

Asia Week Ahead: China activity data could give markets some direction next week

China activity data will be the highlight for the coming week which also features Singapore's exports and Australia's labor report



Inflation in India likely quickened in August

Asian markets had been struggling to find a clear direction lately, although next week's economic calendar featuring China's activity data could provide some cues.

The week opens with India's inflation report. India is expected to post the fastest inflation in the region for August. In August, the appreciation of the Indian rupee and the fall of global oil prices might have kept imported inflation at bay. However, higher domestic food, utilities, and transport costs likely drove inflation back towards 6% (ING forecast 5.9%).

Prakash Sakpal sees inflation staying near the 6% policy limit well into 2022. This may convince the central bank to hike rates earlier than most Asian peers. We have pencilled in a 25bp rate hike

in early 2022 and one more later in the year.

China activity data could provide fresh cues for trading

China's data dump on 15 September features industrial production, retail sales and fixed asset investment.

Iris Pang expects slower growth in retail sales as government policies, such as the closure of education centres and limiting online gaming hitting the jobs market. Meanwhile, industrial production is expected to slow only marginally due to isolated Covid-related closures. Lastly, the growth of fixed asset investments is predicted to pick up, bolstered by outlays in transport and infrastructure.

This acceleration will be driven directly by the government's infrastructure programs as authorities attempt to fill the gaps in economic activity.

Australia's labor report, Indonesian trade and Singapore NODX on deck

Meanwhile, Australia reports labour figures during the week.

Rob Carnell thinks "with about 50% of the population under some form of lockdown during much of August; it would be a surprise if there were not some reflection of this in the August labour figures. We think this will show up most clearly in the part-time segment of the report, where attachment to the labour force may be less firm. Though this will still affect the headline employment figure; and we anticipate that this will fall. That said, the assumption going into this lockdown was probably that these lockdowns would not last long, and so the impact on employment and the unemployment rate may be much lower than in previous episodes."

Indonesia's trade numbers should show more of the same trends noted in 2021. Exports and imports will likely post double-digit growth in August as economic activity picked up relative to levels seen in 2020. The overall trade balance will likely stay in surplus as exports get a lift from higher commodity prices. The trade surplus should help limit the current account deficit this year.

Lastly, Singapore will report August non-oil domestic exports data on 17 September. The pickup of semiconductor exports from Korea and Taiwan bodes well for NODX growth. That said, stagnant chip production in July suggests the sector is hitting a capacity wall amidst ongoing global supply shortages. This, in turn, means the best of the semiconductor exports surge is probably behind us and underlies our forecast of only moderate NODX growth in August at 9.2% YoY, down from 12.7% in July.

Asia Economic Calendar

Country	Time	Data/event	ING Survey	Prev.
Monday 13 September				
India	1300	Aug CPI Inflation (YoY%)	5.9	5.59
Tuesday 14 September				
India	0730	Aug WPI Inflation (YoY%)	11	11.16
South Korea	0000	Aug Unemployment Rate	3.3	3.3
Wednesday 15 September				
Japan	0050	Aug Exports YY	19.1	37.0
	0050	Aug Imports YY	15.4	28.5
	0050	Aug Trade Balance Total Yen	552	441
China	0300	Aug Industrial Output (YoY%)	5.6	6.4
	0300	Aug Retail Sales (YoY%)	7.01	8.5
	0300	Aug Fixed Assets Investments (YoY% YTD)	10.5	10.3
	0300	Aug Surveyed Jobless Rate (%)	5.1	5.1
India	1230	Aug Trade Deficit Govt -USD	13.9	11.0
	1230	Aug Imports - USD	51.5	63.0
	1230	Aug Exports - USD	45.2	49.9
Indonesia	0500	Aug Consumer Confidence Index	85.6	80.2
	0500	Aug Trade Balance (Bln of \$)	2.23	2.59
	0500	Aug Exports Growth (YoY%)	36.1	29.3
	0500	Aug Imports Growth (YoY%)	45.1	44.4
Thursday 16 September				
Australia	0230	Aug Unemployment Rate	4.8	4.6
	0230	Total employment change	-55	2.2
Friday 17 September				
Singapore	0130	Aug Non-oil domestic exports (MoM/YoY%)	2.8/9.2	-0.9/12.7

Source: Refinitiv, ING, *GMT

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