

# GLOBAL WEEKLY ECONOMIC NEWS IN THE ADVANCED ECONOMIES

(19 April 2021 – 23 April 2021)

Countries	Highlights
<p><b>US</b></p> <p><b>US businesses are growing faster than ever as the economy reawakens</b></p>	<p>The US economy's March rebound may have only been a warm-up. Two popular gauges of business activity swung even higher in preliminary April readings, the analytics firm IHS Markit said. The services activity index leaped to 63.1 from 60.4, indicating the fastest level of expansion since data collection began in 2009. The firm's manufacturing index rose to 60.6 from 59.1, also a record. Markit's composite index soared to an all-time high of 62.2 from 59.7. The broad improvements were largely driven by the loosening of economic restrictions and strong demand from consumers. Vaccinations also contributed to stronger activity at service businesses. Manufacturers were able to accelerate production despite supply-chain problems. The surge in activity and supply-chain pressures led input costs to climb at the fastest rate since 2008.</p> <p><i>(Source: Business Insider, 23 April 2021)</i></p>
<p><b>UK</b></p> <p><b>Surging demand signals strong rebound for UK economy</b></p>	<p>The UK economy on Friday showed signs of rebounding strongly from the coronavirus crisis as companies reported surging demand and official data highlighted consumers splashing the cash as lockdown measures eased. The flash, or interim, composite purchasing managers' index published by the research group IHS Markit and the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply rose to 60 in April, from 56.4 in the previous month and the highest level since November 2013. Retail sales in Great Britain rose 5.4% in March compared with the previous month. This was a much stronger reading than the 1.5 per cent forecast by economists polled by Reuters and followed an expansion in February, even though non-essential stores have been shut since early January.</p> <p><i>(Source: Financial Times, 23 April 2021)</i></p>
<p><b>JAPAN</b></p> <p><b>Japan PM's push for higher minimum wage faces uphill battle amid pandemic</b></p>	<p>Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga's plan to boost the minimum wage is facing stiff opposition from Japan's small and midsize firms, worried about their survival during Covid-19, and from lawmakers in his own ruling party amid concerns of a political backlash. The government aims to bring Japan's minimum wage, among the lowest in the Group of Seven (G-7) economies, to 1,000 yen (USD12.30) an hour from 902 yen "more quickly". But smaller firms, which employ seven out of ten workers in Japan, have lobbied to scrap the plans. Japanese policymakers have long considered wage hikes an important tool to boost consumer spending and fuel inflation, which remains elusive in Japan despite years of ultra-loose monetary policy. In theory, higher minimum wages could also help garner political support as it boosts people's purchasing power.</p> <p><i>(Source: Business Times, 23 April 2021)</i></p>
<p><b>CHINA</b></p> <p><b>China's crude oil imports from Saudi up 8.8% y/y in March, UAE shipments jump</b></p>	<p>China's crude oil imports from top supplier Saudi Arabia rose 8.8% in March from a year earlier, driven by strong demand and as shipments delayed due to a port congestion finally arrived. Imports from the United Arab Emirates also rose again, up 86%, as some Iranian barrels were believed to have slipped in. Shipments from Saudi Arabia were 7.84 million tonnes, equivalent to 1.85 million barrels per day (bpd). That was higher than 1.7 million bpd a year earlier, but below imports of 1.94 million bpd in February. Saudi Arabia retained its position as China's biggest crude oil supplier for a seventh consecutive month. Ports at China's oil refining hub Shandong experienced congestion for a few weeks over January and February, slowing oil arrivals.</p> <p><i>(Source: Reuters, 20 April 2021)</i></p>