

Singapore Economics

Strongest NODX Growth Since 2012, Expect AI Boom to be Sustained in 2026

NODX Surge in April on AI-Related Demand

Singapore's external trade remained robust in April, despite the outbreak of war in the Middle East. Non-oil domestic exports (NODX) growth jumped to +24.5% in April (vs. +15.3% in Mar), its strongest expansion since Feb 2012, driven by robust AI-related demand. On a seasonally adjusted month-on-month basis, shipments expanded by +11%.

Electronics NODX maintained double-digit growth at +66.7% in April (March: +73.9%), led by ICs (+82.7%), disk media products (+148.9%), and PCs (+35.7%).

Non-electronic NODX rose +10.9% in April, rebounding after three straight months of contraction. Growth was supported by pharmaceuticals (+97.1%), specialized machinery (+23.6%) and measuring instruments (+60.5%).

Petrochemical exports saw a deeper contraction of -24.5% in April (vs. -17.8% in March), extending its decline into the 14th straight month amid naphtha supply disruptions from the Gulf conflict.

By major markets, NODX to the US rose +59.6% in April, reversing three consecutive months of decline, supported by pharmaceuticals (+739.1%), disk media products (+648.1%) and measuring instruments (+142.7%). Overall electronics NODX to the US surged +224% year-on-year (vs. 164.5% in Mar), while non electronic NODX grew 31.5%.

NODX to China strengthened to +37.8% (vs. +20.3% in March), driven by specialized machinery (+58.1%), non-monetary gold (+128%) and ICs (+69.6%). Exports to South Korea (+71.2%), Hong Kong (+63.2%) and Taiwan (+33.5%) continued to be fueled by robust electronic exports. In contrast, exports to Indonesia contracted in April.

NORX grew +29.6% in April, moderating from +60.8% growth in March due to smaller gains in both electronics (+41.6% vs. +89.8% in March) and non-electronics (+9.1% vs. +24.4% in March). NORX is a proxy for wholesale trade services activity.

Petroleum Surged on Both Domestic and Re-Exports

Domestic petroleum exports jumped by +38.3% vs. +5% in March, the first double-digit growth since July 2024 while re-exports of oil surged nearly 8-fold to above S\$1bn. This growth was attributed to both stronger regional demand and a price surge. The IEA's Oil Market Report on 14 April noted the surge to all-time high of above \$290/bbl for middle distillate prices in Singapore¹.

Resilient Economic Outlook, AI Boom to be Sustained into Second Half

We expect full-year NODX growth to come in above Enterprise SG's 2%-4% forecast range, with upside risks (4M26: +13.5%).

Outperformance will be driven by electronics demand as the global race to ramp up AI computing capacity continues, driving up orders for memory chips and server-related products. The AI capex boom will likely be sustained into the second half of the year.

¹ IEA, Oil Market Report, April 2026, [link](#)

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The top 6 US hyperscaler tech firms have been ramping up capex guidance for the year during the first quarter earnings season, amid increased investment in data centers. Consensus capex growth estimates for 2026 have been revised up to +77%, even higher than the +64% pre-results. In 2027, analysts expect slower hyperscaler capex growth of +22%.

The April PMI continues to foreshadow solid manufacturing and export activity in the first half, as support from global AI demand overshadow supply chain frictions and cost pressures from the Gulf war. The overall PMI rose +0.2 point to 50.7, the highest reading since Feb 2025. Electronics recorded a PMI of 51.7, accelerating from 51.4 in March.

We reiterate our full year GDP growth forecast of 3.4%. With the anticipated upgrade in final 1Q GDP growth to 5.1% (from flash estimate of 4.6%), MTI is expected to maintain the official full year GDP growth forecast at 2%-4% or narrow the forecast range to 2.5%-3.5%.

We expect the Singapore economy to remain resilient in 2026, with rising AI capex demand, safe haven flows and the construction boom cushioning the impact from the Gulf war.

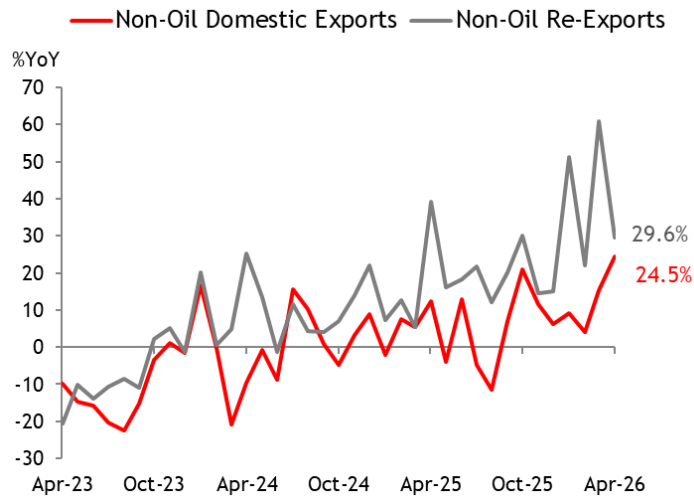
We continue to see higher-than-even odds of another 50bps S\$NEER slope steepening by the MAS in July. The Gulf War will likely have a disproportionately larger impact on inflation than growth, which will increase the pressure on the MAS to tighten its monetary policy further.

Table 1: External Trade by Category (%YoY)

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2Q25</u>	<u>3Q25</u>	<u>4Q25</u>	<u>4M26</u>	<u>Jan-26</u>	<u>Feb-26</u>	<u>Mar-26</u>	<u>Apr-26</u>
Total Trade	8.7	6.8	8.4	14.5	27.7	23.8	13.6	38.3	33.1
Exports	9.6	11.6	8.2	15.0	29.0	30.3	11.0	41.0	31.8
Domestic Exports	-0.7	-4.3	-4.5	8.5	9.5	1.1	-4.4	11.4	29.4
Oil	-9.2	-19.6	-6.4	1.0	2.9	-11.8	-17.9	5.0	38.3
Non-oil	4.8	7.0	-3.4	12.7	13.5	9.2	4.0	15.3	24.5
Re-exports	17.2	24.1	17.6	19.2	41.8	51.2	22.2	61.0	33.1
Oil	-44.3	-44.3	-47.2	-48.6	269.6	32.3	114.9	89.0	745.7
Non-oil	17.7	24.7	18.1	19.7	40.6	51.3	21.9	60.8	29.6
Imports	7.7	1.8	8.6	14.1	26.2	16.6	16.5	35.4	34.7
Oil	-13.3	-20.3	-4.7	-19.7	3.9	-12.5	-24.4	15.5	37.2
Non-oil	12.7	7.4	11.6	21.4	31.0	23.0	26.3	39.6	34.2

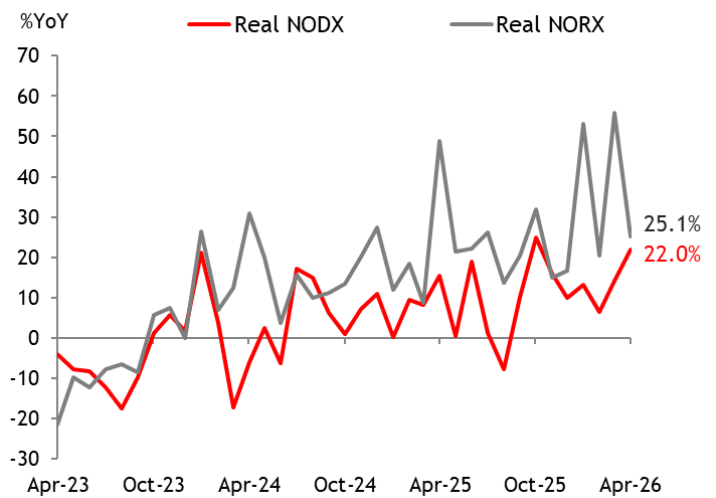
Source: Enterprise Singapore, CEIC

Fig 1: Nominal NODX Surged +24.5% YoY in April, Its Fastest Growth since Feb 2012, While NORX Grew +29.6%



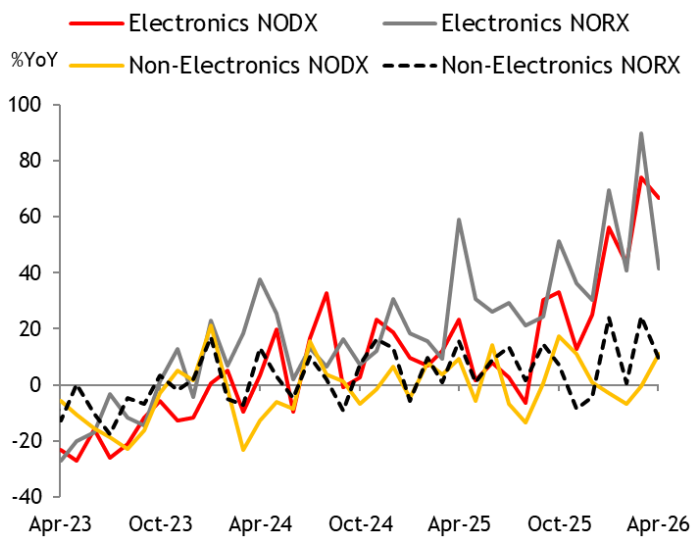
Source: Enterprise SG, CEIC

Fig 2: Both Real NODX (+22%) and NORX (+25.1%) Saw Strong Growth, Aligning with Nominal Figures



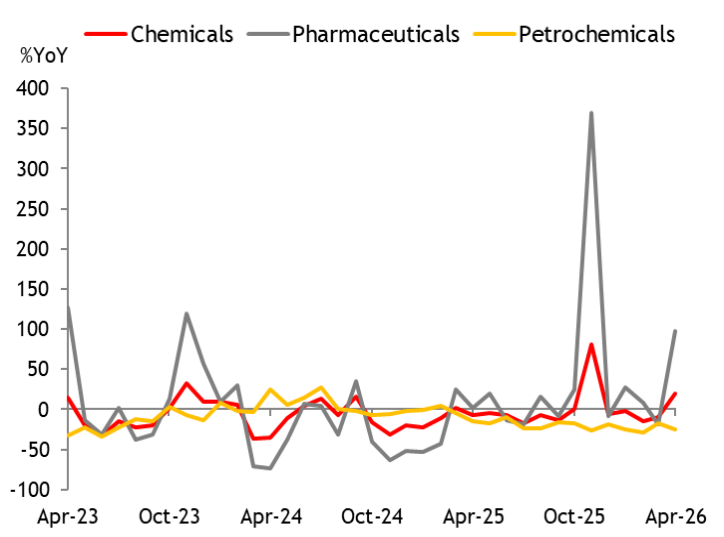
Source: Enterprise SG, CEIC

Fig 3: Electronics Momentum Stayed Resilient on Both NODX (+66.7%) and NORX (+41.6%) in Apr



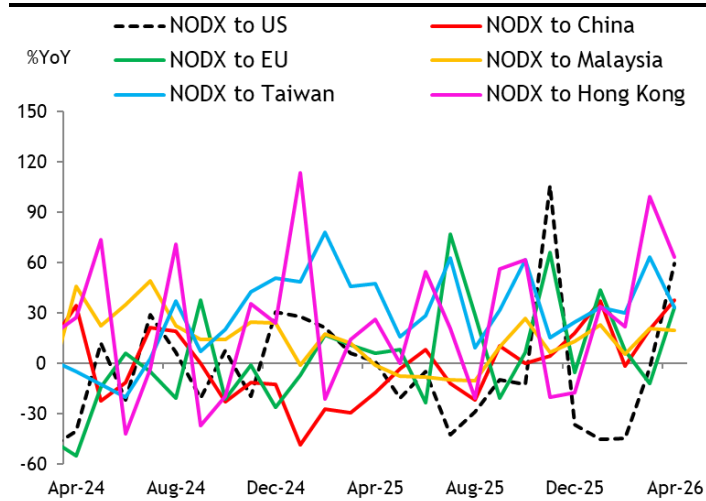
Source: Enterprise SG, SingStat, CEIC

Fig 4: Chemicals NODX Rebounded +19.6% in April, Driven by Pharmaceutical Gains (+97.1%)



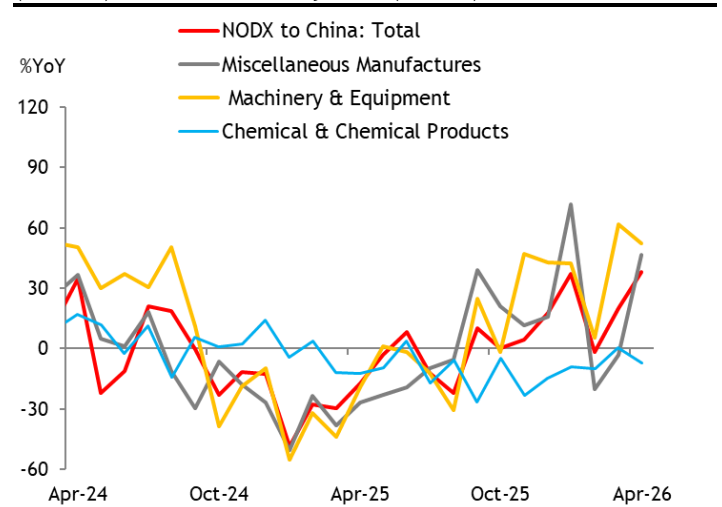
Source: Enterprise SG, CEIC

Fig 5: Strong Shipments to Major Markets on Robust AI Demand, Led by the US (+59.6%), Hong Kong (+63.2%), China (+37.8%)



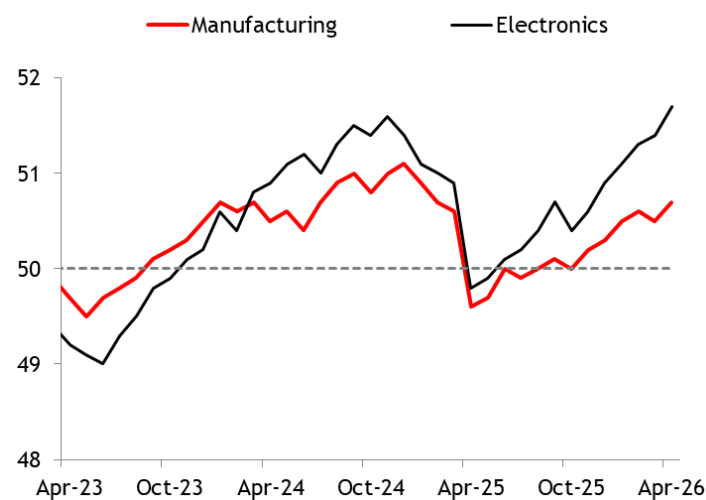
Source: Enterprise SG, SingStat, CEIC

Fig 6: NODX to China Climbed +37.8% in April, Extending a +20.3% Growth in Mar on Specialized Machinery (+58.1%), ICs (+69.6%) and Non-Monetary Gold (+128%)



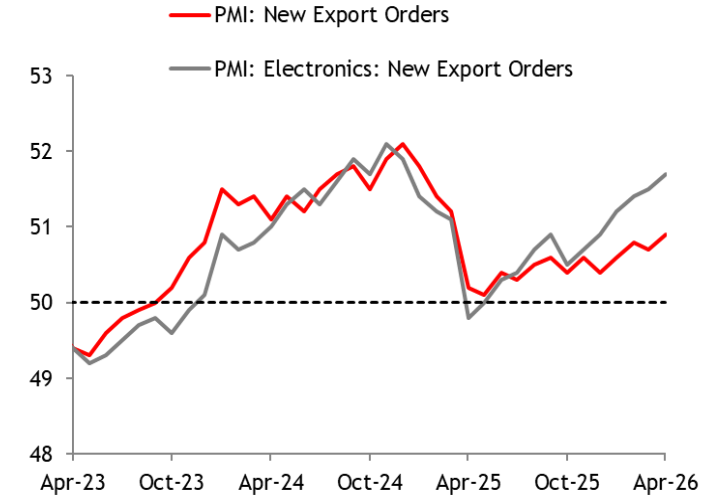
Source: Enterprise SG, CEIC

Fig 7: Both Headline PMI (50.7) and Electronic PMI (51.7) Pick Up Further in April...



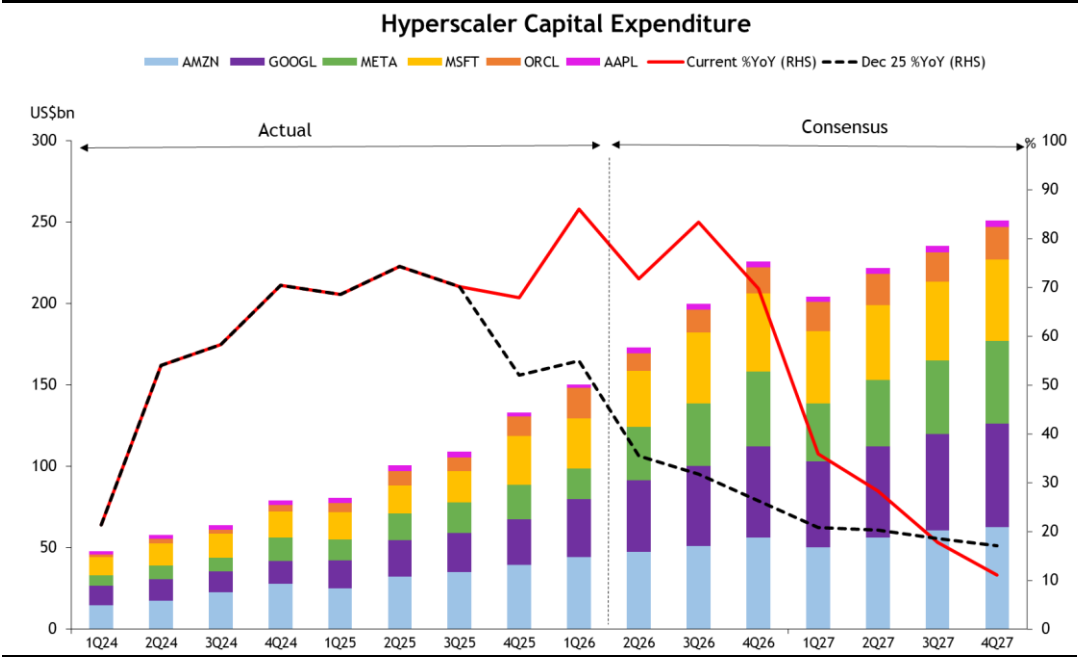
Source: SIPMM, CEIC

Fig 8: ... Fueled By Robust New Export Orders Reading in Both Electronics (51.7) and Headline (50.9)



Source: SIPMM, CEIC

Fig 9: Sustained AI Boom in 2026: Top 6 US Hyperscalers Planning to Expand Capex by +76.9% in 2026



Source: Bloomberg, Maybank IBG Research

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