



Tuesday, 19th March 2024

IMF is lending near record \$150bn to counter debt and wars

The International Monetary Fund is lending near a record amount to almost 100 countries, evidence of its growing role as a backstop against the financial and political dangers of the post-pandemic world. Primarily because of surging borrowing costs and conflicts, the IMF has had to put out more economic fires, including major blazes in Ukraine, Egypt and elsewhere in Africa as well as in Argentina and Pakistan. (www.bloomberg.com 18/03/24)

Eurozone trade surplus rises in January

The euro area trade surplus increased in January as exports increased amid falling imports, Eurostat reported Monday. The trade surplus rose to a seasonally adjusted surplus of €28.1bn in Jan. from €14.3bn in Dec. Exports increased 2.1% on month, while imports decreased 4.0% in Jan. On an unadjusted basis, the trade balance showed a surplus of €11.4bn in Jan. (www.rttnews.com 18/03/24)

Eurozone inflation softens to 2.6% as estimated

Eurozone inflation softened as estimated in February largely reflecting the decline in energy prices, final data from Eurostat showed on Monday. The harmonized index of consumer prices, or HICP posted an annual increase of 2.6% after rising 2.8% in Jan. The rate matched the flash estimate published on March 1. (www.rttnews.com 18/03/24)

Hedge funds shake up the Eurozone's \$10tr government bond market

Hedge funds are piling into the euro zone's \$10 trillion government bond market, scenting opportunities as funding needs surge and the European Central Bank retreats. The funds are buying a large share of government debt sales, providing a source of much-needed capital, traders and officials say. (www.reuters.com 19/03/24)

BOJ raises rates for first time in 17 years

The Bank of Japan raised its interest rates for the first time in nearly 2 decades and became the world's last central bank to end negative rates amid signs that inflation is strengthening. The BoJ Policy Board, led by Governor Kazuo Ueda, decided in a 7-2 vote to raise the overnight interest rate around 0 to 0.1% from minus 0.1%. The central bank also decided to end its yield curve control, or YCC, policy that capped the interest on the 10-year Japanese government bonds. (www.rttnews.com 19/03/24)

Australia signals it's done hiking rates, sending currency lower

Australia's central bank signaled it's done tightening monetary policy after leaving interest rates at a 12-year high, sparking a selloff in the currency and a rally in bonds. The Reserve Bank held its cash rate at 4.35% for a third straight meeting on Tuesday and scrapped any reference to possible further increases. (www.bloomberg.com 19/03/24)

Canadian inflation rate unexpectedly eases to 2.8% in February

Canada's annual inflation rate in February unexpectedly cooled to 2.8%, its slowest pace since June, and core inflation measures eased to more-than two-year lows, data showed on Tuesday, raising expectations of a mid-year rate cut. Analysts polled by Reuters had forecast inflation to accelerate to 3.1% from 2.9% in Jan. (www.reuters.com 19/03/24)

Malaysia trade surplus shrinks to MYR 10.9bn

The Malaysian trade surplus decreased in Feb. as exports fell amid a strong increase in imports, data from the statistical office showed on Monday. The trade surplus shrank to MYR 10.9bn in Feb. from MYR 19.6bn in the same month last year. In Jan. the trade surplus was MYR 10.1bn. (www.rttnews.com 18/03/24)

EXCHANGE RATES OF SELECTED CURRENCIES

CURRENCIES	BUYING		SELLING	
+USD/GBP	1.2727	(1.2792)	1.2728	(1.2793)
+USD/EUR	1.0888	(1.0943)	1.0889	(1.0944)
*GHS/USD	12.6547	(12.5984)	12.6673	(12.6110)
*GHS/GBP	16.1056	(16.1159)	16.1230	(16.1333)
*GHS/EUR	13.7796	(13.7860)	13.7921	(13.7997)

+SOURCE: BOG INTERNAL TRANSACTION RATES: 19/03/24 (Rates for 18/03/24 in brackets)

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Australia Central Bank holds policy rate at 4.35%

The Reserve Bank of Australia decided to keep its benchmark interest rate unchanged at its March, while the policy board said the economic outlook and the interest rate path are uncertain as inflation remains high, although it is moderating. The policy board of the RBA, led by Governor Michele Bullock, decided to maintain the cash rate target at 4.35% for the third straight meeting.

(www.rttnews.com 19/03/24)

Czech producer prices fall 0.9%

The Czech Republic's industrial producer prices declined for the second straight month in February, though at a slower-than-expected pace, figures from the Czech Statistical Office showed on Monday. The industrial producer price index fell 0.9% year-on-year in Feb. following a 1.8% decrease in the previous month. (www.rttnews.com 18/03/24)

Vietnam's central bank asked to conduct inspection to stabilize gold market

The Vietnamese government has directed the State Bank of Vietnam to urgently carry out close and comprehensive inspection and supervision to stabilize the gold market, local media reported Tuesday. The supervision and inspection must be carried out with gold trading enterprises, stores and distribution agents, said Deputy Prime Minister Le Minh Khai. (www.xinhuanet.com 19/03/24)

Swiss trade surplus shrinks to CHF 2.2bn

Switzerland's foreign trade surplus decreased in Feb. from a month earlier as imports rose faster than exports, data from the Fed Customs Administration showed on Tuesday. The trade surplus dropped to CHF 2.2bn in Feb from CHF 2.7bn in Jan. (www.rttnews.com 19/03/24)

Israel sees 10.5% drop in jobseekers in Feb

The number of jobseekers in Israel fell by 10.5% in Feb. said a report issued by the Israel Employment Service on Monday. The report stated that at the end of Feb. the number of jobseekers in the country stood at 245,500, compared to 274,300 at the end of January.

(www.xinhuanet.com 19/03/24)

Oil stays near-four month high but Russia export uptick weighs

Oil prices were largely steady on Tuesday near four-month highs after breaking above range-bound trading last week, but the prospect of rising exports from Russia capped gains amid Ukrainian attacks on refineries. The Brent crude oil futures contract for May delivery was up 10 cents to \$86.99 a barrel at 1320 GMT. (www.reuters.com 19/03/24)

Africa's biggest economies set to hold interest rates as inflation risks linger

Central banks in Africa's biggest economies are set to diverge from their emerging-market peers in Latin America and Europe over the next two weeks, as they maintain tight monetary policies to contend with persistent inflation. (www.bloomberg.com 19/03/24)

SA rand weakens ahead of Fed policy decision

South Africa's rand weakened in early trade on Tuesday, as the US dollar traded higher ahead of the Fed's monetary policy decision due on Wednesday. At 0625 GMT, the rand traded at 19.0200 against the dollar, about 0.4% weaker than its previous close. The dollar was last trading up about 0.18% against a basket of global currencies. (www.reuters.com 19/03/24)

Egypt to allocate \$2.66 bln for bread subsidies in FY 2024/2025 budget- finance minister

Egypt will allocate more than 125bn Egyptian pounds (\$2.66bn) for bread subsidies in its 2024/2025 state budget and more than 147bn pounds (\$3.13bn) in petroleum products subsidies, a finance ministry statement said on Tuesday citing Finance Minister Mohamed Mait. (www.reuters.com 19/03/24)

Uganda gold exports jump more than 10-fold in 2023, says central bank

Uganda's gold exports surged more than 10-fold in 2023 despite US sanctions on a major processor in the East African country, the central bank says. Uganda emerged as a major hub of gold trade in the region, exported gold worth \$2.3bn in 2023. (www.reuters.com 19/03/24)

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