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Asia Compass | Asia Pacific

Under Constraint, In Transition

This week, we continue to look at the Asia-wide implications of a continuing energy shock. Governments have acted to cushion the impact, but if oil stays near US\$120 per barrel, growth could slow sharply, especially in economies like Korea and India. For now, moderate inflation gives central banks some room to wait.

The upside? Asia's industrial cycle had already gained momentum, particularly in tech capex. If energy prices ease, that momentum could return quickly and shape not only Asia's outlook, but the global economy as well.

As the global AI theme continues to shape global markets, China's semiconductor sufficiency stands out as a key factor in Asia. Significant investment and strong policy support have helped jumpstart a domestic GPU ecosystem, even as US export controls restricted access to advanced technology. Chinese AI chips are also becoming more cost-competitive, thanks to cheaper power and improving infrastructure, especially in inference, where efficiency matters more than raw performance.

Magdalena Stoklosa**Director of Pan Asia Research**

MORGAN STANLEY ASIA LIMITED+

Magdalena L Stoklosa, CFA

Director of Pan-Asia Research

Magdalena.Stoklosa@morganstanley.com

+852 2848-8811

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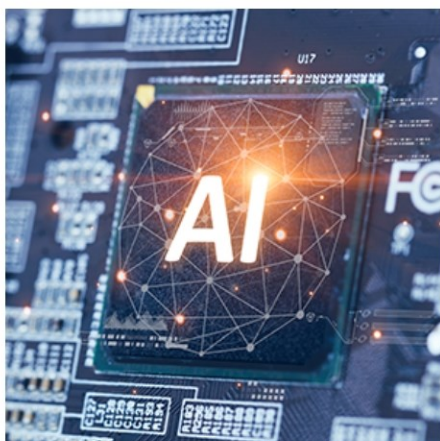


3 Key Reports – Scarcity Drives Strategic Change



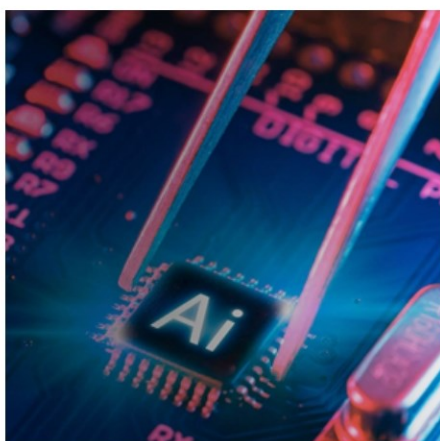
The Damage from Higher Oil Prices

Higher oil prices will weigh on Asia GDP growth through both higher energy costs and tighter supply, with India, Korea, Taiwan and Thailand most exposed. Tighter LNG and feedstock availability will hit production and exports; US\$150 oil risks a deeper, longer slowdown.



China AI GPU/Memory Driving Faster Self-Sufficiency

China's semiconductor self-sufficiency is accelerating as AI GPUs, memory and domestic capacity expand. Gains in GPUs, DRAM/NAND and mature nodes could lift self-sufficiency to ~32% by 2028, driving a sustained shift toward local champions across fabs, equipment and chip design.



China AI GPUs – Closing the Gap with the US

China's AI GPU push is accelerating under export controls, as policy support and AI capex drive demand and domestic supply improves. Local chips are gaining traction in inference through lower-cost, system-level solutions, pushing self-sufficiency toward ~76% by 2030, though commoditization remains a key risk.

Beyond The Headlines



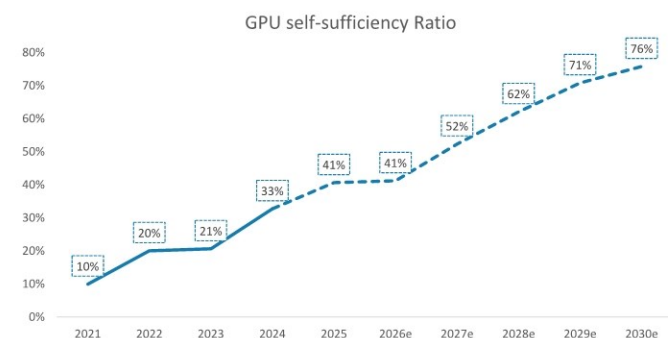
New US bank capital proposals would ease regulatory constraints, freeing up about US \$320bn of excess capital, or roughly 20% across the sector, and shifting banks from defense to deployment. Lower requirements should support more lending, stronger capital markets activity and higher shareholder returns, while clearer rules and limited pushback could drive higher capital deployment, better earnings and a more constructive outlook for bank stocks.

Read more: [US Banks: How Much Capital Is In Motion?](#)

Not to be Missed

One Chart You Can't Miss

Exhibit 1: We expect China AI chip self-sufficiency to reach 76% in 2030e, but industry commoditization could emerge



Source: Company data, e = Morgan Stanley Research estimates

Must Listen Podcast



Morgan Stanley Tech Talk

Stephen Byrd discusses how non-linear AI model improvements are beginning to play out in the US, along with the implications of recursive self-improvement, intensifying compute and power constraints, and his Token Economics framework for enterprise ROI.

We expect volatility to remain heightened and emphasize our wider bull to bear spread across the region.

Exhibit 2: Key Market Forecasts

Market/Region (Index)	MS Rating	Latest Price	Dec 2026 Index Target						12mf P/E Valuations		
			Bear Case (%)		Base Case (%)		Bull Case (%)		Current	10yr Avg	% +/-
MSCI Emerging Markets	EW	1,583	1,100	-30.5%	1,700	7.4%	2,020	27.6%	12.2	12.3	-1%
MSCI Asia Pac ex Japan	-	810	570	-29.6%	870	7.4%	1,010	24.7%	13.3	13.6	-2%
Japan (TOPIX)	OW	3,770	3,000	-20.4%	4,250	12.7%	4,600	22.0%	16.3	14.0	16%
China (MSCI China)	EW	80	58	-27.5%	90	12.9%	114	42.4%	11.8	11.8	0%
China A-Shares (CSI 300)	-	4,685	3,470	-25.9%	4,840	3.3%	6,010	28.3%	14.0	12.4	13%
Hong Kong (Hang Seng)	EW	25,947	18,700	-27.9%	27,500	6.0%	34,700	33.7%	11.1	10.8	3%
Australia (S&P/ASX 200)	EW	8,979	6,875	-23.4%	9,250	3.0%	9,800	9.1%	17.7	16.5	7%
India (SENSEX)	EW	78,111	76,000	-2.7%	95,000	21.6%	107,000	37.0%	19.6	18.8	4%
South Korea (KOSPI)	EW	6,091	5,000	-17.9%	6,500	6.7%	7,500	23.1%	8.2	10.5	-22%
Latin America (MSCI LatAn)	-	3,344	1,700	-49.2%	3,100	-7.3%	3,600	7.6%	8.9	11.7	-24%
Brazil (Bovespa)	OW	197,738	95,000	-52.0%	200,000	1.1%	240,000	21.4%	8.9	10.6	-16%
Mexico (MEXBOL)	EW	69,635	52,000	-25.3%	71,000	2.0%	79,000	13.4%	12.9	14.7	-13%
USA (S&P 500)	-	7,023	5,600	-20.3%	7,800	11.1%	9,000	28.2%	20.9	19.0	10%
Europe (MSCI Europe)	-	2,456	1,930	-21.4%	2,600	5.9%	2,860	16.5%	15.3	14.3	8%

Source: FactSet, Morgan Stanley Research estimates; date: April 15, 2026

Exhibit 3: Key Cross-Asset allocation views

Global Asset Allocation				
Equities				
Bonds				
Credit				
Comms				
Cash				

Relative Equity Allocation				
US				
Europe				
Japan				
EM				

Relative Tsy Allocation				
USTs				
EGBs				
JGBs				

Source: Morgan Stanley Research

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(as of March 31, 2026)

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	Count	% of Total	Count	% of Total IBC	% of Rating Category	Count	% of Total Other MISC
Overweight/Buy	1534	42%	461	50%	30%	698	43%
Equal-weight/Hold	1573	43%	372	40%	24%	716	44%
Not-Rated/Hold	4	0%	1	0%	25%	1	0%
Underweight/Sell	568	15%	89	10%	16%	209	13%
Total	3,679		923			1624	

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