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Editorial

Strengthening Trust in Gold: A Call for Global Action

By Ruth Crowell

LBMA CEO

The global gold market is at a crossroads. As prices reach historic highs and the geo-political race for minerals escalates, the pressures on value chains are intensifying – and so too are the risks.

Illicit gold flows, regulatory arbitrage and opaque sourcing practices threaten not only market integrity, but public trust in gold as a responsible and reliable asset. There has never been such a high-risk of laundering of illicit gold given record prices and ongoing Russian, Sudanese and Iranian conflicts. Therefore, transparent responsible sourcing is not merely a consideration for gold centres – it should be a mandatory, transformative force, driving the market towards greater integrity and sustainability.

In this challenging landscape, LBMA is stepping forward with renewed energy and vision, deepening its engagement with the major International Bullion Centres (IBCs). These eleven hubs are the beating heart of the global gold ecosystem. Their commitment to upholding high-integrity standards and transparent practices will shape the legitimacy and strength of value chains, ensuring gold remains a symbol of reliability and responsibility. To focus attention on the greatest impact, LBMA is prioritising its engagement with UAE, Turkey and India as well as emerging African Bullion centres.

Transparency, Regulation and Enforcement: The Foundations of Trust

LBMA's engagement with IBCs has a solid foundation. Since 2020, we have set clear expectations for how key recycled gold trading centres should drive transparent, consistent responsible sourcing. But now there's a heightened sense of purpose and urgency. Today's dynamic market calls for greater transparency, more vibrant cross-border collaboration and a renewed commitment to trust, achieved through clarity and openness.

Oversight is all about knowledge: what is traded, where it originates and under what conditions. Digitally traceable value chain verification, OECD-aligned due diligence, public reporting and disclosure of country of origin are no longer 'nice to have'. They are vital instruments for identifying risk early, deterring illicit activity and reinforcing confidence across the market.

Regulation is equally important. Clear, consistently applied rules with stringent anti-money laundering controls form the backbone of a resilient system. By eliminating cash transactions where possible, verifying true origin, identifying beneficial ownership and applying enhanced due diligence to high-risk sources, we pave the way for a gold market that is more transparent and accountable.

London sits at the heart of the global gold trade. As the UK Government

steps up action on illicit gold – and uses its FATF Presidency to elevate gold as an illicit finance risk – LBMA is actively supporting UK Government efforts to strengthen market integrity and reduce vulnerabilities to illicit gold flows.

Fragmented Rules Create Perfect Conditions for Illicit Gold

This journey is a shared one. We recognise the importance of working together – with governments, regulators, industry groups and NGOs – to align outcomes, priorities and share information. This sustained collaboration supports public-sector recognition of responsible sourcing efforts, enhances policy alignment across borders, enables better monitoring of supply chains, and also strengthens credibility and market integrity. Collaborative action is how we turn standards into meaningful, system-wide outcomes to drive an end to illicit flows.

Collaboration also fuels continuous improvement. By evolving responsible sourcing frameworks in line with emerging risks, regulatory expectations as well as embracing traceability technology such as Gold Bar Integrity (GBI), confidence will strengthen and trust will build across the global market.

Ignoring ASM Is the Real Risk to Market Integrity

A particularly important – and often misunderstood – part of this conversation is Artisanal and Small-

scale Mining (ASM). Unregulated ASM presents risks, but the answer isn't exclusion – it's empowerment. For 2026, LBMA's focus is on enabling progress: supporting traceability, strengthening governance and providing practical pathways for responsibly produced ASM gold to enter formal markets. Priority engagement will focus on countries with the greatest needs and opportunities, including Ghana, Peru, the Philippines, Tanzania, Côte d'Ivoire, alongside guidance and capacity-building to support responsible sourcing. The recent partnership between South Africa's Rand Refinery and Ghana's Gold

Coast Refinery shows how local refining, supported by an LBMA Good Delivery Refiner, can change the dynamics on the ground and send responsible production to responsible markets.

LBMA's renewed engagement with IBCs embodies the OECD spirit of continuous improvement. We are committed to our role in the ecosystem, but recognise we alone cannot solve the serious challenge of illicit gold. Constructive dialogue remains central, and our expectations of consistent standards are clear. The integrity of the global gold market depends on robust

governance at every level, especially in the major centres that see significant global flows.

Responsible sourcing is no longer a future aspiration. It is a present-day imperative – and one that will define the credibility of the gold market for years to come.



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Front Cover
Precious metals supply chains often originate in remote and environmentally sensitive regions, highlighting the importance of understanding emissions impacts from the very first mile.

The front cover image depicts a great black cockatoo, native to New Guinea, the Aru Islands and the Cape York Peninsula in Queensland, Australia. The species is currently listed as Near Threatened on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.



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The *Alchemist* is published quarterly by LBMA. If you would like to contribute an article to the *Alchemist* or if you require further information please contact the Editor, Shelly Ford, LBMA, 7th Floor, 62 Threadneedle Street, London EC2R 8HP.

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A Refuge in Uncertain Times: Insights from the Investment Panel

By Shelly Ford,
Digital Content Manager, LBMA

Each year, the Investment Session is one of the most closely watched moments of the LBMA/LPPM Global Precious Metals Conference – and 2025 was no exception. With gold prices breaking records, portfolio behaviour shifting, and market structure evolving at speed, this year's discussion offered a timely snapshot of how leading investors, traders, and strategists are interpreting one of the strongest bull markets in precious metals history. Across the discussion, a picture was painted of a market entering a new structural phase rather than a passing cycle.

Moderated by **John Reade** (Chief Market Strategist, World Gold Council), the session brought together distinct perspectives from the following panellists:



John Reade
Moderator



Saad Rahim
Chief Economist, Trafigura



Amir Ravan
Senior Portfolio Manager – Commodities, Jain
Global, speaking in a personal capacity



Wayne Gordon
Managing Director,
Chief Investment Office, UBS

Consensus on Gold: A Bull Market Built on Multiple Drivers

In a rare moment of unanimous agreement, all three panellists opened the session by declaring themselves bullish on gold for the next 12 months, and for reasons that go far beyond price momentum.

Unlike previous cycles, today's rally is not anchored in a single macro force. All panellists noted multiple factors including:

- Gold as a hedge against geopolitical fragmentation;
- A response to fiscal dominance and rising debt burdens; and
- As insurance against persistent inflation, dollar volatility, or a fraying global order.

Importantly, none of these drivers appear close to easing. As Wayne observed, UBS has upgraded its gold price forecast six times this year and has seen gold holdings in client portfolios double, with participation nearly tripling. Even long-term private clients – including intergenerational family offices – are increasing their physical allocations, often in place of fixed income.

Feedback from the panellists all confirmed that their clients wished they had allocated more to gold during 2025, which led John to discuss forecasting and whether forecasts are helpful. The consensus was that the value of forecasting was in understanding the trends and conditions of the market, rather than the actual point number. Saad explained that he would look at the current price levels, review the prevailing conditions, and then decide how high it could go.

Dislocations, Liquidity and the New Market Structure

While investment demand has been strong, market structure itself has fundamentally shifted.

Amir highlighted the breakdown in global connectivity, citing diminished liquidity, wider pricing, and the erosion of traditional arbitrage channels such as the EFP. High-frequency market makers now dominate order books, creating shallow liquidity and sharper intraday volatility.

This changing ecosystem is not only altering how hedge funds express positions; it is also reshaping market psychology. As John noted, the migration of capital from futures to ETFs – and increasingly from ETFs into allocated physical – reflects a renewed interest in ownership certainty (especially for physical vaulted gold), not purely in price exposure.

Meanwhile, physical dislocations, including tariff-driven pricing divergences, have created fresh incentives for commodity traders. Trafigura, for example, is investing in expanding its physical gold team, linking this directly to the opportunities emerging from structural fragmentation.

This market dislocation has changed how clients 'trade' gold. Before, they would look at futures as a way of participating in the market. However, over the course of 2025, this has shifted to ETFs as well as physical gold.

The Bear Case: What Could Stop Gold?

When asked to articulate the bear case, panellists offered few or limited arguments – itself a telling sign of current sentiment. Nevertheless, several risks emerged:

A more hawkish Federal Reserve

Historically, the Fed has ended gold bull markets. A sharp reversal toward higher real rates remains the clearest threat – though panellists saw this as unlikely given the scale of US debt servicing costs.

A deep equity sell-off

While gold is a hedge, it is not immune to liquidity events. A disorderly correction could trigger short-term selling as investors raise cash – though historically gold recovers faster than risk assets.

Productivity breakthroughs (AI, robotics, energy)

John and Saad both raised the intriguing possibility that genuine productivity gains from AI, robotics, the Trump Administration's 'One Big Beautiful Bill' or cheaper power (namely fusion power) could drive strong economic growth and deliver a deflationary shock, which would bring down the price of gold. However, all panellists thought this was unlikely for the next few years.

Beyond Gold: Platinum Strength, Silver Potential, and the PGM Tariff Question

Pressed for their strongest conviction trade, the panel aligned once again – this time around platinum.

Amir argued forcefully that the metal remains structurally undersupplied, with sustained backwardation and extremely tight lease rates signalling deep physical stress.

Wayne shared that he was more optimistic about a moderate recovery of the industrial cycle occurring in the United States in 2026. This would support gold rising, but even a small increase in growth would fuel a higher price increase in silver, PGMs and copper relative to gold.

On tariffs, panellists agreed that while gold appears settled, PGMs carry real – if still modest – risk of policy action in the US, given their strategic role in automotive and industrial applications.

The Portfolio Question: Is 60/20/20 the New 60/40?

John challenged the panel with one of the most discussed shifts in asset allocation theory: a potential transition from the classic 60/40 equity–bond blend to a 60/20/20 model with gold replacing 20% of the bond / fixed income allocation.

While Wayne stopped short of a wholesale endorsement, he acknowledged the underlying trend: clients are increasingly reducing their bond holdings and replacing them with gold due to concerns about government debt sustainability and the weakening reliability of bonds as diversifiers – confidence in US government bonds behaving how they historically would, is diminishing.

Saad reinforced this point, noting the widening doubt about whether major sovereigns – not just the US – can credibly manage their long-term liabilities.

A Market Redefined

This year’s investment session underscored an evolution in how precious metals markets function, how investors engage, and how macro forces coalesce. The panellists were clear: this is not a rally driven by euphoria, but by structural change – geopolitical, financial, technological, and behavioural.

Gold is no longer just a hedge; it is becoming a central portfolio asset for institutions and private investors alike, though still only a small percentage of a full portfolio – about 2% having risen from 1%.

Silver and PGMs are re-entering the conversation with renewed relevance.

And the market plumbing beneath the surface – liquidity, access, regulation – is undergoing a transformation that will shape price behaviour for years to come.

As the session closed, the panel discussed the potential for market corrections. In Amir’s words: “You cannot deny that the environment we are in is a multi-year bullish environment – and who knows how long it can go on for.”



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Precious metals supply chains often originate in remote and environmentally sensitive regions, highlighting the importance of understanding emissions impacts from the very first mile.

A Connected Supply Chain: Understanding Emissions Beyond Mining and Refining

By Simon Rutledge, Commercial Director APAC, IBI International Logistics

The precious metals industry has made significant progress in recent years in advancing its understanding of environmental impacts across mining, refining and investment. Yet one segment of the value chain remains comparatively under examined: the logistics that connect each stage.

Transport has been treated as a functional necessity – a bridge between extraction and refining – rather than a material contributor to a company’s emissions profile and sustainability commitments.

But the reality is that logistics is one of the few parts of the value chain that touches every physical movement of metal. As the industry moves towards more sophisticated expectations around emissions measurement, disclosure and reduction, transporters have a unique and essential role to play in shaping how the sector defines and delivers credible sustainability outcomes.

A growing need for practical, achievable emissions data

While mining and refining have long been the focus of emissions scrutiny, the indirect emissions generated throughout the logistics chain are now receiving greater attention. Moving precious metals from remote mine sites, often in challenging geographies, to refineries, vaults and customers involves multimodal transport, each with distinct emissions profiles and constraints.

For the precious metals industry to continue maturing its approach to emissions, transport cannot remain an afterthought in ESG discussions.

Across the industry, organisations are increasingly expected to quantify these impacts. This is being driven by emerging regulatory and reporting frameworks such as the EU’s Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), the European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS), and the expanding application of Scope 3

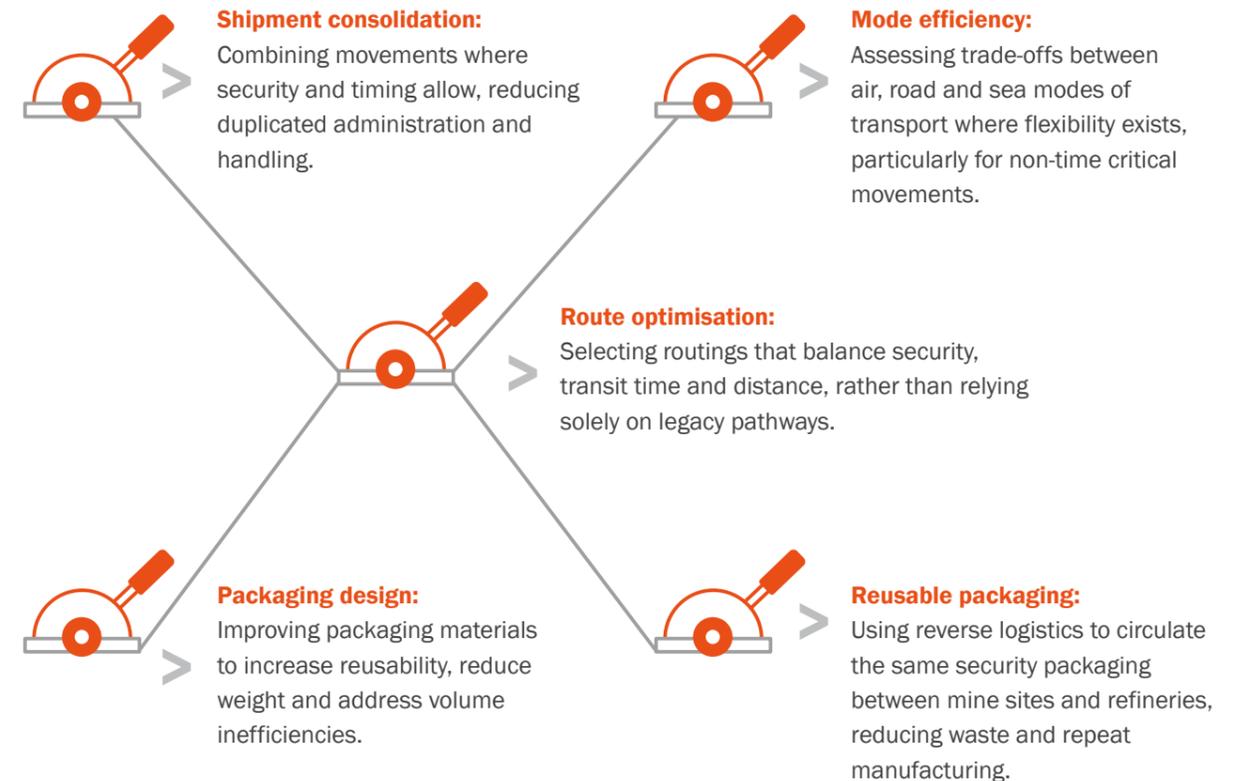
requirements under the Greenhouse Gas Protocol. Yet many companies still lack access to emissions data that is both rigorous and operationally grounded.

This is where secure transporters are well positioned to contribute. Sitting at the intersection of precious metals security, aviation and supply-chain infrastructure, transport providers understand not only where transport-related emissions arise, but also the practical levers available to reduce them. As part of strengthening this visibility, IBI has undertaken formal emissions measurement across its European and Asia-Pacific operations, reporting in alignment with global frameworks including CDP (formerly the Carbon Disclosure Project).

This work has required building consistent methodologies, improving data capture across multimodal movements, and assessing emissions sources that are often overlooked in traditional reporting boundaries.

The experience has highlighted both the challenges and opportunities inherent in quantifying logistics emissions and reinforces the value of involving transport providers earlier and more systematically in sustainability discussions.

Practical levers to reduce transport-related emissions:



From offsetting to collaboration: the next step in shared accountability

Alongside emissions measurement, IBI provides carbon-offset solutions across its global transport network, enabling customers to neutralise emissions generated at the shipment level. In some cases, this includes full mine-to-refinery measurement and offsetting for miners and refiners, demonstrating that emissions transparency can be achieved without compromising operational security or delivery timelines.

However, offsetting alone is not sufficient. The broader objective must be shared accountability: transporters

engaging directly with miners, refiners and other stakeholders to recognise how emissions are generated at each stage of movement, and where reduction initiatives can realistically be implemented.

This has been particularly evident in our work with refineries, where open dialogue has helped integrate transport-related emissions into broader sustainability strategies. In practice, this has involved sharing shipment-level data, identifying higher-emission activities, and exploring practical reduction initiatives such as shipment consolidation, improved packaging materials and design, reverse logistics, and route optimisation where feasible.



Air freight plays a critical role in the secure transportation of precious metals across global supply chains, with routing, consolidation and handling decisions directly influencing transport-related emissions.

Why transporters belong in the sustainability conversation

For the precious metals industry to continue maturing its approach to emissions, transport cannot remain an afterthought in ESG discussions. Standards or expectations developed without operational insight risk becoming aspirational rather than achievable. Transporters can help bridge this gap by contributing grounded, experience-based perspectives.

In particular, transport providers can offer:

- Real-world emissions data from multimodal logistics, spanning both frequent, recurring movements and ad-hoc, one-off shipments.

- Insight into operational constraints, including security, customs, regulatory and routing challenges.
- Practical pathways to reduction, informed by day-to-day operational experience rather than theoretical modelling.
- Consistency of measurement and reporting, supporting miners, refiners and financiers seeking to harmonise emissions disclosures across the value chain.

Importantly, secure transporters can also help clarify where emissions reductions are achievable, and where mitigation or offsetting may remain necessary due to unavoidable emissions profiles, security considerations or regulatory requirements.

Looking ahead: a more connected sustainability landscape

LBMA and its Members have demonstrated leadership in strengthening the industry's understanding of environmental impacts and encouraging transparent, credible reporting across the value chain. As sustainability expectations continue to mature globally, approaches to emissions will naturally broaden to reflect the interconnected way precious metals move from origin to end user.

Within this evolution, logistics has the potential to offer valuable insight. Transporters sit at the intersection of mining, refining and distribution, managing the most complex and security sensitive physical movements in the sector. The operational realities encountered along these routes can help illuminate where emissions arise,

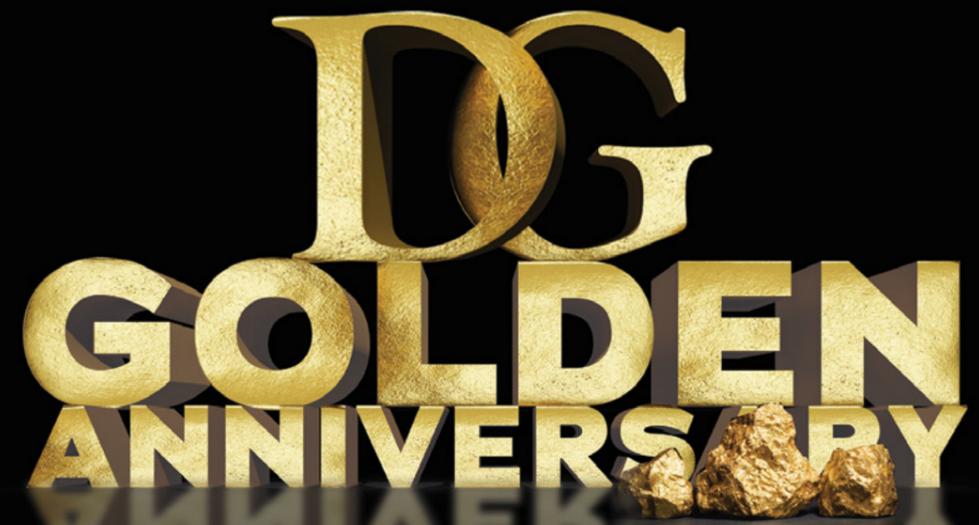
how they can be measured more consistently, and where reduction or mitigation opportunities realistically exist. By considering logistics in conjunction with mining and refining rather than as a separate function, the industry can build a more complete picture of its environmental footprint and the pathways available to manage it. In this way, transport becomes not just a facilitator of physical movement, but a source of practical knowledge that can support the sector's broader sustainability ambitions.

Ultimately, the movement of precious metals will always require secure, expertly managed logistics. Yet by integrating operational insight with evolving sustainability frameworks, the industry can continue progressing towards supply chains that are not only secure and efficient, but increasingly transparent, responsible and aligned with long-term environmental goals.



Simon Rutledge, Commercial Director APAC, IBI

Simon Rutledge is Commercial Director APAC at IBI International Logistics, a global provider of secure logistics services specialising in the transportation of precious metals and other high-value commodities. Based in Sydney, Simon leads IBI's commercial strategy across the Asia-Pacific region, working closely with miners, refiners, financial institutions and other industry participants to design and deliver secure, compliant and integrated international logistics solutions. He brings more than 15 years' experience across logistics, supply chain and secure transport.



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Trade Wars, Strong Dollars, and the Real Roots of Today's Market Disruptions

Richard Koo,
Chief Economist, Nomura
Research Institute

This article is based on Richard Koo's keynote speech given at the LBMA/LPPM Global Precious Metals Conference, Kyoto 2025.

I want to talk about what I call the three Ts: Trump, tariffs, and trade. This is not a typical subject for an economist working in global markets, but trade wars are not theoretical to me. I lived through one of the most intense trade conflicts of the modern era – the U.S.–Japan trade war of the late 1980s and early 1990s – and the lessons from that period are directly relevant to where we are today.

Back then, Japan accounted for roughly 65% of the U.S. trade deficit – far more than China ever did later. The political atmosphere became toxic. Trade friction turned emotional, nationalistic, and, at times, openly hostile on both sides. I found myself unexpectedly representing U.S. trade positions on Japanese television, explaining to

millions of viewers why trade imbalances mattered and why ignoring them would eventually backfire.

What I told Japanese audiences then turned out to be exactly right: if trade imbalances were left unresolved, the currency would adjust violently, industries would hollow out, and the economic model would break. By 1995, the yen had surged to 80 to the dollar, Japanese manufacturers began moving offshore, and Japan was forced to open its economy. That painful adjustment reshaped the country.

That experience shaped how I see today's trade tensions – and why I believe we are repeating many of the same mistakes.

The Hidden Crisis Behind “Strong” Economic Numbers

When Donald Trump won his second term, many people were surprised. After all, headline economic indicators looked solid: unemployment was low, equity markets were at record highs, consumption and investment were strong. In financial markets – including precious metals – we watch these indicators obsessively.

But those numbers masked a deeper problem.

From 1980 to 2023, U.S. equity prices rose roughly 5,000%. Over the same period, median real wages rose only about 15%. That is not a typo. Housing prices, meanwhile, rose nearly 95% in real terms. This disconnect created a massive population of people who did not benefit from globalisation, asset inflation, or financialisation.

These Americans are not visible in Manhattan or London or Tokyo. They live in manufacturing regions, logistics hubs, and former industrial centres. For decades, both political parties told them free trade was good for the country – even as their wages stagnated and their jobs disappeared.

When Trump started talking about protectionism in 2015, something profound happened. Millions of blue-collar workers felt, for the first time, that someone was speaking directly to their experience. That support shocked both Republicans and Democrats, who had assumed these voters had nowhere else to go.

This was not about personality. It was about economics – and about trade.

Why Persistent Trade Deficits Matter More Than We Admit

One of the most damaging misconceptions in modern economics is that trade deficits are benign. In reality, trade deficits reduce GDP dollar for dollar. A \$1 increase in the trade deficit subtracts \$1 from GDP. Over time, that leakage becomes enormous.

From 1980 through to today, the United States has lost the equivalent of 160% of GDP, roughly \$46 trillion, through persistent trade deficits. That loss was not evenly distributed. Financial markets, academia, and service industries benefited from a strong dollar. Import-competing industries did not.

Economists often explain trade deficits as a “savings problem” – Americans supposedly consume too much and save too little. But that story collapses when you look at what actually happened. If domestic demand exceeded productive capacity, U.S. manufacturers should have thrived. Instead, they collapsed. Entire industries disappeared.

The real culprit was an overvalued dollar.

When capital flows were liberalised in the early 1980s, money flooded into the United States, driving the dollar sharply higher. By 1985, the dollar was crushing U.S. manufacturing. Protectionist pressure became so intense that even Ronald Reagan – an ardent believer in free markets – was forced into coordinated currency action. The Plaza Accord cut the dollar nearly in half in two years, and trade balances improved.

That episode proved something critical: exchange rates can destroy free trade just as effectively as tariffs.

Tariffs Are the Wrong Solution

Trump correctly identified the problem: massive trade imbalances hollowing out the U.S. economy. Where I disagree with him is the solution.

Tariffs protect uncompetitive production. If firms need tariffs to survive, they are not globally competitive by definition. Over time, protection breeds inefficiency. That is not the dynamic, innovative economy anyone wants.

Exchange rate adjustment works differently. If the dollar falls, investment flows toward productive activity that is internationally competitive. Manufacturing returns not because it is protected, but because it makes economic sense. That is how sustainable reindustrialisation happens.

Many argue governments cannot influence exchange rates. That is simply wrong. Central banks may look small relative to global FX markets, but they have something private investors do not: the ability to operate without profit constraints and, in deficit countries, effectively unlimited funding capacity.

The Plaza Accord worked not because central banks outspent the market, but because investors stepped aside rather than fight coordinated policy action. We are seeing echoes of that today. Trump's constant focus on trade deficits has made investors wary of being long dollars. The result: the dollar has softened instead of strengthening.

Why This Matters for Precious Metals Markets

For professionals in the precious metals space, this entire debate matters enormously. Exchange rate policy, not tariffs, will determine the long-term trajectory of the dollar – and therefore the structural backdrop for gold and silver.

Persistent trade deficits, political backlash, and pressure for currency adjustment all point toward a world where dollar strength can no longer be taken for granted. If policymakers rediscover the lessons of Plaza – whether intentionally or by accident – the implications for real assets are profound.

Trump identified the disease correctly. The tragedy is that the lessons required to cure it have largely been forgotten.

Unless we relearn them, trade conflict will intensify, growth will slow, and global dynamism will suffer. That is not just a political risk – it is a market risk.

And it is one the precious metals market should be watching very closely.



Nicky Shiels (MKS PAMP SA) interviewed Richard Koo backstage at the Conference for LBMA. You can watch the video on LinkedIn: <https://tinyurl.com/ycxpf29d>



...till Running Trade Surplus with the US
East Asia in US

Richard Koo, Chief Economist, Nomura Research Institute

Richard Koo is a noted thought leader in economics and the creator of the balance sheet recession theory. Richard has been the Chief Economist at Nomura Research Institute since 1997. Over the years, Koo has advised several Japanese prime ministers, and numerous Western governments and central banks on economic and banking problems.

Prior to Nomura, Richard Koo was an economist with the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, and a Doctoral Fellow of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System. In addition to being one of the first non-Japanese to participate in the development of Japan's five-year economic plan, he taught at Waseda University in Tokyo as a visiting professor and was Senior Advisor to the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C.

Richard Koo was the number one economist in the Nikkei Financial Ranking for three consecutive years (1995, 1996 and 1997). He also took first place in the Nikkei Newsletter on Bond and Money from 1998 to 2000. In 2001, he was awarded the Abramson Award by the National Association for Business Economics.



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Precious Metals Set for Volatile 2026 as Momentum Collides with Mounting Risks

By Shelly Ford,
Digital Content Manager, LBMA

Precious metals are heading into this year with strong tailwinds but a growing set of challenges threaten to reshape market dynamics across the complex, so believe the analysts in the 2026 LBMA Precious Metals Forecast Survey.

Analysts see gold, silver, platinum and palladium breaching new highs throughout the year, including not just the \$6,000.00 mark for gold but even \$7,000.00 – while analysts expect silver to hit \$160.00. Platinum could see highs of over \$3,000.00 with palladium close on its tail.

Key Drivers Behind Instability

Gold remains the headline story after a record breaking 2025. Analysts expect the metal to average 38% above last year's levels, fuelled by expectations of lower U.S. real rates, continued Fed easing and unwavering central bank diversification away from the dollar. Geopolitical tension continues to cement gold's role as the world's premier safe haven. Yet the rally is showing early cracks: jewellery demand is retreating, some central banks appear price sensitive, and heavy speculative bets could trigger sharper reversals if sentiment sours. Since analysts submitted their forecasts on 12 January – when the gold price was \$4,612.95 – it's already seen huge movement, hitting a high of \$5,405.00 on 29 January.

Silver, meanwhile, is entering the year with industrial momentum on its side – and analysts are forecasting an average price of \$79.57 in 2026, up 98% from 2025's average actual price. Structural deficits, tight mine supply and accelerating demand from electrification, electronics and AI driven technologies are keeping bullish pressure intact. But after 2025's explosive gains, analysts warn the market is stretched. Price sensitive sectors are already rolling over, and any easing of tariffs or physical bottlenecks could unwind premiums just as substitution and recycling ramp up. Since submitting their forecasts on

12 January – when the silver price was \$84.07 – we have witnessed a swing up to \$118.45 on 28 January.

In the PGM space, platinum stands out for its unusually wide range of analyst forecasts. Analysts forecast an average of \$2,222.14, up 74.32% from the previous year's average. Supply remains structurally fragile, particularly in South Africa, and new speculative flows out of China are adding volatility. But improving recycling, stabilising mine output and softer autocatalyst demand threaten to cap gains. Since submitting their forecasts on 12 January – when the platinum price was \$2,374.00 – prices have swelled to \$2,811.00 on 26 January.

And with an average forecast of \$1,740.25 (up 51% from the 2025 actual average of \$1,150.29), palladium faces its own divide: bulls lean on near term tightness and policy driven disruptions, while bears point to rising battery electric vehicle (BEV) penetration, growing recycling flows and a looming return to structural surpluses. Since submitting their forecasts on 12 January when palladium was \$1,865.00, prices since hit a high of \$2,106.00 on 29 January.

*All prices relate to the LBMA (PM) precious metal prices.

Analyst Perspectives: From Bearish to Bullish Extremes

Gold

Of all four metals, analysts gave more conservative price forecast increases for gold. The gold price for 2026 is predicted to see gains averaging at **\$4,741.97** across the year. However, the forecast trading range is \$3,700 (from \$3,450 to \$7,150), up 103% from the actual range in 2025 of \$1,816 (and up 256% from the 2025 forecast range of \$1,040). The current gold price of \$4,666.85 (as at 19 January) is currently closer to the lowest low of \$3,500.00 than the highest high of \$7,150.00 – but it's all to play for.

Most bearish: Robin Bhar (RBMC) – average forecast of \$4,000.00, with a forecast low and high of \$3,500.00 and \$5,000.00 respectively.

Most bullish: Julia Du (ICBC Standard Bank) – average forecast of \$6,050.00, with a range of \$4,100.00 to \$7,150.00.

Silver

Forecast to reach highs of \$165 – and with a \$123 trading range – silver looks set to continue to outshine the others in 2026 with its average forecast of **\$79.57**, up 98% from 2025's average actual price. Analysts forecast a trading range of \$123 (from \$42.00 to \$165.00), up 170% from the actual range in 2025 of \$45.43 (and up 351% from the 2025 forecast range of just \$19.50), suggesting expectations of a potentially tumultuous year.

Most bearish: Bart Melek (TD Securities) – average forecast of \$44.25, with a forecast low and high of \$42.00 and \$86.00 respectively.

Most bullish: Julia Du (ICBC Standard Bank) – average forecast of \$125.00, with a range of \$62.00 to \$150.00.



Platinum

A bull story for platinum is expected in 2026, with average forecasts of **\$2,222.14** – up 74.32% from the previous year’s average. With prices forecast to hit a trading range of \$2,300 (from \$1,300 - \$3,600), up 76% from the actual range in 2025 of \$1,306 (and up 318% from the 2025 forecast range of \$550), analysts are clearly expecting a potentially tumultuous year.

Most bearish: Jacob Smith (Mitsubishi Corporation) – average forecast of \$1,700.00, with a forecast low and high of \$1,300.00 and \$2,600.00 respectively.

Most bullish: Bruce Ikemizu (JBMA) – average forecast of \$3,100.00, with a range of \$2,100.00 to \$3,600.00.

Palladium

With an average forecast of **\$1,740.25**, up 51% from the 2025 actual average of \$1,150.29, palladium looks set to make solid gains in 2026, building on its performance over the last few years. With a forecast trading range of \$1,810 (from \$1,090.00 - \$2,900.00), up 88% from the actual range in 2025 of \$963 – and up a staggering 3,191% from the 2025 forecast range of \$55 – palladium is slated to put in another solid performance for 2026.

Most bearish: Jacob Smith (Mitsubishi Corporation) – average forecast of \$1,400.00 and a forecast low and high of \$1,100.00 and \$2,100.00 respectively.

Most bullish: Keisuke (Bill) Okui (Sumitomo Corporation) – average forecast of \$2,300.00, with a range of \$1,100.00 to \$2,900.00.



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Congratulations to the 2025 Winners

Four 1oz gold bars kindly donated by **MKS PAMP GROUP** were the reward for the analyst in each of the four metal categories whose forecast was closest to the actual average LBMA price in 2025. The winners were:



Gold:
Keisuke (Bill) Okui
(Sumitomo Corporation)



Silver:
Nicky Shiels
(MKS PAMP SA)



Platinum and palladium:
Joni Teves
(UBS)



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The T-Sintermint Line: Re-Engineering the Production Workflow

By Luca Fiorini,
CEO Tera Automation Srl

In today's precious metals industry, innovation in minting technology is no longer a competitive advantage but a strategic necessity. Rising demand for efficiency, cost control, sustainability, and consistent quality is pushing mints and refiners to reconsider long-established production models. The T-Sintermint Line, developed by Tera Automation in collaboration with ABC Refinery and Coinatec, represents a step forward in this transformation, introducing a new approach to coin and bar production based on metal powder sintering and full process automation.

Presented at the IPMI 49th Annual Conference, the T-Sintermint Line challenges traditional assumptions in minting by re-engineering the entire production workflow rather than incrementally improving individual machines.

From traditional minting to process re-engineering

Historically, minting technology has evolved through gradual mechanical refinements. The introduction of rolling mills in the 18th century, followed by automated presses and annealing furnaces in the 20th century, significantly increased productivity and precision. Nevertheless, the overall production logic has remained largely unchanged.

Conventional minting relies on a multi-stage, fragmented process: metal is cast, rolled into strips, punched into blanks, annealed, cleaned, rimmed, surface-finished, and finally struck. This sequence typically involves up to eleven separate steps and ten different machines, each requiring handling, alignment, and quality checks. As a result, production times are long, operational complexity is high, and material scrap rates can exceed 50%.

The T-Sintermint Line takes a different approach by applying Business Process Re-engineering to minting. Instead of optimising each individual stage, it eliminates entire phases of the traditional workflow.

Metal powder sintering as a new production paradigm

At the core of the T-Sintermint Line is the use of metal powder sintering, a technology widely proven in other high-precision mechanical industries but unprecedented at this level of integration in minting.

The process begins with the atomisation of molten metal using high-pressure water jets, producing a controlled metal powder. This powder is then dried, sieved, and classified to achieve a precise and repeatable particle size distribution. From this point onwards, the powder becomes the primary raw material for production.

Instead of rolling and punching metal strips, precisely weighed doses of powder are compacted and sintered under controlled mechanical and thermal conditions. The result is a near-net-shape blank that already meets tight tolerances for weight, density, and geometry, significantly reducing downstream processing.

By adopting this approach, the T-Sintermint Line reduces the number of production stages from eleven to just six – simplifying the process while increasing repeatability, control, and overall robustness.

Full automation and robotic integration

Beyond the process innovation itself, the T-Sintermint Line is notable for its end-to-end automation. After powder classification, the entire production flow is managed by a robotic system designed to operate on a 24/7 basis with minimal human intervention.

Anthropomorphic robots handle powder dosing, transfer to cold compaction presses, movement through the sintering furnace, optional rimming, and final coining. Integrated weighing systems verify each piece before palletisation, ensuring full compliance with strict quality standards.

This high level of automation delivers several strategic advantages: human error is virtually eliminated, production consistency is enhanced, and all critical parameters can be monitored and adjusted in real time. The result is a stable, predictable process aligned with Industry 4.0 principles, where data, traceability, and digital control are integral to production.

Operational performance and efficiency gains

Material efficiency represents one of the most significant improvements. While traditional minting processes can generate scrap rates exceeding 50%, the sintering-based approach reduces waste to approximately 10–15% of remeltable powder, resulting in considerable savings in precious metal consumption.

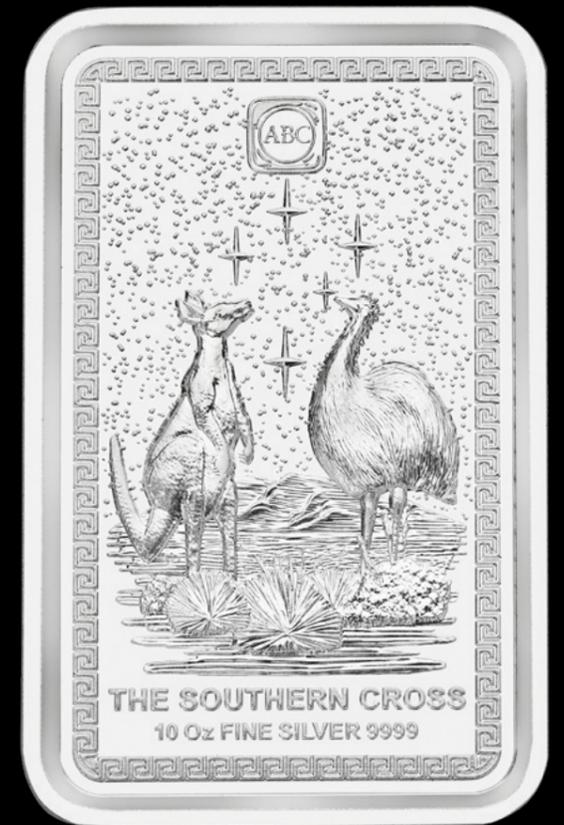
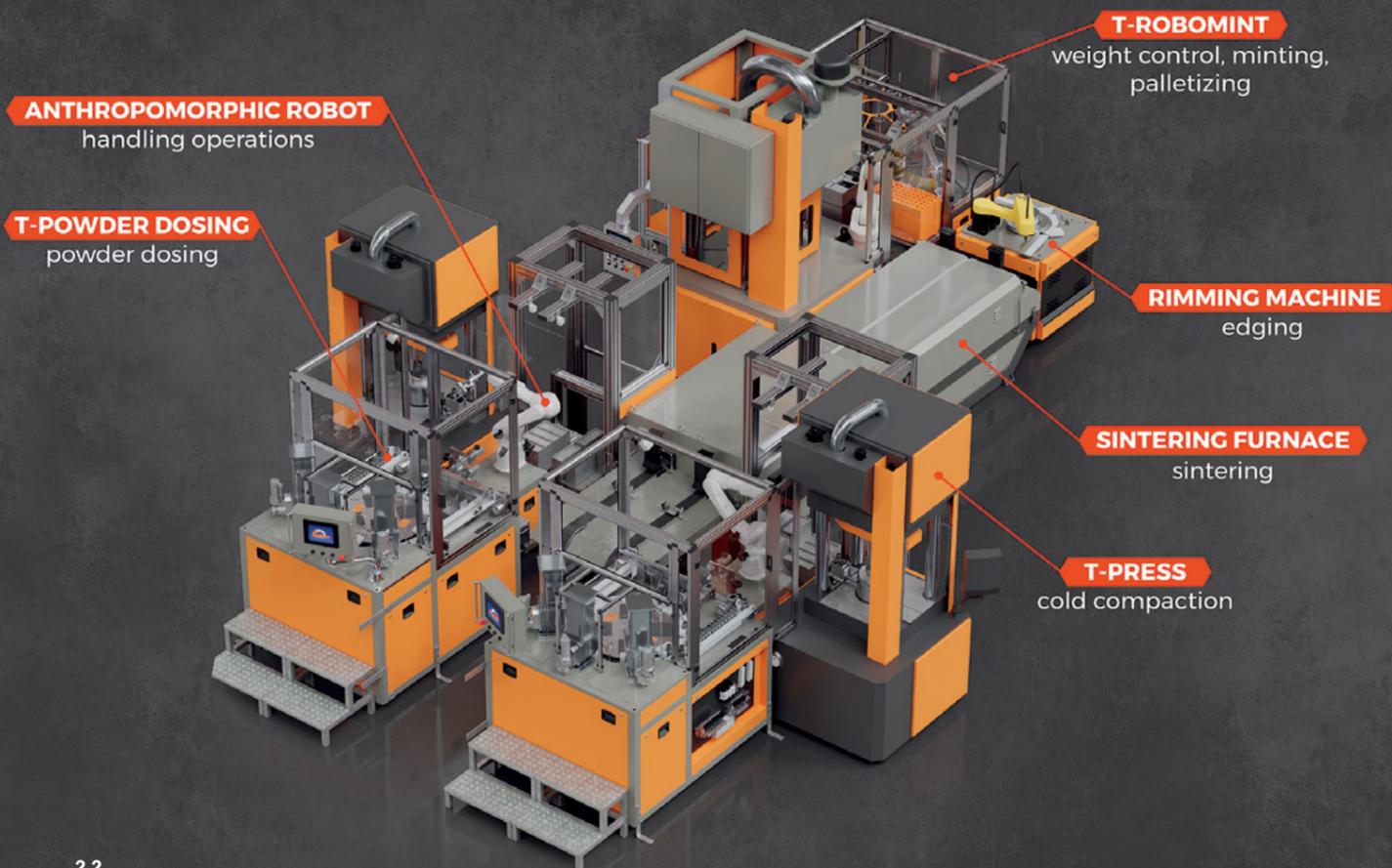
In addition, the sintering process enables high-proof surfaces and high-relief designs, opening new possibilities for premium numismatic products. It also allows the production of large-size coins and bars, complex geometries, and non-standard formats that are difficult or uneconomical to achieve with conventional minting technologies. The compact footprint of the entire line – less than 48 square metres – further enables installation in facilities where space is at a premium.

Lower capital expenditure, reduced operating costs and shorter production cycles – as well as a significant reduction in working capital tied up in raw materials and work-in-progress inventories – collectively improve the economic sustainability and financial efficiency of minting operations.

Implications for the precious metals industry

By reducing waste, simplifying workflows, and enabling full digital control, this technology aligns minting operations with broader trends in advanced manufacturing. It also supports greater operational flexibility, allowing producers to respond more rapidly to changing market demands, product specifications, and opportunities for high-value, differentiated products.

Through the integration of metal powder sintering, robotics, and full automation, minting can be transformed into a leaner, more efficient, more flexible, and more sustainable industrial process.



Luca Fiorini

CEO Tera Automation Srl

Luca Fiorini, originally from Arezzo, graduated in electrical engineering from the University of Florence and specialised in telecommunication and automation systems. He founded Tera Automation after collaborating with Italimpianti Orafi, designing a revolutionary tunnel furnace for ingot production. Fiorini later became a partner in Italimpianti Orafi (2018) and founded Maximeccanica (2019), focusing on CNC precision machining and 3D printing. Tera Automation offers automated production lines for precious metal ingots and coins, and actually holds nine patents. In the last year, Tera Automation acquired Doma Automation to expand expertise in the jewellery industry.

SPOTLIGHT ON



Goldinvest Edelmetalle GmbH joins LBMA as an Affiliate Member

Goldinvest Edelmetalle GmbH

5 QUESTIONS 5 ANSWERS

1 What were the reasons for you wanting to join LBMA and what do you see as the key benefits of membership?

Joining LBMA was a strategic decision. As a precious metals trading house operating in a highly trust-sensitive market, alignment with LBMA represents the highest global benchmark for integrity, transparency, and responsible sourcing. Membership strengthens our commitment to best practices, governance, and market discipline. The key benefit lies not only in the credibility the LBMA framework provides, but also in being part of a global network that actively shapes standards, dialogue, and long-term stability within the precious metals ecosystem.

2 Tell us about your company's role in the precious metals market?

Goldinvest operates as a physical precious metals trading and investment specialist, serving private investors, institutional clients, and strategic partners. Our focus is on investment-grade bullion products in gold, silver, platinum, and palladium, with an emphasis on secure sourcing, transparent pricing, and efficient cross-border structures. In addition to our European core business, we are actively building bridges between established Western bullion markets and high-growth regions such as India, where investment demand and market sophistication are rapidly evolving.

GOLD INVEST

3 What's the background and history of the company?

Goldinvest was founded in Vienna in 2008, during a period marked by financial uncertainty and declining trust in traditional financial instruments. From the outset, the company was built around the principles of physical ownership, risk awareness, and long-term value preservation. Over the years, Goldinvest has grown from a regional trading operation into an internationally active precious metals house, expanding its product range, operational capabilities, and geographic footprint while maintaining a strong focus on compliance and customer trust.

4 What factors do you expect to impact your business in the short to long term?

In the short term, macroeconomic volatility, interest rate policy, and geopolitical uncertainty will continue to drive demand for physical precious metals. In the long term, regulatory developments, evolving ESG standards, supply chain transparency, and the digitalisation of trading and custody processes will play a decisive role. Additionally, shifts in investor behaviour – particularly in emerging markets – are expected to reshape how bullion products are distributed and accessed globally.

5 What are your future plans for the business?

Our future strategy focuses on controlled international expansion, particularly in markets with strong cultural and economic affinity to precious metals. We are investing in operational infrastructure, regulatory alignment, and local partnerships to support this growth. At the same time, we aim to deepen our role as a trusted market participant by actively engaging with industry initiatives, fostering education around physical precious metals, and continuously aligning our operations with LBMA standards.



The Goldinvest Edelmetalle GmbH team (l-r): Alexander Dedishchev, Peter Siegl, Honorata Nina Szczepanska, Bernd Schomaker, Gernot Hinteregger, Varun Rishi, Moses Bodea, Aron Ableidinger.



Facing Facts

PGM Prices Supported by Ongoing Stockpiling and Strengthening Market Sentiment

By **Debajit Saha**,
Research Lead, Metals, LSEG

Platinum Group Metals (PGMs) surprised markets in 2025, outperforming gold by a wide margin. Platinum soared by 127% and palladium by 77%, compared to gold's 64.6% gain. Early momentum was driven by supply concern, heightened exchange-for-physical (EFP) activity following President Donald Trump's Liberation Day tariff announcement. In the latter half of the year, renewed demand for platinum jewellery in China, the launch of a new Chinese exchange, and expectations of softer emissions policies in Europe further supported prices. PGMs also benefited from anticipated US demand growth after the termination of the \$7,500 electric vehicle purchase incentive. Additionally, broader macro tailwinds – including US dollar weakness, inflationary pressures, and geopolitical uncertainty that boosted gold and silver – added to PGMs strength. We expect this positive trend to persist into 2026.

Exchange for Physical (EFP)

Consistent with trends across other precious metals, NYMEX deliveries surged as President Trump's Liberation Day tariff announcement approached. Dealers aggressively accumulated physical metal to hedge against potential supply disruptions if steep tariffs were imposed on imported metals. Platinum inventories in COMEX approved warehouses soared to 697koz in the first ten months – a 160% increase from the start of the year. Palladium saw an even sharper rise, with stocks jumping 359% to reach 176koz.

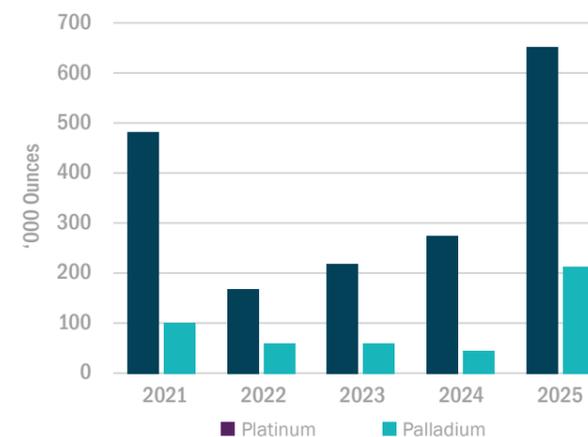
Russia remained the key concern, already under US and European Union (EU) sanctions. Russia is the largest producer of palladium and the second largest producer of platinum. Traders anticipated demand for PGMs to increase as the deadline for termination of the electric vehicle purchase was fast approaching. Meanwhile, dealers wanted to secure the inventories ahead of any

potential tariffs that could discourage importers from bringing the metal into the country.

Inventory levels in both the US and China rose in 2025, depleting the above ground stocks for commercial use. Platinum and palladium holdings are now at their highest levels in five years. China has been stockpiling these metals for several years, capitalising on periods of low prices and even introducing new PGM contracts on the GFEX. Stockpiling exercises in the world's two largest economies have tightened the inventory in the secondary market in London and Zurich, pushing borrowing costs higher.

Platinum imports into China were significantly higher in Q2 2025 than actual domestic demand, surging to 878koz – up 33% year-on-year. Notably, this coincided with the quarter when US President Donald Trump announced his so-called 'Liberation Day' tariff plan.

PGM stocks in COMEX warehouses



Source: CME, LSEG

PGMs also benefitted from positive momentum in gold and silver

In 2025, asset managers significantly increased investments in gold and silver as a hedge against portfolio risk. Both metals outperformed traditional assets such as bonds and equities, and this momentum spilled over into PGMs, lending additional support to prices. Global PGM ETFs recorded inflows of 10koz in 2025, following a substantial 313koz addition in the previous year.



Debajit Saha
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Debajit is a Lead Analyst at LSEG, based in Mumbai. He is responsible for precious metals research in Asia, Middle East. He has a bachelor's degree from the University of North Bengal, India.

EU allows 10% fossil fuel vehicles beyond 2035

The EU has rolled back its earlier mandate for 100% zero-emission new car sales from 2035, replacing it with a 90% CO₂ reduction target from 2021 levels. Automakers can now sell up to 10% of internal combustion engine (ICE), hybrid, and plug-in hybrid vehicles. PGMs remain critical for reducing emissions in these vehicles, with hybrid engines requiring higher PGM loadings than traditional ICE models. This shift is expected to drive stronger PGM demand in the coming years. Hybrid vehicle sales have already shown steady growth across major markets such as the US, Europe, and China in 2025.

Market Moves

Vincent Domien and Mathew O'Neil move to Tether

Together, the duo will oversee Tether's 140 tonnes stockpile of gold, and XAUF, one of the most actively traded tokenised gold products globally.

Vincent and Mathew's experience spans leading HSBC's Global Metals Trading, across futures trading, vaulting and physical gold transport operations, to precious metals origination for Europe, the Middle East and Africa, respectively.

Vincent and Mathew are joined by Charlie Benson, who founded the SMO Gold ETF. By integrating bullion market expertise with tokenised and electronic asset settlement and distribution, Tether aims to build the largest market for gold as both a tradable digital commodity and a future-proofing asset.



Vincent Domien



Mathew O'Neil



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