

# GLOBAL WEEKLY ECONOMIC NEWS IN THE ADVANCED ECONOMIES

(22 February 2021 – 26 February 2021)

Countries	Highlights
<p><b>US</b></p> <p><b>US labour market showing tentative signs of improvement; manufacturing strong</b></p>	<p>Fewer Americans filed new claims for unemployment benefits last week amid falling COVID-19 infections, but the near-term outlook for the labour market is unclear after winter storms wreaked havoc in the South region in the middle of this month. Still, the decline in claims to a three-month low reported by the Labor Department suggested the labour market was slowly regaining traction, catching up with the broader economy, after hitting a pothole in late 2020. Initial claims for state unemployment benefits fell 111,000 to a seasonally adjusted 730,000 for the week ended Feb. 20, the lowest level since November. Unadjusted claims decreased 131,734 to 710,313 last week.</p> <p><i>(Source: Reuters, 25 February 2021)</i></p>
<p><b>UK</b></p> <p><b>UK data points to record outflow of foreign workers in 2020</b></p>	<p>Almost a million people born outside Britain may have left the country last year as the coronavirus pandemic appears to have triggered the biggest net outflow of foreign-born workers on record. Figures from the Office for National Statistics suggested there were 795,000 fewer foreign-born workers in Britain in the final three months of 2020 than a year earlier, and nearly a million fewer foreign-born residents aged over 16. Britain has suffered Europe's highest death toll from coronavirus and the biggest economic hit of any major economy. Some sectors which previously employed large numbers of foreign workers, such as hospitality, have been especially hard hit.</p> <p><i>(Source: Reuters, 23 February 2021)</i></p>
<p><b>JAPAN</b></p> <p><b>Japan's Jan factory output rises for first time in three months, retail sales drop</b></p>	<p>Japan's industrial output rose for the first time in three months in January thanks to a pickup in global demand. But retail sales, a key gauge of consumer spending, posted their second straight month of declines in January as emergency measures taken in response to the pandemic hit consumption. Official data released showed factory output advanced 4.2% in January, boosted by sharp rises in production of electronic parts and general-purpose machinery, as well as a smaller increase in car output. While economic growth will likely be negative in the first quarter, the strength in manufacturing would offset the negative impact of a state of emergency at home, which is mainly affecting the services sector. Factory output fell in November and December as a rebound in car production ended on sagging global demand, but since then strong demand for tech-making equipment and electronic goods has helped turn the tide.</p> <p><i>(Source: Reuters, 26 February 2021)</i></p>
<p><b>CHINA</b></p> <p><b>China's 'difficult' job market to be inundated with 15 million new urban applicants this year</b></p>	<p>About 15 million urban workers, including a record-high 9.09 million university graduates, will enter China's job market this year, exerting greater employment pressure on the world's second-largest economy. Zhang Jinan, minister of human resources and social security, said this year's employment situation is rife with challenges, as there are still "quite a few uncertainties and instabilities" in the economy. Structural obstacles remain prominent in the job market, with hardships faced by both job applicants and by firms seeking skilled labour. Competition for jobs will be more intense this year after the coronavirus left millions of degree-holders out of work or relegated to jobs such as delivery couriers for which they were overqualified in 2020. The record number of new universities graduates an increase of about 350,000 from last year's 8.74 million looks to be a thorn in the government's side.</p> <p><i>(Source: South China Morning Post, 26 February 2021)</i></p>