



SME Corp. Malaysia
1 MAY 2026

20 APRIL 2026

30 APRIL 2026

FTSE BURSA MALAYSIA	1,702.30	↑	1,722.02
CURRENCY; USD 1 =	RM3.95	↓	RM3.97
BRENT CRUDE OIL (USD PER BARREL)	USD95.48	↑	USD108.17

Source: Bursa Malaysia, Bank Negara Malaysia & Bloomberg

ECONOMICS & MSME NEWS

20 APRIL 2026 – 1 MAY 2026

GLOBAL ECONOMIC NEWS IN ADVANCED ECONOMIES

China's Industrial Profit Growth Quickens Even as Iran War Heightens Risks

China's industrial profits increased 15.8% year-on-year in March, the fastest in six months, supported by a stronger first quarter as GDP growth reached 5%. However, the recovery remains uneven, with weak exports, softer retail sales and cooling industrial output despite an end to producer price deflation. AI-related industries posted strong gains, while consumer sectors like premium liquor remained under pressure from weak demand. Policy efforts to reduce intense price competition are expected to support margins, though improvements are gradual. External risks from the Middle East conflict are adding uncertainty to global demand and supply chains. China's industrial sector shows resilience, but underlying fragility persists. Growth is increasingly split between high-tech and consumer industries.

Source: CNA, 27 April 2026

PM Takaichi: Japan Should Keep Economy Running Amid Crisis

Japan's Prime Minister, Sanae Takaichi said that the country's economic and social activities should continue despite growing energy pressures linked to the Middle East conflict. She noted that recent government advice for households and businesses to reduce energy use reflects global fuel supply uncertainty. She rejected any need for emergency shutdown-style measures at this stage. Instead, she emphasised that the government's priority is to maintain stability while managing energy-related risks. Japan remains highly dependent on crude oil imports from the Middle East, making it vulnerable to global energy fluctuations. In response, authorities have already released strategic oil reserves twice, with the possibility of further releases if necessary. The government is also diversifying oil supplies and boosting reserves with strong budget support.

Source: News.AZ, 27 April 2026

UK Economy Set for GBP 35 Billion Hit from Middle East Energy Crisis, Think Tank Says

The UK economic think tank NIESR has warned that a Middle East energy crisis could reduce the UK economy by around GBP35 billion over the next two years. It said even in a best-case scenario, the conflict would weaken growth and add to inflation pressures. A prolonged disruption could even push the UK into recession in the second half of this year. The Bank of England is expected to hold rates at 3.75% this week but may raise them to 4% in July. In a more severe scenario, interest rates could rise as high as 5.25%. UK economic growth is forecast to slow to 0.9% in 2026 compared with 1.4% in 2025. Inflation is expected to peak at 4.1% next January before easing towards 2% only by 2028. Overall, higher energy costs are expected to weaken household incomes and leave the economy materially smaller than previously forecast.

Source: AOL Media LLC, 29 April 2026

Core Inflation Rate Hit 3.2% in March as First-quarter Growth Disappointed at 2%

Core inflation in the US increased to 3.2% in March, its highest since November 2023, while headline inflation reached 3.5% amid surging energy costs linked to geopolitical tensions. US GDP grew at an annualised 2% in Q1 2026, slightly below forecasts but improved from the previous quarter, supported by government spending and continued AI-related investment. Initial jobless claims fell to 189,000, the lowest since 1969, indicating an exceptionally tight labour market. Goods inflation climbed 1.4% while services rose more modestly, reflecting uneven price pressures across sectors. Consumer spending weakened as higher prices reduced real purchasing power, particularly for goods. Overall, the economy reflects a "split-screen" dynamic between strong high-tech activity and pressure on middle-income households from persistent inflation.

Source: CNBC, 30 April 2026

MALAYSIA ECONOMIC NEWS

Malaysia Q1 Trade Hits Record RM789.85 billion, Led by E&E Exports

Malaysia's trade performance reached a historic high in Q1 2026, with total trade rising 10.4% year-on-year to RM789.85 billion. Exports grew 12.7% to RM426.53 billion, while imports increased 7.7% to RM363.31 billion. This resulted in a trade surplus of RM63.22 billion for the quarter. Growth was mainly driven by manufactured goods, particularly electrical and electronic (E&E) products and optical and scientific equipment. Mining products, including metalliferous ores and metal scrap, also contributed to the expansion. In March alone, trade increased 9.3% to RM272.95 billion, with exports and imports both recording strong gains. The country maintained a 71-month consecutive trade surplus, reaching RM24.55 billion in March. Exports to major partners such as China, the US and Taiwan showed strong growth, while shipments to several free trade partners also improved. Despite global trade uncertainties and geopolitical tensions, Malaysia's trade outlook remains positive with continued growth expected in 2026. Bank Negara Malaysia projects exports to grow by 8.6% and imports by 9%, reflecting sustained domestic and external demand. The World Trade Organization also expects modest global merchandise trade growth of 1.9% in 2026.

Source: New Straits Times, 20 April 2026

Malaysia's Producer Price Index Rises

1.1% in March

Malaysia's Producer Price Index (PPI) increased 1.1% year-on-year in March 2026, reversing February's decline, mainly driven by higher global commodity prices. The rebound was led by the mining sector, which surged 26.5% following a sharp increase in crude petroleum extraction. Rising oil prices, linked to geopolitical tensions, pushed Brent crude to USD103.69 per barrel, while palm oil prices also strengthened. Utilities recorded gains, but manufacturing and agriculture continued to decline, weighing on overall performance. Despite the March improvement, PPI remained in contraction for Q1 2026, down 1.7% year-on-year. On a monthly basis, PPI increased 4.1% in March, supported by broad-based sectoral gains. Globally, producer prices also increased in major economies including the US, Japan, China and Thailand. Overall, higher energy costs were the key driver of upward price pressures across regions.

Source: The Star, 27 April 2026

Inflation Eases in 2025

Malaysia's inflation eased to 1.4% in 2025 from 1.8% in 2024, supported by a stronger ringgit, steady household spending and government subsidies including RON95 fuel. The rate remained within Bank Negara Malaysia and the Finance Ministry's projected range of 1% to 2%. Key price increases were seen in housing, utilities, health, recreation, transport and household maintenance, while personal care, insurance, restaurants, education and food & beverages recorded higher rises. Information & communication declined, along with clothing and footwear prices. Inflation peaked at 1.7% in January before easing to 1.1% in June, driven by slower food and housing costs. Core inflation increased to 2.0%, led by services such as personal care, food services, insurance and hospitality. State-wise, Johor recorded the highest inflation at 2.0% while Kelantan had the lowest at 0.3%. Overall, ASEAN inflation ranged widely from -0.3% to 7.7%.

Source: Bernama, 30 April 2026

Malaysia's Official Reserve Assets at USD126.6 Billion as at End-march

Malaysia's official reserve assets stood at USD126.6 billion as at the end of March 2026, according to Bank Negara Malaysia, with additional foreign currency assets of USD69 million. Foreign currency reserves totalled USD110.8 billion under the International Monetary Fund SDDS framework, comprising securities and deposits, including holdings placed with other central banks and international institutions. Gold reserves were valued at USD6.41 billion, while Malaysia's IMF reserve position amounted to USD1.26 billion. Net short forward positions stood at USD23.2 billion, reflecting liquidity management in the domestic market. Projected foreign inflows of USD3.01 billion over the next 12 months were excluded from the official reserves figure. The only contingent outflow was USD846.4 million in government-guaranteed foreign currency debt due within one year. The central bank also does not engage in foreign currency options against the ringgit. Overall, the data indicates that Malaysia's international reserves remain usable, stable and adequately positioned.

Source: New Straits Times, 30 April 2026

MSME NEWS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

SINGAPORE

GXS Bank, Funding Societies Offer Property-backed SME Financing in Singapore

GXS Bank has collaborated with Funding Societies to launch the GXS Biz Property-backed Loan, a financing solution designed to provide SMEs in Singapore with access to up to S\$2 million. The facility is tailored for business owners holding residential or commercial property, enabling them to monetise these illiquid assets into working capital for expansion, operational needs, or urgent business opportunities. By integrating GXS Bank's ecosystem strength, supported by its affiliations with Grab and Singtel, with Funding Societies' proven capabilities in digital lending and structured finance, the initiative seeks to broaden access to flexible and efficient funding. The partnership underscores GXS Bank's commitment to supporting fintech collaboration while empowering SMEs to navigate economic uncertainties with greater agility and confidence. The loan will be introduced in phases, initially targeting existing customers of both platforms and businesses operating within the Grab and Singtel ecosystems, including merchants, partners and service providers, before expanding to a wider SME base.

Source: Fintech News, 27 April 2026

INDONESIA

Minister: The hikes of Non-subsidised Fuel Price Not Affecting MSMEs

Indonesia's Minister of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises, Maman Abdurrahman, stated that recent increases in non-subsidised fuel prices are not expected to affect MSMEs, as most businesses rely on government-subsidised fuels such as diesel, Peralite, and 3kg LPG, whose prices remain unchanged. He emphasised that maintaining these subsidies is a key government policy, particularly amid global uncertainty linked to the Middle East conflict. As a result, MSMEs are largely insulated from the impact of rising global oil prices. However, he acknowledged that businesses are facing cost pressures from rising plastic prices, driven by disruptions in naphtha supply from the Middle East. To address this, the government is coordinating with the Ministry of Trade to diversify supply sources to regions such as India, Africa, and the United States. The price hikes, implemented by Pertamina on 18 April, saw significant increases in non-subsidised fuels like Pertamina Turbo, Dexlite, and Pertamina Dex. Despite this, subsidised fuel prices, including Peralite and diesel, remain stable, helping to shield MSMEs from direct cost impacts. Overall, the government's subsidy policy continues to play a crucial role in sustaining MSME resilience amid external economic pressures.

Source: ANTARA, 27 April 2026

PHILIPPINES

Quezon City Taps TikTok Shop to Expand MSME Market Reach

The Quezon City government has partnered with TikTok Shop to support micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in expanding their market reach through digital platforms. Around 300 business owners and staff participated in the Unlad Lokal Roadshow Caravan, where they were introduced to platform-driven selling techniques, including TikTok's "Yellow Basket" feature for direct product promotion and sales. Conducted in collaboration with the Quezon City Small Business and Cooperatives Development and Promotions Office and the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry-Quezon City, the programme provided hands-on training in e-commerce, digital marketing and live selling. Participants were guided on setting up accounts and optimising platform tools, with tailored focus on sellers, service providers and content creators. The programme also enabled real-time onboarding, allowing participants to immediately enhance their online presence and expand their customer base. To date, the initiative has conducted 130 training sessions, benefiting more than 6,000 participants and supporting MSME digital transformation.

Source: The Manila Times, 2 May 2026