Weekly Macro Wrap Up

July 20, 2026

IRON ORE

Stocks of Fortescue's Super Special Fines, a type of lower-grade iron ore, held at Chinese ports dropped 16.5% to a four-month low in the week to July 14, traders said, as steelmakers rushed to take delivery of cargoes before restrictions by Beijing kicked in. China Mineral Resources Group (CMRG), the state iron ore buyer, notified domestic steel mills in early July that from July 15 they must not take delivery of Super Special Fines held at ports. It later widened the restrictions to new purchases of Fortescue's Super Special Fines cargoes, Bloomberg reported earlier this month. Inventory of Super Special Fines at some major Chinese ports slumped by nearly 17% week-on-week to 6.01 million metric tons as of July 14, the lowest since mid-March, said three traders. (Mining.com)

BHP Group posted record iron ore output and higher realized prices last Thursday, despite purchasing restrictions imposed by China Mineral Resources Group amid tense contract talks earlier this year. Annual iron ore production from BHP's Western Australia operations on a 100% basis came in at 291.2 million metric tons, above last year's 290 Mt. Average realised prices for iron rose 3% to $84.56 per wet ton in fiscal 2026. BHP did not mention any pricing impacts from its annual negotiations with China's state buyer, after Reuters reported in April that its biggest customer had lifted its ban on certain products. China's state buyer has been flexing its muscles during annual pricing negotiations with big iron ore miners as it looks to tap its market size to pay less for iron ore, and lower costs for its steelmakers. (Mining.com)

GRAIN

Black Sea wheat prices strengthened sharply over the past week as renewed military escalation in the region disrupted export logistics and increased uncertainty for grain shipments. Since July 10, attacks on commercial vessels, port infrastructure and key export facilities have raised transportation risks across both Ukrainian and Russian trade corridors, prompting buyers and traders to reassess supply availability. Platts' Milling Wheat Marker increased by nearly 3% week-on-week, reaching its highest level in three weeks. The strongest gains were recorded in Romania and Bulgaria, where wheat prices rose 10.6% to their highest levels since June 2024 as buyers increasingly favoured the comparatively safer Constanța–Varna–Burgas export corridor. This widened the premium over Russian and Ukrainian wheat to around $25/mt, while limited availability of higher-protein Romanian wheat further supported prices. (SP Platts)

Severe heat and drought across key European growing regions are expected to reduce the EU's 2026/27 corn harvest, increasing the bloc's reliance on imports during the new marketing year. The latest forecast from COCERAL cut EU corn production to 52.7 million tonnes, down from 57.2 million tonnes previously and below last season's 57.4 million tonnes, as prolonged heat stressed crops during the critical pollination period. France has experienced the largest downgrade, with production now forecast at 9.4 million tonnes, compared with 13.8 million tonnes last year, marking the country's lowest corn crop in more than two decades. Hungary has also been affected by adverse weather, while conditions in Spain have remained relatively more favourable due to widespread irrigation. Italy's production has so far avoided major losses but is still expected to remain insufficient to satisfy domestic demand. (SP Platts)

OIL

China exported 577,000 barrels daily of fuel oil last month, which was the most since the start of the year and an 18% increase from June 2025, Reuters reported, citing official customs data. At the same time, overall refined products exports declined, as exports of gasoline, diesel fuel, and jet fuel remained under government restrictions. The total refined product number stood at 4.36 million tons, which represented an 18.3% decline on the year, the data showed, as cited by China Global South. As a result of the monthly surge, the total for fuel oil exports from China over the first half of 2026 rose by 7.7% on an annual basis, to a total of 10.87 million metric tons, the publication also said. China exports fuel oil mostly used for ships, with demand last month benefiting from lower prices, Reuters noted in its report. The demand increase was particularly marked during the second half of the month. (Oilpro)

Exports of liquefied natural gas via the Strait of Hormuz appear to have ground to a halt over the past three days, data from tanker-tracking firms have suggested, while oil tanker traffic has shrunk considerably, Reuters reported. ING analysts, meanwhile, wrote in a note today that the latest hostilities would have a more serious impact on gas markets than oil markets, based on the previous rate of export recovery in the Gulf following the June ceasefire deal between the United States and Iran. Anadolu Ajansi reported that Asian prices for liquefied natural gas had surged to March heights on the latest tanker traffic disruption in the Persian Gulf, with the regional benchmark adding 25% over the last four weeks. On an annual basis, the Japan-Korea Marker price has surged by over 60%, the report noted. (Oilpro)

Carriers Chartering Corp. S.A.
Kaplanon 7 & Massalias Street, 106 80 Athens, Greece | Telephone: +30-210 3668700
Email Address: capespmx@carriers.gr, handy@carriers.gr, snp@carriers.com
www.carrierschartering.com