

- NOUVELLES -

OUR WEEKLY CAPITAL MARKETS UPDATE

International Market News Update

U.S. stocks eked out gains on Friday, extending a weekly advance, as comments from Janet Yellen and other key Federal Reserve officials confirmed growing expectations of a March interest-rate increase. The S&P 500 index closed up 1.2 points at 2,383.12, with six of the 11 main sectors finishing in negative territory. The index posted its biggest decline of 2017 on Thursday a day after notching its biggest gains a day earlier, when it closed a few points below 2,400. For the week, the benchmark booked a 0.7% gain, its sixth consecutive weekly advance. The Dow Jones Industrial Average closed virtually unchanged at 21,005.71. The blue-chip index finished the week 0.9% higher, booking a fourth consecutive weekly gain. The Nasdaq Index rose 9.53 points, to 5,870.75, ending the week 0.4% higher. All three main indexes were up more between 6% and 9% year to date, as investors continue to bid up the prices on hopes of fiscal stimulus.

European shares posted their best weekly gains of 2017 of Friday, although they were down on the day following disappointing company updates. French stocks performed better after a poll eased anxieties over the impact on markets of the presidential election. The pan-European STOXX 600 ended the day 0.1 percent lower after touching a 15-month high in the previous session. The benchmark index was up 1.4 percent on the week, however, its best weekly gain since early December, on a strong showing from financial stocks that would benefit from a U.S. interest rate hike seen as increasingly likely. France's blue-chip CAC 40 index closed up 0.7 percent, outperforming the broader European market, Germany's DAX and Britain's FTSE. It hit 5,002.32 points, its highest level since November 2015, after a poll suggested a victory for far-right leader Marine Le Pen in the French presidential election was less likely. Shares in French banks BNP Paribas, Societe Generale and Credit Agricole were top performers.

Japanese stocks fell on Friday as investors took profits before the weekend, after hitting a 14-month high the previous day on rising expectations for a U.S. interest rate hike this month. Bucking the weakness, index-heavyweight Fast Retailing Co Ltd rose 2.1 percent on strong monthly sales, adding a hefty 29 positive points to the index. The Nikkei dropped 0.5 percent to 19,469.17 points, after climbing to as high as 19,668.01 on Thursday, the highest intraday level since December 2015. The Nikkei rose 1.0 percent this week. Analysts said that many investors were on the sidelines awaiting a speech by Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen later in the day, which could provide the strongest indication yet about an interest rate move in coming weeks. The Fed's next policy-setting meeting was set for March 14-15.

Commodity in Focus

Crude oil prices ended the week back in the middle of the range they have been mired in for two months as a rebound Friday couldn't overcome big losses from the day before.

WTI crude for April delivery gained 72 cents, or 1.4%, to \$53.33 a barrel. Brent, the global benchmark, settled up 82 cents, or 1.5%, at \$55.90 a barrel.

US Indices	Net			
	Closing	Change	% Change	YTD
DJIA	21,005.71	+183.95	0.88%	6.29%
S&P 500	2,383.12	+15.78	0.67%	6.44%
NASDAQ Composite	5,870.75	+25.45	0.44%	9.06%

Europe Indices	Net			
	Closing	Change	% Change	YTD
UK - FTSE 100	7,374.26	+130.56	1.80%	3.24%
Eurozone - STOXX 50	3,116.91	+44.94	1.46%	3.53%
France - CAC 40	4,995.13	+149.89	3.09%	2.73%
Germany - DAX	12,027.36	+223.33	1.89%	4.76%
Netherlands - AEX	505.86	+10.96	2.21%	4.70%
Switzerland - SMI	8,670.06	+144.44	1.69%	5.48%

BRICS Indices	Net			
	Closing	Change	% Change	YTD
Brazil - Ibovespa	66,785.53	-1,804.02	-2.63%	10.89%
Russia - MICEX	2,056.89	-36.20	-1.73%	-7.88%
India - SENSEX	28,832.45	-60.52	-0.21%	8.28%
China - Shanghai	3,218.31	-35.12	-1.08%	3.69%
South Africa - JSE Africa	51,708.61	+98.75	0.19%	2.08%

Asia-Pacific Indices	Net			
	Closing	Change	% Change	YTD
Japan - Nikkei 225	19,469.17	+185.63	0.96%	1.86%
Hong Kong - Hang Sen	23,552.72	-412.98	-1.72%	7.06%
South Korea - KOSPI	2,078.75	-28.88	-1.37%	2.58%
Australia - ASX 200	5,729.60	-9.38	-0.16%	1.13%

Commodities	Net			
	Closing	Change	% Change	YTD
Gold Spot	1,234.81	-22.38	-1.78%	7.61%
Silver Spot	17.97	-0.40	-2.15%	12.85%
Platinum Spot	998.75	-28.75	-2.80%	10.59%
Palladium Spot	775.08	3.60	0.47%	13.82%
Crude Oil (WTI)	53.33	-0.66	-1.22%	-0.73%
Crude Oil (Brent)	55.90	-0.09	-0.16%	-1.62%
Baltic Dry Ind	939.00	+64.00	7.31%	-2.29%

Money Markets	Closing	Net		Net Change (YTD)
		Change (5-D)	Change (6-M)	
3M Libor	1.102	0.048	0.267	0.104
12M Libor	1.808	0.069	0.249	0.123
3M Euribor	(0.329)	-	(0.028)	(0.010)
12M Euribor	(0.113)	-	(0.061)	(0.031)
10Y US	2.478	0.166	0.876	0.034
10Y UK	1.185	0.107	0.458	(0.054)
10Y Germany	0.356	0.170	0.399	0.148
10Y Japan	0.078	0.010	0.111	0.032
10Y India	6.784	(0.132)	(0.334)	0.269

Currencies	Closing		Closing
USD/JPY	114.040	AUD/USD	0.760
USD/CHF	1.008	EUR/AED	3.901
USD/INR	66.805	EUR/INR	70.423
USD/CNY	6.897	EUR/CHF	1.070
USD/RUB	58.217	AED/INR	18.171

Source: Bloomberg

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Middle East Market News Update

Dubai Financial Market (DFM), the emirate's main stock exchange, launched a trading platform for exchange-traded funds (ETFs) in an effort to encourage the listing of more such funds by improving liquidity. The market currently lists just one ETF, Afkar Capital's S&P UAE UCITS fund, which invests on the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange and NASDAQ Dubai as well as DFM itself. It replicates the S&P UAE BMI Liquid 20/35 Capped Index, which includes the largest stocks by capitalisation in the United Arab Emirates. The new platform, which DFM described as the region's first of its kind, aims to make trading smoother and more efficient.

Oman's government has given itself breathing space from the pressure of financing a large budget deficit by selling \$5 billion of international bonds, almost completing its entire foreign borrowing plan for 2017 in a single issue. Wednesday's bond sale, in tranches of five, 10 and 30 years, was about double the size that most investors had expected and a huge amount for a country which returned to the international bond market in 2016 after an absence of two decades.

En Bref..... Biggest Market News

Standard Life Plc and Aberdeen Asset Management Plc, two of the U.K.'s largest fund managers, have been holding talks about an 11 billion-pound (\$13.5 billion) merger that would create one of the world's biggest asset managers. The merged company would manage more than 600 billion pounds and employ more than 9,000 people, with a possible annual cost savings of 200 million pounds. Standard Life has a market value of 7.5 billion pounds, almost double the 3.77 billion-pound value of Aberdeen. Standard Life shares have risen 1.75 percent so far this year, closing at 378.5 pence on Friday. Aberdeen's stock is up 11.3 percent, closing at 286.4 pence.

Events in the week ahead

9 March – European Central Bank Rate Decision.

10 March – US unemployment rate.

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