

# WEEKLY NEWSLETTER



**April 15th, 2024**

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# Investment Playbook

## EQUITIES

Stock Ticker	Stock Information (as at April 12th, 2024)	Comments
<p><b>WISYNCO</b> Wisynco Group Limited</p>	<p>P/E: 15.44x P/B: 3.34x Price: \$21.31 Div Yield 1.88%</p>	<p><b>OVERWEIGHT</b></p> <p>Throughout the pandemic, Wisynco has managed to improve its operational efficiency but given the effects of COVID-19 on industries such as tourism and education, the Company was unable to deliver significant revenue growth. Now, with tourism rebounding and schools operating at a greater level, Wisynco has married its improved operational efficiency with stronger revenue growth, allowing for significant net profit growth. As tourism is expected to continue growing towards its pre-pandemic level of output, we expect Wisynco to continue to perform well.</p> <p><a href="#">Wisynco Equity Report</a></p>
<p><b>JMMBGL</b> JMMB Group Limited</p>	<p>P/E: 2.08x P/B: 0.68x Price: \$24.55 Div Yield 1.02%</p>	<p><b>OVERWEIGHT</b></p> <p>Given its relatively low P/E ratio and considering the Group's consistently strong performance throughout the pandemic, the market has been underpricing JMMBGL significantly relative to its local counterparts. JMMBGL's price has declined by 5.8% YTD which provides investors with an opportunity to acquire JMMBGL shares at a more attractive price. The long-term outlook for the company and the stock remains favorable, buoyed by an expanding regional footprint. In July JMMBGL closed on its acquisition of a commercial bank in the Dominican Republic (DR) which now enables the company to offer a full range of financial services in the market. The DR operations currently contributes 17% of net operating revenue and we will be keen to watch the effect of the expansion to JMMBGL's performance over the next few quarters.</p> <p><a href="#">JMMB Equity Report</a></p>
<p><b>MASSY</b> Massy Holdings Limited</p>	<p>P/E: 10.05x P/B: 1.03x Price: \$88.01 Div Yield 3.98%</p>	<p><b>OVERWEIGHT</b></p> <p>Massy Holdings Limited. (MHL, Massy), through its portfolio companies, engages in trading, manufacturing, distribution, and service industry businesses throughout the Caribbean region. The company operates through three portfolios: Integrated Retail, Gas Products, Motors, and Machine and two business lines: Financial Services, and Strategic and Other Investments. In financial year 2020, Massy transitioned from a Conglomerate to an Investment Holding Company. By so doing, Massy's strategy has changed, with the Group focusing mainly on its core portfolios. These core areas of the business represent Massy's competitive advantages, are well-positioned to scale, and are therefore expected to drive strategic growth going forward.</p> <p><a href="#">Massy Equity Report</a></p>

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LASD Lasco Distributors	P/E: 10.7x P/B: 1.85x Price: \$4.87 Div Yield 2.05%	<b>OVERWEIGHT</b> Lasco Distributors has continued its growth trajectory, displaying resilience throughout the pandemic, and we expect this to continue post-pandemic supported by the improving economic backdrop of the global economy. As continued domestic demand for goods and services remain strong, the company is also looking to strengthen its exports as well as continue to launch new product lines. However, this isn't without challenges as global supply shocks has affected LASD's gross margins. In response, management has prudently managed operational costs such that higher imported inflationary costs has not completely eroded the bottom line, resulting in continued growth.  <a href="#">Lasco Distributors Equity Report</a>
SCIJMD/SCIUSD Sygnus Credit Investments	P/E: 10.11x / 11.57x P/B: 0.58x / 0.66x Price: \$10.69 / \$0.08 Div Yield: 6.3% / 5.59%	<b>OVERWEIGHT</b> Sygnus' business model is built on providing capital and direction to the underbanked, targeting the middle market. To accomplish this, the Company has executed several capital raises involving equity, preference shares and debt raise. Sygnus has demonstrated their commitment to growth and being the market leader in the regional private credit space with their acquisition of a Puerto Rico-based, private credit firm, Acrecent Financial in Q3 of their financial year. This acquisition has significantly added to the group's income and overall profitability. The stock trades at significant discount relative to peers both from a P/E perspective and a P/B perspective. At present, given Sygnus' strong current and expected future growth, the market is pricing Sygnus at a steep discount to its book value per share.  <a href="#">Sygnus Credit Investments Equity Report</a>
TROPICAL Tropical Battery Limited	P/E: 17.33x P/B: 2.4x Price: \$2.08 Div Yield 1.92%	<b>OVERWEIGHT</b> Tropical Battery has been aggressively pursuing revenue diversification strategies, to reduce its dependence on auto battery and accessory sales. This is evident by the company's recent launch of three new subsidiaries aimed at providing renewable energy solutions for commercial customers. In addition, the company recently implemented a new inventory management system that has yielded improved operational efficiencies in addition to targeted sales initiatives that have improved revenue growth. We believe that the Company will continue to grow as they build out new revenue lines, improve operational efficiencies and drive targeted sales initiatives.  <a href="#">Tropical Battery Equity Report</a>

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<p><b>PROVENJMD/ PROVENUSD</b> Proven Group Limited</p>	<p>P/E: 11.64x / 11.64x P/B: 0.68x / 0.63x Price: \$21.72 / \$0.14 Div Yield: 3.92% / 3.94%</p>	<p><b>OVERWEIGHT</b> Proven has shown a decline in profitability throughout the current financial year, a performance driven by lower share of earnings of associates and higher operating expenses. The company continues to demonstrate its appetite for growth through acquisitions as evidenced by the recent 100% acquisition of Fidelity Bank (Cayman). The company has a history of acquiring companies with accretive value. We expect that profit margins will improve in the future as one-off spending related to recent acquisitions pass.</p>
<p><b>LUMBER</b> Lumber Depot Limited</p>	<p>P/E: 10.67x P/B: 2.73x Price: \$2.56 Div Yield 2.81%</p>	<p><b>OVERWEIGHT</b> Lumber represents an option to gain exposure to the construction sector which has been a relatively resilient and fast-growing sector. With this sector tailwind, lumber has shown strong revenue growth since its 2019 listing and the financial year 2022 revenue and net profit are 10.1% and 26.8% higher than financial year 2021 revenue and earnings, respectively. We are still monitoring how the company progresses given the loosening of restrictions and continued growth in the construction sector. We also note that despite the growth it has shown over the last 2 years, the stock still trades at an attractive PE compared to Junior market peers.</p> <p><a href="#">Lumber Depot Equity Report</a></p>
<p><b>TJH</b> TransJamaican Highway Limited</p>	<p>P/E: 10.29x P/B: 5.25x Price: \$3.2 Div Yield 5.83%</p>	<p><b>OVERWEIGHT</b> The Group continues to experience stronger-than-projected traffic growth, as evidenced by the performance during the third quarter of the 2023 financial year, and this trend is expected to persist at least in the short term. Additionally, the JIO acquisition has improved operating efficiency, and it is expected that as the group continues to reduce debt, profitability and cash flow generation will continue to improve.</p> <p><a href="#">TJH Equity Report</a></p>

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<b>JBG</b> Jamaica Broilers Group Limited	P/E: 7.02x P/B: 1.36x Price: \$33.07 Div Yield 2.6%	<b>OVERWEIGHT</b> JBG's financial performance has rebounded nicely from the lows seen in FY2020, driven by the recovery in the Jamaican economy and tourist arrivals, coupled with JBG's growing presence in the US market and the increasing production of the Best Dressed Chicken line of products. The loss making Haiti operation has been discontinued which should contribute to improved margins in the coming quarters. Positive results from expansion into the United States and recovery in Jamaican operations, along with stringent cost control have contributed to the surge in profitability in the first half of the 2023 financial year.  <a href="#">Jamaica Broilers Group Equity Report</a>
<b>SEP</b> Seprod Limited	P/E: 16.06x P/B: 2.02x Price: \$82.55 Div Yield 2%	<b>OVERWEIGHT</b> Seprod saw its financial performance surge for the 2022 financial year, owing to the strategic acquisition of AS Bryden, with revenues and net profit growing by 82% and 93% respectively. Going into the 2023 financial year, we expect easing of supply chain pressures, stability in commodity prices, and further consolidation of profits from AS Bryden to further lift net profits. Along with new products, Seprod also plans to aggressively target growth in export markets and is currently in the process of making necessary investments to increase capacity of its margarine plant.  <a href="#">Seprod Limited Equity Report</a>
<b>LASM</b> Lasco Manufacturing	P/E: 8.86x P/B: 1.74x Price: \$5.17 Div Yield 2.32%	<b>OVERWEIGHT</b> We expect that the Company's growth trajectory will be sustained, however, in the short term, the financial results have seen an impact from the overall macroeconomic conditions since the pandemic. Margins across the board have been compressed despite record profitability in 2022. Despite continued record tourism arrivals and growth in key sectors such as entertainment, steps need to be taken to restore margin progression. Against this backdrop it is notable that inflationary pressures and supply issues that plagued the company from 2022 to the first quarter of this year will likely begin to ease in the spring of 2023, suggesting a rebound in net profit growth for the company moving forward beyond FY 2023. Plans to further expand its geographical footprint by driving the contribution of export to its revenue will be value-added to the long-term sustainability of the Company's operations  <a href="#">Lasco Manufacturing Equity Report</a>

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<b>GK</b> GraceKennedy Limited	P/E: 9.5x P/B: 0.93x Price: \$73.97 Div Yield 2.93%	<b>MARKETWEIGHT</b> For the year ended December 31, 2022, GK reported significant top-line growth, however, margin deterioration contributed to a decline in the bottom line. Revenues increased by 10.5% while profits saw a 15.1% decline of flat as operating expenses grew at a faster rate than revenues. The company cited challenges presented by high inflation globally, sustained supply chain issues, increasing interest rates, and foreign currency volatility as issues that have affected profit margins. GK continues to advance its merger & acquisition (M&A) strategy, after it increased its stake in Catherine's Peak Bottling Company Limited in the first quarter of 2023 to move its ownership stake from 35% to 70%, thus granting them a stronger position in the spring water market. The company continues to seek M&A transactions locally and internationally. These acquisitions stand to add more diversity and growth to the company's earnings.  <a href="#">GraceKennedy Group Equity Report</a>
<b>MAILPAC</b> Mailpac Group Limited	P/E: 20.7x P/B: 9.2x Price: \$2.07 Div Yield 5.31%	<b>MARKETWEIGHT</b> During the peak periods of the pandemic, MAILPAC benefited immensely as online shopping became a larger share of shoppers' wallets. In large part, this period of heavy demand driven by pandemic restrictions has passed and while we anticipate online shopping will remain integral for the everyday consumer, the outsized growth we witnessed in FY2020 and FY2021 will not be repeated. Admittedly, the Company has a robust balance sheet with more cash than total liabilities which we believe places MAILPAC in a position to make growth-inducing investments. However, the current slowdown in demand and consequently revenue and profit growth underscores our MARKETWEIGHT recommendation  <a href="#">Mailpac Group Equity Report</a>
<b>SGJ</b> Scotia Group Jamaica Limited	P/E: 8.21x P/B: 1.15x Price: \$44.84 Div Yield 3.01%	<b>MARKETWEIGHT</b> The greatest driver of profitability in FY2021 was the reduction of Expected Credit Losses (ECL) relative to the previous year as the economic backdrop improved. Scotia is not likely to have this benefit recur to the magnitude it did in FY2021. The group has made an accelerated effort to digitize its business in line with its digital strategy to drive efficiency and better service customer needs. SGJ is looking to further consolidate its operations and funnel investments in core operations through technology and talent, while also looking to enter new markets and launch new products. Scotia has two major positives. The first is that the current rising interest rate environment supports the Group's bank model, more so than other listed financial institutions. The second is that SGJ is a consistent source of relatively attractive dividends which makes the Company a good asset for investors with a clear preference for income.  <a href="#">Scotia Group Equity Report</a>

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<b>FTNA</b> Fontana Limited	P/E: 17.55x P/B: 4.11x Price: \$8.95 Div Yield 2.23%	<b>MARKETWEIGHT</b> Fontana has been growing and expanding since listing on the junior exchange in 2019. The Company has plans to expand, which include a new outlet to bring its footprint to a total of seven locations. In its most recent quarter, Net Profit saw a 32.7% increase over the same quarter in the prior financial year. Further, the cost of sales has been impacted given the current inflationary environment and is likely to continue being affected in the near to medium term. However, the company continues to grow organically and is financially positioned to do so. Due to the current environment and increased finance costs, profitability could dampen in the near term but in the long term, the addition of its new outlet could support growth. On balance, the Company has both significant risks and the potential for upside, which underscores our recommendation.  <a href="#">Fontana Equity Report</a>
<b>SVL</b> Supreme Ventures Limited	P/E: 27x P/B: 15.34x Price: \$24.78 Div Yield 3.78%	<b>MARKETWEIGHT</b> Supreme Ventures is the market leader in the lottery and gaming industry. The company has also in recent years embarked on an aggressive growth strategy through several acquisitions (Champion Gaming and Post To Post Betting). The company would have been impacted by the pandemic as the lockdown measures impacted its operations at Caymanas Park. With the easing of restrictions, the Company should benefit from an easing of lock down restrictions and a normalization of business. Despite this, in the medium term we note that the company now has competition in the lottery segment of the market which may negatively impact margins. The degree to which this might impede the pace of revenue growth will however depend on the take up of new games such as Scratchaz which, at present, seems popular amongst younger consumers as it is a new addition to the Company's product offerings.  <a href="#">Supreme Ventures Equity Report</a>
<b>ECL</b> Express Catering Limited	P/E: 15.72x P/B: 6.55x Price: \$4.4 Div Yield 0%	<b>MARKETWEIGHT</b> ECL has seen improved performance as the tourism industry rebound, following the pandemic, has been robust. However, the Company is not currently operating at pre-covid efficiency levels, as price increases due to the current global supply chain challenges have driven higher costs across all product categories. While we do expect the tourism industry to continue to recover, driving ECL's revenues to grow and likely surpass pre-covid levels by FY2023/FY2024, the inflationary pressures can not be ignored. Longer-term we do expect the company to reap the benefits of their expanded footprint within the Sangsters International Airport as well as the return to trend growth in stopover arrivals.  <a href="#">ECL Equity Report</a>

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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>VMIL</b> Victoria Mutual Investments Limited</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">P/E: 7.47x P/B: 1.52x Price: \$2.69 Div Yield 0%</p>	<p><b>OVERWEIGHT</b> Victoria Mutual has recently rebranded under the "VM Group". By association, there has been implications for VMIL. For example, the Company has been significantly more active in the capital markets through its investment banking arm. We expect continued growth in the investment banking space will add considerable value to the Company's bottom line which has already shown clear improvement throughout FY2021.</p> <p><a href="#">VMIL Equity Report</a></p>

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<p><b>SOS</b> Stationery &amp; Office Supplies Limited</p>	<p>P/E: 14.17x P/B: 2.87x Price: \$1.7 Div Yield 1.31%</p>	<p>Stationery and Office Supplies presents investors with another option to benefit from the reopening of the domestic economy. A core segment of their business would have suffered from the lockdown measures and work from home, namely the sale of furniture and its SEEK line of books. However, during that period stationery sales have done well to fill that revenue gap. With the resumption of economic activity, the return to office and the expansion in the BPO sector, SOS might be a large beneficiary in 2022.</p>
<p><b>SJ</b> Sagikor Group Jamaica Limited</p>	<p>P/E: 11.34x P/B: 1.63x Price: \$41.6 Div Yield 2.94%</p>	<p>Sagikor Group Jamaica Limited would have been adversely impacted by the pandemic even more so than the typical financial sector company due to their exposure to the tourism sector. This would have therefore led to sizeable impairment losses on their investment in associated companies (i.e., Playa Hotel and Resorts). For 2022 we therefore expect to see some amount of recovery as the group has disposed of their investments in Playa which will stem impairment losses while simultaneously still having direct exposure to travel through their US resort (The Hilton DoubleTree) while their banking services should benefit from a pickup in economic activity.</p>

*\*\*The "Monitoring List" represents stocks that are on our radar as our initial expectation for these companies is positive. However, no official recommendation is presented as these stocks are still being evaluated.*

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## Fixed Income

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<p><b>HLT 3.75% 2029</b> Hilton Domestic Operating</p>	<p>Price (Bid/Ask): 90.00 / \$90.50 Yield to Maturity (Bid/Ask): 6.08%/5.96% Maturity: May 1st, 2029 Modified Duration: 4.40 Credit Rating: BB+ (S&amp;P)</p>	<p>The Hilton Hotels gives investors access to several global brands in the hospitality and travel sector. As of 2022, Hilton managed, franchised, or owned 7,165 hotels and resorts, totaling 1.1 million rooms in 123 countries. The industry also continues to represent a potential travel recovery play as the demand for business transient (short stay business travel) and group travel continues to gain momentum with trends through 2Q23 continuing to look strong.</p>
<p><b>SFCCN 5.3% 2028</b> Sagcor Financial Corporation</p>	<p>Price (Bid/Ask): \$96.40/\$96.78 Yield to Maturity (Bid/Ask): 6.21%/6.21% Maturity: May 13th, 2028 Modified Duration: 3.52 Credit Rating: BBB (S&amp;P) / BB+ (Fitch)</p>	<p><b>OVERWEIGHT</b> SFCCN 5.3% 2028 gives investors exposure a global life insurer with a growing footprint in the North American Market. While the credit has seen some spread compression, we believe that there might be more to come. This comes as it trades slightly cheap relative to peers with the major concern as it relates to macroeconomic exposure to Caribbean government debt is likely to be improved with the Iviri transaction. In this regard, the successful closure of the acquisition means that there is potential for more spread compression. In addition to this, approaching closer to the end of the Fed hiking cycle might also limit the potential downside tailwinds on price from even more restrictive monetary policy.</p> <p><a href="#">SFCCN Fixed Income Report</a></p>
<p><b>BAC 7.25% 2025</b> Bank of America Corp</p>	<p>Price (Bid/Ask): \$102.11/\$102.35 Yield to Maturity (Bid/Ask): 5.76%/5.59% Maturity: October 15th, 2025 Modified Duration: 1.41 Credit Rating: BBB+ (S&amp;P) / A (Fitch) / A3 (Moody's)</p>	<p>Bank of America is one of the largest financial institutions in the United States, with more than \$2.5 trillion in assets. The bank now has one of the most complete retail branch networks and overall retail franchises in the United States. BAC is also a Tier 1 investment bank, a top four U.S. credit card issuer, a top three U.S. acquirer, has a solid commercial banking franchise, and owns the Merrill Lynch franchise, which has become one of the leading U.S. brokerage and advisor firms.</p>
<p><b>MAT 3.75% 2029</b> Mattel Inc</p>	<p>Price (Bid/Ask): \$91.00/\$91.17 Yield to Maturity (Bid/Ask): 5.87%/5.83% Maturity: April 1st, 2029 Modified Duration: 4.41 Credit Rating: BBB (S&amp;P) / BBB-(Fitch) / Baa3 (Moody's)</p>	<p>Mattel markets toy products that are sold to its wholesale customers and direct to retail consumers. The Company offers products for children and families, including toys for infants and preschoolers, girls and boys. A rebound in dolls, especially Barbie and Frozen, is the key to Mattel outperforming projections for 2023.</p>

*\*\*The "Monitoring List" represents stocks that are on our radar as our initial expectation for these companies is positive. However, no official recommendation is presented as these stocks are still being evaluated.*

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# Unit Trust

Unit Trust Fund	10/04/2024	03/04/2024	Week/Week Return	Year-to-Date Return	1 Year Return	Yield
Capital Growth	77.97	77.89	0.10%	-3.19%	-2.81%	-
Money Market	16.4366	16.4219	0.09%	0.89%	5.13%	5.46%
Income Portfolio	100.00	100.00	-	-	-	6.14%
FX Bond Portfolio (US\$)	1.4360	1.4537	-1.22%	0.86%	5.51%	4.70%
Real Estate Portfolio	16,179.59	12,580.95	28.60%	28.52%	32.98%	-
FX Growth Portfolio	1.03	1.042	-0.74%	8.54%	17.82%	-
FX Income Accumulator Portfolio	1.0138	1.0157	-0.19%	-0.12%	0.42%	3.02%

“Someone's sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago.”

Warren Buffett

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# LOCAL EQUITY MARKET

For the week ending April 12, 2024, the local stock market, measured by the Combined Index, advanced by 0.17%. The Main Market Index advanced by 0.10%, the Junior Market Index increased by 0.99%, and the JSE USD Equities Index declined by 0.77%. During the week, The Limners and Bards Limited was the largest gainer, rising by approximately 27.61% to close at \$1.71. Margaritaville Turks Limited was the biggest decliner, which fell by 13.54% to close at \$14.11. .

Large-cap stocks, reflecting those listed on the Main Market Index are overperforming on a YTD basis, increasing by 0.32%, relative to its Junior Market counterpart which has declined by 1.15%.

For the week ending April 12, 2024, overall market activity resulted from trading in 126 stocks of which 59 advanced, 56 declined and 11 traded firm. Market volume amounted to 143,317,147 units valued at over \$514,460,095.92. Spur Tree Jamaica Limited was the volume leader with 61,337,267 units (42.49%), followed by TransJamaican Highway Limited with 17,395,158 units (12.05%), and by Wigton Windfarm Limited 15,739,824 units (10.90%).

**Revisiting relevant news during the week:**

**'Unprecedented and unnecessary'**

The legal team for the former owners of the Alliance affiliated companies — Alliance Investment Management Limited (AIML), Alliance Financial Services Limited (AFSL), and Alliance Finance Limited (AFL) — is dismissing a recent statement from the Bank of Jamaica (BOJ) about the circumstances which led to it to sanction the former principals of the company Peter and Robert Chin and suspending the licences of AFSL.

**'Unprecedented and unnecessary'**

**Guardian boosts tech spend**

Guardian Holdings Limited (GHL) is increasing its investment in technological solutions to improve its efficiencies while driving further value for its customers and shareholders.

**Guardian boosts tech spend**

**IMF report warns of looming global growth slowdown, urges immediate action**

In a sobering assessment, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has projected a significant deceleration in global economic growth to 2.8 per cent by 2030, mirroring predictions made by the World Bank a year ago that global economic growth would fall to its lowest level by the end of 2030.

**IMF report warns of looming global growth slowdown, urges immediate action**

**JSE regulatory arm expounds on iCreate breaches**

Nearly three months following iCreate Limited's second suspension, the Jamaica Stock Exchange's (JSE) Regulatory Market & Oversight Division (RMOD) has specifically detailed the latest breaches committed by the Junior Market company.

**JSE regulatory arm expounds on iCreate breaches**

**Eppley raids NCB**

Eppley Limited has managed to snatch two executives of National Commercial Bank Jamaica Limited (NCBJ) as it embarks on deepening its asset management and credit portfolio in the Caribbean.

**Eppley raids NCB**

**JFP lands contract with PF Chang restaurant, Decameron Hotel**

Contract Manufacturer JFP Limited has shipped its first set of containers to Guyana under a new contract it has inked with American-based restaurant chain, PF Chang.

**JFP lands contract with PF Chang restaurant, Decameron Hotel**

**Main Event proposes capital change for upcoming AGM**

Shareholders of Main Event Entertainment Group Limited (MEEG) will vote on July 4 on whether the company should increase its authorised share capital limit

**Main Event proposes capital change for upcoming AGM**

Index	12/04/2024	05/04/2024	29/12/2023	Week/Week	Year-to-Date
JSE Main Market	326,755.24	326,418.42	325,699.79	0.103%	0.324%
JSE Junior Market	3,804.02	3,766.56	3,848.33	0.99%	-1.15%
JSE Combined Market	339,745.58	339,161.61	339,158.12	0.17%	0.17%
JSE USD Equities Market	242.15	244.03	231.05	-0.77%	4.80%
JSE Financial Index	70.19	70.49	70.65	-0.43%	-0.65%
JSE M&D Idex	103.54	103.04	102.94	0.49%	0.58%

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# INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

## U.S.

### Inflation disappoints on the upside in U.S. and on the downside in China

The major equity benchmarks retreated for the week amid heightened fears of conflict in the Middle East and some signs of persistent inflation pressures that pushed long-term Treasury yields higher. Large-caps held up better than small-caps, with the Russell 2000 Index suffering its biggest daily decline in almost two months on Wednesday and falling back into negative territory for the year to date. Growth stocks also fared better than value shares, which were weighed down by interest rate-sensitive sectors, such as real estate investment trusts (REITs), regional banks, housing, and utilities.

The primary factor weighing on sentiment appeared to be Wednesday morning's release of the Labor Department's consumer price index (CPI) data, which showed headline prices rising by 0.36% in March, right in line with February's increase, in contrast with consensus hopes for a small decline from the month-earlier pace. A rebound in the price of medical services (from -0.1% in February to +0.6% in March) was partly to blame, as was a continuing sharp rise in transportation services costs, which rose 10.7% over the preceding 12 months—fed largely by increases in the cost of car insurance. Overall inflation rose 3.5% over the preceding 12 months, its biggest gain since September.

### Supercore inflation hits highest level in almost a year

More concerning may have been a material increase in so-called supercore inflation, which tracks services prices excluding energy and housing costs, which policymakers have acknowledged are a lagging indicator of overall inflation trends. Supercore inflation jumped 0.7% in March and 4.8% over the past 12 months, substantially higher than expectations and its biggest increase in 10 months. In the wake of the report, futures markets began pricing in roughly a 20% chance of a rate cut at the Federal Reserve's June policy meeting versus roughly 50% before its release. The consumer inflation data helped drive the yield on the benchmark 10-year U.S. Treasury note to its highest intraday level since November before Treasuries rallied on Friday as investors sought out U.S. dollar-based assets. (Bond prices and yields move in opposite directions.)

## Europe

In local currency terms, the pan-European STOXX Europe 600 Index ended 0.26% lower. Major stock indexes also fell. Germany's DAX lost 1.35%, France's CAC 40 Index declined 0.63%, and Italy's FTSE MIB slid 0.73%. However, the UK's FTSE 100 Index bucked the downtrend, gaining 1.07%. The British pound's weakness relative to the U.S. dollar helped support the index, which includes many multinationals that generate meaningful overseas revenue.

### ECB points to June rate cut

The ECB left its key deposit rate at a record high of 4.0%, as expected, but said that if an updated inflation assessment, which is due in June, "were to increase its confidence that inflation is converging to the target in a sustained manner, it would be appropriate to reduce the current level of monetary policy restriction." Asked if the strong U.S. inflation data would affect the policy path, she replied that the ECB was "data-dependent, not Fed-dependent" and that U.S. and eurozone inflation were "not the same."

### Eurozone confidence rises; German output up again

Investor confidence in the eurozone rose in April to its highest level in more than two years, according to an index compiled by Sentix. The economic expectations barometer turned modestly positive for the first time since Russia invaded Ukraine. In Germany, industrial production in February rose 2.1% sequentially, the second consecutive month of strong gains, due to increased construction output. However, in the three months through February, production was 0.5% lower than in the previous period.

### UK economy grows for two months in a row

UK gross domestic product (GDP) in February expanded 0.1% sequentially, thanks to a rebound in manufacturing output. The Office of National Statistics also revised January GDP growth 0.3% from 0.2%, suggesting the economy exited recession. In the three months through February, gross domestic product expanded 0.2%.

## Japan

Japan's stock markets gained over the week, with the Nikkei 225 Index up 1.4% and the broader TOPIX rising 2.1%. As the Japanese yen hovered close to a 34-year low, investors' focus was on whether the country's authorities would step in to support the currency. Following a hot U.S. inflation print and subsequent rise in U.S. Treasury yields, the 10-year Japanese government bond yield rose to 0.84%, from 0.77% at the end of the previous week. It briefly touched its highest level since November 2023 during the week.

[T.RowePrice](#)

Index	12/04/2024	05/04/2024	29/12/2023	Week/Week	Year-to-Date
Dow Jones	37,983.24	38,904.04	37,689.54	-2.37%	0.78%
S&P 500	5,123.41	5,204.34	4,769.83	-1.56%	7.41%
NASDAQ 100	18,003.49	18,108.46	16,825.93	-0.58%	7.00%
FTSE 100	7,995.58	7,911.16	7,733.24	1.07%	3.39%
Euro Stoxx 50	4,955.01	5,014.75	4,521.65	-1.19%	9.58%

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# ABOUT US

Barita Investments Limited, is a publicly-traded company on the JSE, 74.3% owned by Cornerstone Financial Holdings Limited (“Cornerstone”).

The Barita Group is made up of Barita Investments Limited and its subsidiary, Barita Unit Trusts Management Company Limited (BUTM). Founded by Rita Humphries-Lewin in 1977, Barita has the distinction of being one of the oldest stock brokerages in Jamaica. The Company is regulated by the Financial Services Commission (FSC), is a member of the JSE and is licensed as a Primary Dealer and Cambio Dealer by the Bank of Jamaica (BOJ or the Central Bank). In August 2018, Cornerstone Financial Holdings Limited (Cornerstone or CFHL) acquired majority shares in Barita and has supported the Company’s mission and vision to be a premier investment force in Jamaica and the wider Caribbean.

## OUR PRODUCTS AND SERVICES INCLUDE:

- Stock Market investments on any of the three regional exchanges
- Fixed Income Trading
- Investment Banking Services
- Unit Trust Investments
- Currency Trading
- Structured Products
- Retirement Planning
- Wealth Planning
- Market Research

BUTM currently offers six (6) unit trust products spanning fixed income, equities and real estate and is recognised as a strong player in the middle market retail segment and a leader in unit trust performance.

Barita serves its clients island-wide through its Head Office in Kingston and branches in Mandeville and Montego Bay with a team of 163 members across its operations island-wide.

## Contact us

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