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Inflation cools, but focus shifts back to oil

A soft US inflation release helped cool inflation concerns, but a new Middle East conflict escalation remains a risk via oil prices.

US inflation provides relief, but oil prices remain a risk

A soft June US CPI inflation print helped deflate prior concerns over the extent of inflation – and thus, Fed rate hike – risks. However, renewed escalation in the Middle East conflict has led to a new rise in oil prices, which could reignite some inflation worries. Oil prices are likely to stay centred within a USD 70-90/bbl range, with any temporary rise above this range unlikely to be sustained. This should help cap inflation worries and allow the Fed to stay on hold through H2 2026.

Higher yields an opportunity to lock in income

The tussle between easing CPI inflation and a renewed rise in oil prices means that US yields are likely to be rangebound in the very short term across both short and long maturity yields. Any rise in the US 10-year bond yield above 4.6% is likely to be relatively short-lived, unless geopolitical tensions push oil prices higher than we expect. Bond yields in the UK, nonetheless, are at risk of greater short-term volatility given recent political uncertainty.

Broaden technology sector equity exposure

Investor scrutiny on the extent of capex spending by the major hyperscalers is likely to persist through the current earnings season. In Asia, the Hang Seng Tech index as another way of capturing the broadening trade within technology, though Chinese and Indian equities should benefit more broadly as well. Beyond the technology and communication services sectors, US banks are also delivering strong earnings, led by trading and investment banking activity.

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