a report from the state think tank Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS).

**Thailand's central bank is not worried by the recent rise in the baht** to a 28-month high and will continue to monitor the currency as normal, Governor Prasarn Trairatvorakul said.

## North East Asia

**China's fresh cabinet restructuring plan** has the top economic planning agency assuming the task of creating population policies in China.

**Demand for China's robot sector increase** as workers get replaced due to soaring labour costs, according to China Securities Journal.

**Fixed asset investment in China's railways rose** 25.7% y-o-y to US\$ 6 billion in the first two months of the year, according to the railways authority.

**The lower house of parliament endorsed Haruhiko Kuroda to become Bank of Japan governor**, clearing the first hurdle in PM Shinzo Abe's plan to install a central bank leadership in favor of more easing.

**South Korea plans to implement an economic stimulus package** but will set the details around the end of this month after examining first-quarter indicators, a senior official said.

**Foreign-currency loans extended by South Korean banks declined** last year from a year earlier, as a stronger won helped borrowers repay their outstanding debts, the financial regulator said.

**South Korea's central bank froze the key interest rate** for the fifth straight month as the new government is poised to take measures to stimulate the slowing economy.

## Indian Sub-Continent

**Indian indirect tax collections registered growth** of 20% to Rs 4.17 lakh crore in the April-February period.

## Middle East

**Kuwait fiscal surplus stood at around KD16.1 billion (Dh207 billion)** in the first nine months of the 2012-2013 fiscal year, according to National Bank of Kuwait.

**Kuwaitis and expatriates will all be riled very soon by subsidy cuts, imposition of VAT and income tax.** MP Nasser Al-Merri has recently proposed scrapping subsidy to all Kuwaitis and expats and advised the government to instead improve the services and provide subsidy to Kuwaitis only on basic necessities such as electricity, water and fuel.

## Europe

**The European Parliament has demanded further negotiations** on the EU's multi-year budget, after national leaders agreed to a cut of 3.3%.

**European Union leaders meet with a debt bailout for Cyprus** looming on the horizon as Europe's faltering economy and soaring unemployment stoke unease at stinging austerity policies.

**Britain's public finances will benefit by a net £17 billion (\$25 billion)** from transfers from the Bank of England's asset-purchase program, published in the bank's Quarterly Bulletin in London.

## Eastern Europe

**Russia's foreign trade surplus fell** 13% in January, the central bank reported.

## North America

**The United States budget deficit for the month of February narrowed by US\$203.5 billion** (12% lower) from a year ago, the Treasury Department said.

**US retail sales picked up sharply in February**, driven by a surge in gasoline prices, government data showed.



**US money market fund assets decreased by US\$9.09 billion to US\$2.624 trillion** in the week ended March 12, the Money Fund Report said.

**Annual US deficits under a new plan from Senate Democrats would hover in the US\$400-600 billion range** for much of the next decade, but they argue that this allows for stronger near-term job growth than the Republicans' balanced-budget vision.

## Australasia

**Australian employment in February rise of 71,500** was made up of a rise of 17,800 in full-time employment and a rise of 53,700 in part-time employment, data released by Australian Bureau of Statistics.

**Non-resident holdings of New Zealand government securities dipped fractionally** to 64.4% in February from 64.8% the month before, the Reserve Bank of New Zealand said.

## Oil & Gas News

**Oil prices fell Wednesday** after another build in US crude inventories and a lowered key oil demand forecast took the shine off better-than-expected US retail sales.

## Commodities News

**Gold declined from a two-week high** as U.S. data showing a strengthening economy boosted equities and damped demand for haven assets.

## Currency News

**The Thai baht's strength** has been driven by Thai interest rates that are higher than those in other countries, the finance minister said.

**The Australian dollar jumped more than half a cent to a one-month high** after strong jobs data led markets to sharply scale back expectations of further interest rate cuts by the Reserve Bank of Australia.

Date	Gold	NYMEX Natural Gas (\$/MMBtu)	Brent Oil (\$/bbl)	oil/nat. gas ratio	EUR	GBP	USD	AUD	Indo RUP	YEN	MYS RM	Phil Peso	Thai Baht	SGX Index
13-Mar-13	1,593.35	3.64	109.68	30.13	1.63	1.86	1.25	1.28	7,772	77.43	2.49	32.55	23.73	3,298.92
14-Mar-13	1,587.85	3.68	108.34	29.44	1.63	1.86	1.25	1.29	7,777	76.79	2.49	32.55	23.75	3,278.41
% Change	-0.35	1.10	-1.22		0.04	0.27	-0.04	0.28	0.05	-0.83	-0.05	0.00	0.11	-0.62

# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

16/3/2013

***Japan's parliament approved Haruhiko Kuroda as the Bank of Japan's new governor ...  
Recession-plagued Portugal has until 2015 to bring down its public deficit ...***

## South East Asia

**Bank Indonesia (BI) is unlikely to adjust its benchmark rate of 5.75% in the next two years**, as inflation is expected to remain within the central bank's target throughout the period, BI's top executive said.

**Personal remittances from overseas Filipino workers reached US\$1.9 billion in January**, an increase of 8.4% y-o-y, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) announced.

**2013 Budget Session in Singapore Parliament came to a close**. 483 amendments were filed, an increase of 7% from last year, according to the Leader of the House and Defence Minister, Ng Eng Hen.

**Singapore retail sales fell by 2% y-o-y in January**, due mainly to sharp lower retail sales from food and beverage outlets and department stores.

**Private home sales by developers in Singapore fell to 708 units in February** from 2,013 units the month before, latest data from the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) showed.

**The State Bank of Viet Nam plans to inject VND30 trillion (US\$1.4 billion) into the banking system** to offer soft loans to home buyers in an attempt to revive the struggling property market and resolve bad debts.

## North East Asia

**China's electricity consumption was up 5.5% y-o-y for the first two months of the year**, signaling the country's economy is strengthening, according to the National Energy Administration.

**Hong Kong's total goods exports' volume rose 17.4% y-o-y in January and imports' volume rose 24% y-o-y**, the city's Census & Statistics Department said.

**Japan's parliament approved Haruhiko Kuroda as the Bank of Japan's new governor**, setting the stage for the central bank to embark on more vigorous monetary easing.

**Japan's government raised its assessment of the economy in March for the third consecutive month**, saying factory output is showing signs of a pickup and

that capital expenditure is bottoming out as the economy shakes off a mild recession last year.

**Japanese yen's weakness drove down the number of Japanese travelers to South Korea** by 26.2% y-o-y last month.

**Korea's economic growth in Q1 this year is likely to fall below the 2% range** due to sluggish demand and slumping exports.

**The Bank of Korea is leaving its key interest rate unchanged for a fifth straight month in March at 2.75%**. Central bank officials decided on the rate freeze based on forecasts of a continued moderate recovery.

## Indian Sub-Continent

**The slowdown in India's economic growth is less supportive for the country's sovereign credit ratings**, and the government may find it challenging to meet the revenue projections in its 2013/14 budget.

## Middle East

**Qatar's y-o-y inflation rose to 3.2% in February 2013** with house rent showing a disturbing upward trajectory, rising 4.8% since February 2012.

**Thousands of Tunisians are out of work, while some employers say they are still struggling to attract workers**. The employment ministry in December reported 653,000 unemployed people. Parallel statistics confirm about 120,000 jobs remain unfilled.

## Europe

**Inflation in eurozone fell sharply in February to 1.8% y-o-y**, below the ECB's target rate for the first time in more than two years, official data showed.

**The European economy and financial system remained weak**. The International Monetary Fund urged the region to quickly clean up its banks in order to advance toward a banking union.

**Recession-plagued Portugal has until 2015 to bring down its public deficit to below 3.0% GDP** in line with EU regulations, Finance Minister Vitor Gaspar said.

**Spain's public debt hit a new record of 84.1% of GDP or €884.4 billion at the end of 2012**, owing to

increases in both at the federal level and that of the country's 17 autonomous regions, official data provided by the Spanish central bank showed.

## Eastern Europe

**The Central Bank of Russia left all policy rates on hold** at its monthly meeting on Friday.

## North America

**US industrial production rose more than expected in February on a rebound in manufacturing**, showing the economy continues to gain momentum.

**Surging gasoline prices drove a pickup in US inflation in February**, with the consumer price index adding 0.7% for the month, the Labour Department said.

## Australasia

**The Australian federal budget sank \$4.6 billion further into deficit in the first four weeks of the year**, without any sign of the revival in revenue that had prompted forecasts of a surplus. Treasury figures showed the deficit had reached \$26.8 billion for the first seven months of the financial year.

**A group of lawyers to take legal action against the New Zealand banks over default fees.** More than 18,000 people have registered to join legal action over claims of excessive charges.

## Oil & Gas News

**West Texas Intermediate crude gained in New York.** WTI rose to a three-week high as the dollar slid to a one-week low against the euro after a report showed U.S. inflation is contained. Futures for April delivery rose 42 cents to \$93.45 a barrel.

## Commodities News

**Gold futures rose.** Gold futures for April delivery added 0.1% to settle at \$1,592.60 an ounce.

**Wheat fell**, on speculation that a rebound in global output will reduce demand for supplies from the U.S., the biggest shipper. Corn and soybeans saw little change.

## Currency News

**NZ dollar claws back ground overnight.** The kiwi dollar rose to 82.12 US cents from 81.78 cents.

Date	Gold	NYMEX Natural Gas (\$/MMBtu)	Brent Oil (\$/bbl)	oil/nat. gas ratio	EUR	GBP	USD	AUD	Indo RUP	YEN	MYS RM	Phil Peso	Thai Baht	SGX Index
14-Mar-13	1,587.85	3.68	108.34	29.44	1.63	1.86	1.25	1.29	7,777	76.79	2.49	32.55	23.75	3,278.41
16-Mar-13	1,592.10	3.87	109.82	28.38	1.62	1.88	1.25	1.29	7,770	77.02	2.50	32.52	23.70	3,286.05
% Change	0.27	5.16	1.37		-0.10	1.06	0.10	0.62	-0.09	0.30	0.30	-0.09	-0.21	0.23

*...India may ease restrictions on foreign-direct investment...  
...Cyprus to ditch the part of a hugely controversial €5.8bn grab on savings...*

## South East Asia

**Malaysia's exports to India amounted to RM29.3bil**, posting a 4.2% growth over 2011, while imports from India touched RM11.8bil, up 15.9% over 2011," Malaysian trade commissioner in India said.

**Singapore's non-oil domestic exports fell 30.6%** last month from a year ago, dragged down by a sharp drop in pharmaceuticals and oil rigs as well as continued weakness in electronics.

**The Iraqi government was willing to supply Indonesia with an "unlimited" supply of crude oil**, Susilo Siswoutomo, the Indonesian deputy minister for energy and mineral resources has said.

**The growth in the use of electronic payment products**, such as credit and debit cards, added \$2 billion to GDP of the Philippines, according to a study conducted for Visa by Moody's Analytics, a leading independent provider of economic forecasting.

**"Foreign money flows in because of the higher interest rate.** If a bubble bursts, everything that we see as good will come to an end or will not happen," Virabongsa Ramangkura, chair of the Bank of Thailand, warned yesterday.

**The State Bank of Viet Nam proposes to provide VND30 trillion (US\$1.428 billion) for lending to low-income house renters** and buyers, plus investors in social housing projects, at an interest rate of 6% for three years.

**The Minister of Finance and Revenue of Myanmar announced on March 15 that all civil servants will receive a 20,000 kyat monthly** pay rise beginning in April; however, government employees have voiced concern about the raise in salaries effecting inflation.

## North East Asia

**Japan's bid to join the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade negotiations** may make it easier for it to import liquefied natural gas from the United States, a prospect that is raising the hackles of environmental groups, said the Energy Department.

**China's housing prices rise further** in February from a month earlier. Prices in the surveyed cities rose 1.01% on average in February from January, compared with a 0.54% increase in January - the highest month-to-month

reading since January 2011, based on The Wall Street Journal's calculations.

**China's Foreign Direct Investment inflow expanded** by 6.3% y-o-y in February, the first rebound after declining for 8<sup>th</sup> consecutive months.

**Taiwan's central bank governor Perng Fai-nan said Monday that the bank is working to sign a currency-swap agreement** with China as soon as possible and will strive to keep the currency swap line at not less than US\$48.27 billion.

**Hong Kong's unemployment rate stayed flat** between December and February, the Census and Statistics Department said today. The underemployment rate dropped to 1.5% from 1.6% in the November-January period.

**Macau's GDP growth slowed to 9.9% in real terms last year**, the Statistics and Census Bureau has announced.

## Middle East and North Africa

**Annual inflation in the United Arab Emirates rose to 0.73% in February**, up from 0.43% in January, mainly due to higher food and beverage prices, according to UAE's national bureau of statistics.

## Indian Sub-Continent

**India may ease restrictions on foreign-direct investment** and called on the central bank to cut interest rates, as he extends efforts to revive growth in Asia's third-largest economy, India's finance minister said.

**India's wholesale price inflation for food accelerated to 11.4%** in February even as non-food manufacturing inflation, or core inflation, slowed to 3.8%. Retail food inflation for the month rose to 13.73%, Moody said.

## Europe

**The Eurozone told Cyprus to ditch the part of a hugely controversial €5.8bn grab on savings** that stung even the smallest of account holders in exchange for a €10bn sovereign bailout deal, according to a statement issued by Eurogroup President Jeroen Dijsselbloem.

**France and Germany insisted that it was Cyprus's proposal** to slap a levy on all Cypriot bank savings under an EU bailout deal and appeared to suggest it review the contested plan.

**The Eurozone's total trade deficit stood at 3.9 billion euros** in January, the EU statistics bureau Eurostat said on Monday.

## Eastern Europe

**Morgan Stanley lowered Russia's 2013 growth forecast** to 2.9%, down from the 3.1% it predicted four months ago.

**Russia's annual industrial output** fell 2.1% in February, the State Statistics Services reported.

## North America

**Mexico is committed to maintaining its freely floating exchange rate** and is not currently contemplating any new mechanism to slow strong gains in the peso, deputy finance minister Fernando Aportela said.

**California's jobless rate was unchanged at 9.8%** in January for the second straight month, and that lack of improvement put the Golden State in a tie with Rhode Island for the worst unemployment in the U.S.

## Australasia

**Though the increase in savings since the middle of last decade** and the rise in the Australian dollar had hurt many businesses, they had been good for the overall economy, Reserve Bank of Australia's deputy governor said.

**High-tech goods and services are now worth almost \$23 billion** and Kiwis' spending on high tech goods has increased by \$3 billion in just two years Statistics New Zealand said.

## Oil & Gas News

**Natural gas climbed in New York** on speculation that a cold start to spring will buoy demand for heating fuel.

**West Texas Intermediate oil traded near a one-month high** as tension eased over a bank tax in Cyprus that threatens to worsen Europe's debt crisis. A report today may show U.S. crude supplies rose to the most since June.

## Commodities News

**Gold jumped to a two-week high**, topping \$1,600 an ounce, as concern that Europe's debt crisis will escalate increased the appeal of the metal as a haven. Gold futures for April delivery rose 0.8% to settle at \$1,604.60.

## Currency News

**The Japanese yen's continued depreciation** will likely hit South Korea's automobile, steel and textile industries hard by weakening their competitiveness against Japanese products in the global market, a report said Monday.

**Australia's dollar traded 0.2%** from a five-week high after central bank Deputy Governor Philip Lowe defended a higher exchange rate and savings level, saying they helped stabilize the economy.

Date	Gold	NYMEX Natural Gas (\$/MMBtu)	Brent Oil (\$/bbl)	oil/nat. gas ratio	EUR	GBP	USD	AUD	Indo RUP	YEN	MYS RM	Phil Peso	Thai Baht	SGX Index
16-Mar-13	1,592.10	3.87	109.82	28.38	1.62	1.88	1.25	1.29	7,770	77.02	2.50	32.52	23.70	3,286.05
19-Mar-13	1,603.70	3.88	109.37	28.19	1.62	1.89	1.25	1.30	7,763	75.68	2.51	32.54	23.64	3,256.47
% Change	0.73	0.26	-0.41		-0.58	0.36	0.20	0.10	-0.09	-1.74	0.35	0.05	-0.25	-0.90

# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

20/3/2013

*...A total of 127 import restrictions were imposed on South Korean goods...  
... New Zealand's current account deficit widened...*

## South East Asia

**Domestic investments were the main driver of private investments** last year, accounting for 78% (RM127.6bil) of the total investments approved in 2012, while the remainder 22% (RM34.8bil) came from foreign investments, International Trade and Industry Minister said.

**The World Bank warned Indonesia** of moderate investment growth, and soaring inflation, which might undermine the consumer purchasing power needed to propel the consumption-reliant economy. The World Bank cut its 2013 growth forecast for Indonesia to 6.2% from 6.3%.

**The Indonesia government was contemplating raising the price of subsidized fuel**, but emphasized the discussion would not necessarily lead to an increase, Coordinating Minister for the Economy said.

**The Bureau of Internal Revenue of the Philippines** reported tax collections of P74.52 billion in February, up 8.5% from a year ago level but still short of its P77.12 billion goal.

**Philippines' balance of payments registered a US\$960-million deficit** in February as dollar outflows from the settlement of debts to foreign creditors exceeded inflows.

**The Thai government will seek up to Bt350 billion in loans** for the overhaul of Thailand's water systems before the end of June, Government Spokesman Tossaporn Serirak said.

**Thailand's Cabinet has approved a plan to borrow \$67.6 billion** to build high-speed train lines and other transportation mega-projects over the next seven years, PM Yingluck Shinawatra said Tuesday.

**Viet Nam's exports to some large African countries plunged** in February, the Ministry of Industry and Trade said.

**The State Bank of Viet Nam's governor issued a decision regulating gold bar trading procedures** to prepare for the commodity's first official auction, the deputy governor said.

**Cambodia will sign to receive US\$33.9 million in grant aid from Japan** for three projects in small hydropower dams, healthcare and education, according to a news release from Cambodia's foreign ministry.

## North East Asia

**"There is no quick way to fix an economy that has suffered 15 years of deflation** and that aggressive money printing alone was not the answer", outgoing Bank of Japan Governor Masaaki Shirakawa warned on Tuesday.

**A total of 127 import restrictions, including anti-dumping measures were imposed** on South Korean-made goods as of February this year, compared with 120 cases at the end of last year, according to the data compiled by the Korea International Trade Association.

**South Korea and the Inter-American Development Bank have agreed to expand economic cooperation** in IT, transport, energy and other areas of mutual concerns, the finance ministry said Wednesday.

**Chinese investment overseas soared** in January and February 147% y-o-y to US\$18.39 billion, official data showed Tuesday, more than FDI into the country itself.

**Hong Kong records 2.5% GDP growth in Q4 2012** over a year earlier, compared with 1.4% increase in Q3 of 2012, according to the city's Census and Statistics Department.

**Prices of edible farm produce in 36 major Chinese cities have declined** for four consecutive weeks, new official data show

**Taiwan is considering an increase in its tobacco tax** and health surcharge on cigarettes, as part of its efforts to reduce the smoking population in the country, government officials said Tuesday.

**The Taiwanese government is planning to further raise its solar system installation** from the 130 megawatts set earlier after an increase of 30%, and has introduced a new subsidy program in response to growing calls for adoption of clean energy, the Ministry of Economic Affairs said yesterday.

## Middle East and North Africa

**Trade between Arab countries and Brazil increased 3.26% to nearly \$26 billion** last year from \$25.11 billion in 2011, according to figures released by the Arab-Brazilian Chamber of Commerce.



**Libya's General National Congress approved the 2013 budget** for about 66 billion Libyan Riyals (some 51 billion dollars), the GNC reported.

## Indian Sub-Continent

**India's central bank has cut its main interest rate for the second time** this year, lowering it by 25 basis points in an effort to jumpstart a sharply slowing economy, said the Reserve Bank of India.

**The per capita income of Delhi at current prices increased** from Rs 63,877 in 2004-05 to Rs 2,01,083 in 2012-13, recorded an annual compound growth rate at 15.41%, according to officials.

## Europe

**Fitch affirmed its top 'AAA' credit rating for the European Union**, and said the outlook on the EU's top credit rating is stable.

**European Parliament has approved setting up the Single Supervisory Mechanism (SSM)**, i.e. the single eurozone bank supervisor, Irish Finance Minister Michael Noonan said.

**Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne is to unveil his latest tax and spending plans in the annual budget** that is likely to insist on austerity drive, even though the country is sailing close to another recession.

**The controversial levy on bank savings in Cyprus will not be repeated** in other European countries, Eurogroup chairman Jeroen Dijsselbloem said.

## Eastern Europe

**Russian PPI** rose 0.8% in February after 4 months of falling, the State Statistics Service reported.

## North America

**Canada's factory sector suffered** through another poor month in January, recording a disappointing 0.2% drop in sales that suggests the economy continues to struggle, the Royal Bank of Canada said.

**U.S. housing starts climbed by 0.8%** last month to a 917,000 annualized pace, the Commerce Department reported.

## Australasia

**Consumer spending in February rose 0.2%** in seasonally-adjusted terms, according to the Commonwealth Bank's Business Sales Indicator.

**New Zealand's current account deficit widened more** in the three months to year ended 2012, clocking in at \$10.5 billion for the 2012 calendar year, or 5% of GDP, the Statistics New Zealand said.

**Implementation of the regulatory regime for insurers** is well underway, the Reserve Bank of New Zealand said today.

## Oil & Gas News

**Brent oil futures rose** as much as 0.4% after sliding 1.9% yesterday, the biggest decline since November.

## Commodities News

**Gold is poised to retreat 1.8%** this year as demand may decline if instability in global financial markets eases and consumption drops, Australia's Bureau of Resources and Energy Economics said.

## Currency News

**The euro slid toward** the lowest in almost four months against the dollar after the Cypriot parliament voted down a bank-deposit levy needed to secure a bailout, risking.

**Canada's dollar weakened** a second day against its U.S. peer after Canadian factory sales fell in January.

Date	Gold	NYMEX Natural Gas (\$/MMBtu)	Brent Oil (\$/bbl)	oil/nat. gas ratio	EUR	GBP	USD	AUD	Indo RUP	YEN	MYS RM	Phil Peso	Thai Baht	SGX Index
19-Mar-13	1,603.70	3.88	109.37	28.19	1.62	1.89	1.25	1.30	7,763	75.68	2.51	32.54	23.64	3,256.47
20-Mar-13	1,613.60	3.95	107.92	27.32	1.62	1.89	1.25	1.30	7,768	76.53	2.50	32.55	23.50	3,259.80
% Change	0.62	1.80	-1.33	0.22	-0.15	-0.11	0.12	0.05	1.12	-0.30	0.04	-0.62	0.10	



# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

21/3/2013

*...Philippines is considering establishing a sovereign wealth fund...  
...Myanmar announced the abolition of its U.S. dollar proxy currency...*

## South East Asia

**Malaysia's inflation increases at 1.5%** in February in which the indices for food and non-alcoholic beverages and non-food rose 3.3% and 0.7%, respectively, the Statistics Department said in a statement.

**The fee for electronic payment method will be reduced** come May this year to incentivise businesses and consumers to adopt the more cost effective method, said Bank Negara Malaysia.

**Philippines is considering establishing a sovereign wealth fund** that it can use for various investments, the profits of which can be tapped for various development projects, central bank's governor said.

**Indonesia's fiscal position is generally considered as sound**, in which its temporary realization figure of State Budget (APBN) 2012 deficit is Rp. 146 trillion, the World Bank's chief economist stated.

**The Bank of Thailand will seek tax incentives** to promote the use of debit cards for payments rather than cash withdrawals. Charging debit cards for purchases of products and services will help reduce the use of cash and lower the cost of printing banknotes, BOT's deputy governor said.

**Myanmar announced the abolition of its US dollar proxy currency.** More than US\$30mil worth of Foreign Exchange Certificates would be phased out of existence, Finance Minister Win Shein said in parliament.

**Vietnam's public debt**, which stood at 56.3% and 54.9% of the nation's GDP in 2010 and 2011 respectively, is under control, according to Finance Ministry.

**Vietnamese individuals will be allowed to borrow loans from overseas as of next year**, under an amended Ordinance on Foreign Exchange recently approved by the Standing Committee of the National Assembly.

## North East Asia

**China manufacturing activity expands.** The HSBC Flash China Manufacturing Purchasing Managers Index registered 51.7 for this month, up from a final reading of 50.4 in February.

**Japanese exports fell in February at 2.9%**, according to Ministry of Finance.

**Japan recorded a trade deficit of 777.5 billion yen** (US\$8.1 billion) in February despite the weaker yen as exports of cars and auto parts slipped while imports surged nearly 12%, the Finance Ministry reported.

**South Korea's FDI inflow** came to US\$9 billion in 2012, down 11.9% from \$10.2 billion tallied a year earlier, according to the data compiled by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

**Taiwan's export orders during the first two months of the year hit a record high of US\$66.18 billion**, up 1.1% from last year, the Ministry of Economic Affairs said yesterday.

## Middle East and North Africa

**Egypt on Wednesday invited Indian investments in the country**, and said it also proposes to establish a free economic zone for Indian companies, Egypt's president Mohamed Morsi said.

## Indian Sub-Continent

**Foreign Direct Investment in India grew by 8%** y-o-y to USD 2.15 billion in January after declining two months in a row.

## Europe

**Britain is expected to grow by just 0.6% in 2013, down from forecasted 1.2%**, according to estimates by the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR). Economic growth for 2014 was also cut to 1.8%.

**UK's unemployment rose by 7,000 to 2.52 million between November and January but held at 7.8%**, according to data from the Office for National Statistics.

**EU lawmakers are expected to agree** on Wednesday to bar bankers in Europe from getting bonuses bigger than their salary, introducing the first cap of its kind globally, EU official said.

## Eastern Europe

**Capital outflow from Russia** amounted to US\$6 billion in February, Deputy Economic Minister Andrei Klepach said.

## North America

**U.S. central bank chief Ben Bernanke said the Federal Reserve is monitoring the Cyprus crisis** but, so far, it's not seen as a danger for the United States.

**The Federal Reserve is expected to maintain its resolve** to keep borrowing costs at record lows despite growing signs that the U.S. economy is strengthening.

**Canadian home sales have already dropped more than 10%** from spring 2012, said Scotiabank.

**A sudden \$2.4-billion revision to Canada's nuclear liabilities** has crept up on Finance Minister Jim Flaherty and substantially deepened the deficit for the current fiscal year at a time.

## Australasia

**Bank lending rates have moved in line** with funding costs over the past year, a Reserve Bank of Australia report said.

**New Zealand's economy grew by 2.5% in the year ending December**, figures released Thursday by Statistics New Zealand indicated.

**The Reserve Bank of New Zealand is defending new rules** to deal with a bank collapse and said its policy is nothing like moves to tackle a banking crisis causing chaos in Cyprus, central bank said.

## Oil & Gas News

**Oil prices have gained** after an unexpected decline in US oil inventories. Prices were also strengthened by the Federal Reserve's widely expected move to maintain its stimulus program.

## Commodities News

**Cotton slumped 18% in 2012**, sliding for a second year, as soybeans climbed 17% and corn rose 8%.

## Currency News

**The yen halted yesterday's decline** against the dollar after a report showed Japan's trade deficit narrowed more than forecast.

**Thailand's baht fell** from a 16-year high on concern the central bank will intervene to slow gains that may hurt exports.

Date	Gold	NYMEX Natural Gas (\$/MMBtu)	Brent Oil (\$/bbl)	oil/nat. gas ratio	EUR	GBP	USD	AUD	Indo RUP	YEN	MYS RM	Phil Peso	Thai Baht	SGX Index
20-Mar-13	1,613.60	3.95	107.92	27.32	1.62	1.89	1.25	1.30	7,768	76.53	2.50	32.55	23.50	3,259.80
21-Mar-13	1,609.20	3.95	108.61	27.50	1.61	1.89	1.25	1.30	7,771	75.92	2.50	32.54	23.29	3,269.60
% Change	-0.27	0.00	0.64		-0.38	0.14	0.22	0.15	0.04	-0.79	0.02	-0.02	-0.88	0.30

# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

23/3/2013

*...Jakarta residents will pay less in land and building tax...  
...China's state-owned enterprises saw their combined profits expand...*

## South East Asia

**Malaysia's international reserves** stood at US\$140.6 billion as of March 15, Bank Negara Malaysia said.

**The tax collection target of RM130bil set for 2013** was based on the government's confidence on the ability of the Inland Revenue Board, said Second Finance Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Husni Hanadzlah.

**The Malaysia government is working on further liberalising** the services sector sub-sectors, said Minister of International Trade and Industry.

**The Philippines' Balance of Payments** stood at US\$3.4 billion for Q4 2012. This rose by more than seven-fold compared to the same period a year ago.

**The Philippines' outstanding external debt approved/registered** by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas stood at US\$60.3 billion as of end-2012, lower by US\$1.4 billion from the US\$61.7 billion level in Q3 2012.

**The current account posted a surplus of \$7.1 billion** in 2012, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported.

**Manila is widening the tax base** to drive up government revenue to help cut reliance on borrowing to fund expenditure, Finance Secretary said.

**Jakarta residents will pay less in land and building tax** (PBB) this year compared to previous years, yet the city administration will see an increase in tax income, an official said. A new policy in effect from this year means the tax goes straight into the city coffers instead of being shared with the central government as in previous years.

**Viet Nam's trade surplus** so far this year reached US\$700 million by March 15, according to statistics from the General Department of Customs.

## North East Asia

**China's state-owned enterprises saw their combined profits expand** 9.7% y-o-y to 306.01 billion yuan (48.8 billion U.S. dollars) in the first two months of 2013, the Ministry of Finance announced Friday.

**Japan's central bank governor determined to chart** a much more aggressive monetary policy in the battle to reverse 15 years of deflation, BOJ said.

**South Korea's new finance minister, Hyun Oh-seok** said Friday that his ministry will come up with a package of measures next week to boost the economy's recovery and help the livelihoods of the people.

**Taiwan's unemployment rate rose to 4.24%** last month as the number of jobseekers increased, ending three months of decline, the Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics said yesterday.

## Middle East and North Africa

**Egypt's central bank raised** its overnight deposit rate and overnight lending rate by 50 basis points to 9.75% and 10.75% respectively, in an effort to rein in inflation and stabilize an economy that recently failed to secure a much-needed international bailout.

## Indian Sub-Continent

**Indian government is likely to offer short-term incentives**, simplify procedures and reduce transaction costs to boost exports, which are likely to fall short of the target this fiscal and further widen the trade deficit, said Board of Trade.

## Europe

**The U.K. economy shrank** 0.3% in the fourth quarter of 2012, and Osborne said in his budget statement that renewed turmoil in the euro area may damage recovery prospects.

**The European Union, Germany and leading bankers have all urged the Cypriot parliament** to quickly find a way of raising the 5.8bn euros needed to qualify for an international bailout.

## Eastern Europe

**Russian oil major Rosneft has signed an agreement on the main conditions of prepaid oil supplies to China** and, within the framework of the oil agreement, Rosneft signed a loan agreement with the China Development Bank, RIA Novosti reported on Friday.

## North America

**The number of green jobs in the economy grew** from 3.2 million in 2010 to 3.4 million in 2011. That's an

increase of one-tenth of a percent of the nation's jobs, from 2.5% to 2.6%, the Bureau of Labour Statistics said.

**The Canada federal government released its stay-the-course budget Thursday**, with \$900 million in new spending and the projected \$6.6-billion drop in the deficit for 2014.

## Australasia

**More than 600,000 Australians** with disabilities are living below the poverty line, according to new figures from the Australian Council of Social Service.

**New Zealand's economy took a leap forward** late last year, posting a 1.5% growth spurt, with Canterbury's rebuild playing its part in the stronger than expected economic activity, Statistics New Zealand said.

## Oil & Gas News

**Oil prices have climbed** amid optimism that struggling Cyprus would secure a last-minute bailout deal and that growth in the US economy was picking up.

## Commodities News

**Gold traders are becoming more bullish** as concern mounts that a worsening of Europe's debt crisis will spur demand for a protection of wealth.

## Currency News

**The ringgit gained** against the US dollar at close today, fueled by buying interest to fulfill commercial demand for the local note.

**The pound fell** from a five-week high against the euro as the bond markets of Europe's most indebted nations rallied.

Date	Gold	NYMEX Natural Gas (\$/MMBtu)	Brent Oil (\$/bbl)	oil/nat. gas ratio	EUR	GBP	USD	AUD	Indo RUP	YEN	MYS RM	Phil Peso	Thai Baht	SGX Index
21-Mar-13	1,609.20	3.95	108.61	27.50	1.61	1.89	1.25	1.30	7,771	75.92	2.50	32.54	23.29	3,269.60
23-Mar-13	1,608.55	3.93	107.66	27.39	1.61	1.90	1.25	1.30	7,798	76.01	2.49	32.68	23.40	3,258.57
% Change	-0.04	-0.51	-0.87		0.09	0.40	-0.23	0.25	0.35	0.11	-0.22	0.41	0.45	-0.34

# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

26/3/2013

*...EU finance ministers have approved a new €10 billion bailout plan for Cyprus...  
...Financial assets held by Japanese households increased by 3.1%...*

## South East Asia

**Singapore's inflation in February rose** to 4.9%, compared with 3.6% for January, the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) and the Ministry of Trade and Industry jointly announced.

**Malaysia's construction industry is expected to grow** by 11.2% this year, driven by various projects under the Economic Transformation Programme initiated by the Government last year.

**The national government of Philippines posted a deficit of P19.531 billion in January 2013**, which is 23% higher than the same period last year. In total, the government collected P138.368 billion in revenues and spent P157.899 billion.

**Philippines' inflation for March** could fall between 2.8% and 3.7%, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor said on Monday.

**The State Bank of Vietnam will trim** the refinance rate by one percentage point to 8% and bring down the discount rate by one point to 6%, effective today, it said in a statement.

**Viet Nam exported** US\$11 billion worth of goods in March and imported US\$11.3 billion in the same period, according to the General Statistics Office.

**Lao PDR is considering to adopt a roadmap** to simplify and harmonise trade services, as part of efforts to facilitate trade and improve the business and investment climate, Deputy Minister of Industry and Commerce said.

**Myanmar needs Japanese investments** as well as capacity-building support as the Southeast Asian nation faces the massive challenge of rapid economic reforms, leading figures in the country's business community said at a recent symposium in Tokyo.

## North East Asia

**In January and February, the total sales area for commercial housing jumped** 49.5% y-o-y, while real estate investment increased 22.8% y-o-y, data from the National Statistics Bureau of China showed.

**China's local governments have earned at least US\$4.8 trillion** in profits from appropriation of land from farmers as the country urbanizes on a massive scale.

**Financial assets held by Japanese households** at the end of December increased 3.1% from a year earlier to 1,546.71 trillion yen, the Bank of Japan said.

**The South Korean government plans** to significantly increase its support for the country's SMEs in an effort to create jobs and also strengthen the country's overall competitiveness, the commerce ministry said.

**South Korea's GDP grew** at an annual rate of 2% in 2012 after rising 3.7% in the prior year, the Bank of Korea said in a statement on Tuesday.

**South Korea will launch a US\$1.35 billion fund** this week to provide debt relief for more than half a million people unable to repay loans, according to South Korea's Financial Services Commission.

**Taiwan's industrial production** index for the January-to-February period this year expanded 3.24% y-o-y, driven by continually increasing output of electronics components, as well as petroleum and coal products, the Ministry of Economic Affairs said yesterday.

## Indian Sub-Continent

**India has move to cut interest rates** on certain small savings schemes will not hit collections in such schemes, the finance minister said.

## Europe

**Eurozone finance ministers have approved a new €10 billion bailout plan for Cyprus**, putting an end to uncertainties over the fate of the Mediterranean island country in the euro area, the Eurogroup head said on Monday.

## Eastern Europe

**The Russian federal government is investing** 19 billion rubles (\$612 million) in Sochi's sea port to prepare it for the Olympics, said Viktor Vovk, deputy head of the Federal Sea and River Transportation Agency reported.

## North America

**Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke on Monday defended** the central bank's aggressive easing of monetary policy, saying while it was aimed at bolstering

the economic recovery; it was helping other countries as well.

**The Canadian government will raise tariffs** on goods from many developing nations may have as much to do with fighting currency manipulation, the government said in the budget 2013.

## Australasia

**Australia has ruled out making any changes** to the mining tax but has conceded it could have been handled better, Federal Resources Minister Gary said.

**The trade surplus was \$414 million** in February from a revised deficit of \$287 million in the previous month, according to Statistics New Zealand.

**The value of exported goods rose \$290 million (8.0%)** to \$3.9 billion in February 2013, compared with February 2012, Statistics New Zealand said today.

## Oil & Gas News

**Oil prices have gained** on a rescue deal for the crisis in Cyprus, which had threatened to spill over and further harm the weak Eurozone economy. The New York benchmark, West Texas Intermediate for May delivery, finished up \$US1.10 to \$US94.81 a barrel on Monday.

## Commodities News

**China's iron ore demand is expected to rise** by 50 million tonnes in 2013, but it will not be enough to soak up a supply glut on the world market, the country's top economic planning agency said.

## Currency News

**The euro lost more than 1%** against the dollar on Monday after scoring early gains from the 11th hour, 10 billion euro EU-International Monetary fund rescue deal for Cyprus.

**The Australian dollar traded 0.1%** from its highest in two months as traders pared bets on further interest rates cuts by the Reserve Bank.

Date	Gold	NYMEX Natural Gas (\$/MMBtu)	Brent Oil (\$/bbl)	oil/nat. gas ratio	EUR	GBP	USD	AUD	Indo RUP	YEN	MYS RM	Phil Peso	Thai Baht	SGX Index
23-Mar-13	1,608.55	3.93	107.66	27.39	1.61	1.90	1.25	1.30	7,798	76.01	2.49	32.68	23.29	3,258.57
26-Mar-13	1,601.55	3.9	107.92	27.67	1.62	1.90	1.25	1.30	7,817	76.14	2.48	32.77	23.49	3,282.70
% Change	-0.44	-0.76	0.24		0.55	0.06	-0.33	-0.14	0.24	0.17	-0.42	0.28	0.85	0.74



# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

27/3/2013

*...India's overall debt has surpassed the annual budget...  
...China's public expenditure jumped 15.7%...*

## South East Asia

**Singapore's economy may shrink in Q1**, after manufacturing output fell a startling 16.6% in February, Economic Development Board said.

**Malaysia's aerospace industry grew** 9.4% last year to RM30.3bil compared with 2011 and contributed 3.23% to the country's GDP, Malaysian Industry Government Group stated..

**Philippine merchandise imports contracted in January** by 8% y-o-y to \$4.725 billion as shipments of electronic products slowed down.

**The Philippines is not the Asia's worst performer** in terms of human development and attaining the Millennium Development Goals, according to the National Economic and Development Authority. The 2013 Human Development Report showed that the Philippines ranked 114 among 187 countries.

**Vietnam's GDP rose** 4.89% in the first quarter of this year compared to the same period in 2012, the Ministry of Planning and Investment announced Tuesday.

## North East Asia

**The Japanese government approved a ¥13.2 trillion (US\$139.4 billion) stopgap budget** for fiscal 2013 starting April 1 to fund its spending for 50 days, as the initial budget for the year is unlikely to be enacted until May,.

**China's public expenditure jumped** 15.7% y-o-y in the first two months, more than double the rate of the 7.2% increase in government income, said Finance Minister.

**China will cut the retail prices** of gasoline by 310 yuan (\$49.43) per ton and diesel by 300 yuan per ton starting Thursday, the country's top economic planner said Wednesday.

**Combined debts of households, companies and the government** were 3,607.3 trillion won (3.25 trillion U.S. dollars) as of the end of 2012, according to the Bank of Korea.

**South Korea's top 30 companies paid corporate tax** worth 8.485 trillion won (US\$7.64 billion) last year, down 10 billion won from 2011, according to data compiled by Ceoscore.

**South Korea will beef up its monitoring of business activities** underway in the underground economy to help raise more tax revenue for the new government in need of money to finance its campaign promises for expanded welfare programs, said South Korea Custom Agency.

## Middle East and North Africa

**MENA Tax Conference 2013 held in Hong Kong, lowering of corporate tax rates** by MENA governments is expected to increase the flow of FDI, according to experts at Ernst & Young.

**More than 12,000 unemployed Jordanians** have been secured jobs through a campaign launched earlier this year, the Labour Ministry said.

## Indian Sub-Continent

**India's overall debt has surpassed the annual budget** to reach Rs 1, 64,085 crore, the Comptroller and Auditor General said.

## Europe

**The European Commission aims ultimately to ensure that taxpayers no longer have to bear** the brunt of bailing out stricken lenders, a spokeswoman for EU Financial Markets Commissioner Michel Barnier stated.

**Italy's financial system has shown impressive strength** but the ongoing recession remains a major threat to its banks, the IMF said.

**Credit rating agency, Fitch has put Cyprus' credit rating on watch for a possible downgrade** as the restructuring of its banking system would hurt the economy and public finances despite an EU-IMF bailout.

## Eastern Europe

**Diamond mining in Russia** fell by 0.6% to 34.9 million carats in 2012, the Finance Ministry said Tuesday. Diamond mining increased 7.4% to US\$2.87 billion and price increased to US\$82.28, from US\$76.12 per carat.



**Several Russian companies have officially filed complaints with the government** claiming that their accumulated funds held in Cyprus have been frozen, First Deputy Prime Minister Igor Shuvalov said Tuesday. According to the companies, the funds were not deposits but were accumulated in the accounts to make certain transactions.

## North America

**U.S durable goods orders jumped** 5.7% as demand for transportation equipment rebounded strongly, the Commerce Department said on Tuesday.

## Australasia

**Reserve Bank of Australia governor said the welter of reforms** set in process since the global financial crisis were already having unintended consequences and adopting any more could cause regulatory "overload".

**New Zealand's research and development spend rose** to \$2.6 billion last year but remains far below many other OECD countries as a proportion of GDP, Statistics New Zealand data out today.

**At the end of last year the average New Zealander earned** 26.3% - or \$12,800 - less than the average Australian, the latest Roy Morgan state of the nation report revealed.

**New Zealand's central bank is requiring banks** to carry more capital cover on their balance sheets for high loan-to-value ratio mortgages, said Reserve Bank of New Zealand.

## Oil & Gas News

**The price of oil eased** back Wednesday after a strong day of gains propelled by U.S. economic data suggesting a sustained recovery in the world's largest economy.

## Commodities News

**Corn supplies in the U.S. are shrinking** at the fastest pace in almost four decades as improving demand from ethanol refiners drains reserves already diminished by drought.

## Currency News

**The yen dropped** against most of its major peers as traders bet Bank of Japan governor Haruhiko Kuroda will add to stimulus measures as early as next week in a bid to end deflation.

Date	Gold	NYMEX Natural Gas (\$/MMBtu)	Brent Oil (\$/bbl)	oil/nat. gas ratio	EUR	GBP	USD	AUD	Indo Rup	YEN	MYS RM	Phil Peso	Thai Baht	SGX Index
26-Mar-13	1,601.55	3.9	107.92	27.67	1.62	1.90	1.25	1.30	7,817	76.14	2.48	32.77	23.49	3,282.70
27-Mar-13	1,594.46	4	109.26	27.32	1.60	1.88	1.24	1.30	7,854	76.01	2.49	32.98	23.65	3,310.50
% Change	-0.44	2.56	1.24	-1.56	-0.74	-0.34	-0.25	0.48	-0.17	0.42	0.64	0.68	0.85	

# Economic & Financial News

Research & International Division

28/3/2013

*...Britain's GDP contracted by 0.3% in Q4...  
...Kuwait posted a record provisional budget surplus...*

## South East Asia

**Around 800,000 Singaporean HDB households** can expect to receive \$77 million worth of Service & Conservancy Charges rebates in 2013. These rebates were announced during Budget 2013 to help households cope with increases in the cost of living.

**Total bank lending in Singapore increased** 2.1% in February from January, according to figures from the Monetary Authority of Singapore

**Prices of private resale homes dropped** 1.4% in February from January, after rising 0.8% month-on-month in January, according to the latest Singapore Residential Price Index.

**The Philippines government's outstanding debt increased** by 6.8%, or P341 billion, to P5.334 trillion at end-January 2013, the Bureau of Treasury said.

**Malaysia's trade with Australia**, which is Malaysia's eight largest trading partner, increased by 13.6% to RM43.72bil in 2012, accounting for 3.3% of Malaysia's total trade.

## North East Asia

**Japan's economy has stopped weakening** and should show signs of recovery by midyear, the newly appointed central bank governor said Thursday.

**South Korea, Japan and China made small but significant progress** in their first round of talks aimed at signing a three-way free trade agreement, laying down a set of "detailed rules" on how future negotiations will proceed, Seoul's trade ministry said Thursday.

## Middle East and North Africa

**Kuwait's budget** of the FY 2012/2013 is expected to produce a large surplus as high as KD 14 billion, despite higher government spending levels backed by the growing oil revenues, the National Bank of Kuwait said in a report.

**Kuwait posted a record provisional budget surplus** of 17.2 billion dinars (\$60.2 billion) in the first 10 months of the fiscal year on high oil price, government data showed Wednesday.

**Qatar's real GDP** was up 13% in 2011 versus 16.7% in 2010 calculated at the constant prices of 2004, according to revised estimated figures released by the Qatar Statistics Authority.

## Indian Sub-Continent

**India's fiscal deficit** during the April-February period was Rs 5.07 trillion (\$93.23 billion), or 97.4% of the budgeted full fiscal year 2012/13 target, government data showed on Thursday.

## Europe

**Business and consumer confidence in the eurozone slipped back in March** after recent gains, the European Commission said. Its key confidence index in March fell 1.1 points y-o-y to 90 points, reflecting a downturn in the manufacturing and service sectors.

**Britain's GDP contracted by 0.3% in Q4 2012**, the Office for National Statistics said in a statement.

**Major British banks must reinforce their capital by £25 billion (US\$38.8 billion) by the end of 2013** after underestimating the potential losses and fines they face over the next three years, the Bank of England said.

**The Belgian economy faces a second year of near zero growth**, hampered by a loss of competitive edge and structural problems as the government cuts back spending, the IMF said.

## Eastern Europe

**Russia's foreign debt fell** 0.06% to US\$50.616 billion in February, the Ministry said.

## North America

**Consumer prices in Canada jumped** by a surprisingly strong 1.2% in February, Statistics Canada said.

## Australasia

**Five years on from the global financial crisis**, Australian households are still refusing to open their purse strings, sensibly choosing to save and pay off debt instead, the Reserve Bank said yesterday.

**The Reserve Bank of Australia has sounded** a warning bell about declining credit standards in the top-end corporate market due to strong competition from Asian-owned banks.

**Statistics New Zealand said that new housing activity**, including apartments, has risen by 53% since hitting a low in March 2011.

## Oil & Gas News

**The price of oil rose** near the end of trading Wednesday, and has now gone up more than \$4 in less than a week.

## Commodities News

**Gold headed for a second quarterly loss** as holdings in exchange-traded products fell by the most on record and the dollar climbed on prospects for a U.S. recovery, eroding the metal's allure as an alternative investment.

## Currency News

**A closely watched measure of consumer prices shows** the strong Australian dollar is keeping inflation subdued, giving the Reserve Bank room to cut the official interest rate.

**The ringgit traded higher** against the US dollar in early trade today amid renewed concerns over the Euro debt crisis, dealers said.

Date	Gold	NYMEX Natural Gas (\$/MMBtu)	Brent Oil (\$/bbl)	oil/nat. gas ratio	EUR	GBP	USD	AUD	Indo RUP	YEN	MYS RM	Phil Peso	Thai Baht	SGX Index
27-Mar-13	1,594.46	4	109.26	27.32	1.60	1.88	1.24	1.30	7,854	76.01	2.49	32.98	23.65	3,310.50
28-Mar-13	1,604.78	4.1	109.96	26.82	1.60	1.88	1.24	1.30	7,827	76.28	2.49	32.98	23.60	3,312.69
% Change	0.65	2.50	0.64		-0.04	-0.02	0.16	0.27	-0.35	0.35	0.05	0.01	-0.20	0.07