24 August 2026

Global Markets Research

Daily Market Highlights

24 Aug: Firm PMIs across the major economies

US stocks gained despite modest upticks for treasury yields
DXY narrowed losses following the stronger than expected US composite PMI
Stronger PMIs for all the majors save Australia; latter still expanding

- Treasuries were softer in trading last Friday led by shorter dated bonds after US composite PMI surprised on the upside. The benchmark 2Y yield rose 5bps to 4.24%, while the 10Y advanced 3bps to 4.73%. In the equity space, all 3 major US indices were higher between 0.4-1.0% d/d even as UST yields rose modestly, supported by hopes for continued profit growth following the upbeat PMI prints. Gains were broad-based, with 7 of the eleven sectors within the broad index closing in green, led by materials and healthcare stocks.
- Similarly, Stoxx Eur 600 closed 0.6% d/d higher after Eurozone's composite PMI saw another solid gain, while Hang Seng led most Asian bourses higher in the region with a 1.2% d/d rally.
- In the forex space, the DXY narrowed its losses following the release of US' August PMI, before closing 0.2% d/d weaker at 98.80. AUD outperformed its G10 peers, appreciating 0.8% d/d to 0.7171 against the greenback, while EUR, GBP and JPY strengthened 0-0.1% d/d to 1.1679, 1.3644 and 158.95. KRW (0.5% d/d) led most Asian FX stronger against the Dollar, while CNH, MYR and SGD appreciated a more modest pace of 0.1-0.2% d/d to 6.7210, 4.0385 and 1.2694 against USD.
- In the commodity space, crude oil prices closed mixed as traders await more details from the US campaign to isolate Iran's economy. Brent added 0.7% d/d to $94.39/barrel, while the WTI plunged 0.9% d/d to $87.06/barrel.

Stronger composite PMIs for the majors save Australia

- Composite PMI for US unexpectedly rose from 54.5 in July to 56.0 in August, its fastest pace since April 2022 with growth momentum shifting from manufacturing (53.2 vs 53.9) to services (56.8 vs 54.6). Manufacturing was weighed down by reduced safety stock building and supply delays, while the latter underscored a dependency on consumer spending and financial services growth. In tandem with this, business expectations also improved for the third consecutive month.

Key Market Metrics

	Level	d/d (%)
Equities		
Dow Jones	53,277.01	0.98
S&P 500	7,674.37	0.43
NASDAQ	26,180.46	0.43
Stoxx Eur 600	654.18	0.59
FTSE 100	10,816.56	0.64
Nikkei 225	66,016.36	-0.30
CSI 300	4,618.90	0.57
Hang Seng	26,009.46	1.21
Straits Times	5,688.96	0.30
KLCI 30	1,736.48	-0.01
FX		
Dollar Index	98.80	-0.10
EUR/USD	1.1679	0.01
GBP/USD	1.3644	0.10
USD/JPY	158.95	-0.06
AUD/USD	0.7171	0.80
USD/CNH	6.7210	-0.06
USD/MYR	4.0385	-0.16
USD/SGD	1.2694	-0.21
USD/KHR	4,045.50	0.04
USD/THB	32.68	-0.52
Commodities		
WTI ($/bbl)	87.06	-0.88
Brent ($/bbl)	94.39	0.65
Gold ($/oz)	4,624.10	2.39
Copper ($/MT)	14,215.50	1.28
Aluminum($/MT)	3,237.50	1.01
CPO (RM/MT)	4,791.00	1.20

Source: Bloomberg, HLBB Global Markets Research

- The composite PMI for the Eurozone unexpectedly improved 0.1ppts to 52.1 in August, with the pick-up largely underpinned by manufacturing (52.8 vs 51.9), while services held steady at 51.7. The uptick for the manufacturing sector was driven by rising demand for AI-related tech goods and equipment, the latter thanks to higher defence spending, while the services sector was supported by rising tourism spending.
- The UK economy picked up a bit more pace than expected with the headline at 52.5 vs 52.2 previously, amid a sustained turnaround in services sector (52.8 vs 52.1), which offset a slowdown in manufacturing growth (51.5 vs 51.9). Businesses were also feeling more upbeat amid stronger order books and moderated job losses. However, intense competition, rising input prices and elevated domestic political uncertainty could potentially weigh on growth.
- Although down from 53.2 in July, August's 52.5 marked 3 months of uninterrupted and moderate growth for Australia's private sector. The slight dip reflects a slightly softer services sectors (52.9 vs 53.6), while manufacturing held steady at 52.0. With modest growth in output, new orders and employment, business sentiment improved to its 6-months high.
- Japan's business activity expanded at its fastest pace in 6-months according to the headline PMI (53.4 vs 52.7). Growth momentum picked up across both manufacturing (55.1 vs 54.5) and services sectors (52.3 vs 51.2). Manufacturing notably registered sharp increases in both production and new orders, as well as the steepest increase in total sales and overseas demand for over 8.5 years thanks to the AI-related industries. With overall business confidence improving, strong sales growth and further increases in employment, this adds to hopes that the private sector remains well placed to perform strongly going forward.

Eurozone's consumer confidence unexpectedly improved

- Consumer confidence index remained broadly stable, improving 0.4ppts to -15.5 in August. Despite better than expected, consumer confidence remains below its long-term average at the current level.

UK retail sales retreated from June's bump

- Matching expectations, retail sales fell back by 0.5% m/m in July following strong sales growth of 0.7% m/m the previous month. The current sales level is still at its second highest since April 2022, but was weighed down by issues of stock availability, hot weather reducing footfall and after consumer brought sales forward their purchases from July to June due to promotions.

House View and Forecasts

FX	This Week	3Q-26	4Q-26	1Q-27	2Q-27
DXY	97-101	102.28	100.86	99.42	98.07
EUR/USD	1.15-1.18	1.13	1.14	1.16	1.18
GBP/USD	1.34-1.38	1.29	1.30	1.32	1.33
USD/CHF	0.78-0.82	0.81	0.81	0.80	0.79
USD/JPY	157-161	162	159	155	153
AUD/USD	0.69-0.73	0.68	0.70	0.71	0.72
NZD/USD	0.57-0.61	0.56	0.56	0.57	0.57
USD/CNY	6.70-6.75	6.85	6.78	6.72	6.65
USD/MYR	4.02-4.08	4.15	4.11	4.07	4.03
USD/SGD	1.26-1.29	1.31	1.30	1.28	1.27
USD/THB	32.50--33.30	32.50	32.30	32.0	32.0

FX	Last close	3Q-26	4Q-26	1Q-27	2Q-27
EUR/MYR	4.7253	4.68	4.71	4.73	4.75
GBP/MYR	5.5148	5.37	5.36	5.36	5.36
AUD/MYR	2.8910	2.83	2.86	2.87	2.89
CNY/MYR	0.6009	0.61	0.61	0.61	0.61
SGD/MYR	3.1827	3.18	3.17	3.17	3.17

Rates, %	Current	3Q26	4Q26	1Q27	2Q27
Fed	3.50-3.75	3.50-3.75	3.50-3.75	3.50-3.75	3.50-3.75
ECB	2.25	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50
BOE	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75
SNB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
BOJ	1.00	1.00	1.25	1.25	1.25
RBA	4.35	4.35	4.35	4.35	4.35
RBNZ	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50
BNM	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75

Source: HLBB Global Markets Research

Up Next

Date	Events	
24-Aug	SI CPI Core YoY (Jul)	1.60%
	US Chicago Fed Nat Activity Index (Jul)	-0.02
25-Aug	AU RBA Minutes of Aug. Policy Meeting	
	HK Exports YoY (Jul)	53.40%
	US Philadelphia Fed Non-Manufacturing Activity (Aug)	7.4
	US FHFA House Price Index MoM (Jun)	0.30%
	US S&P Cotality CS US HPI YoY NSA (Jun)	1.11%
	US Richmond Fed Manufact. Index (Aug)	5
	US Richmond Fed Business Conditions (Aug)	-5
	US New Home Sales MoM (Jul)	1.60%
	US Conf. Board Consumer Confidence (Aug)	90.8

Source: Bloomberg

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