

## New York bourse falls for fourth straight day on Fed tightening bet

WALL STREET closed lower on Monday for a fourth straight session with Nasdaq leading declines as investors shied away from riskier bets, worried the US Federal Reserve's tightening campaign could push the US economy into a recession.

The three major US stock indexes have been under pressure since Wednesday, when Fed Chair Jerome Powell took a hawkish tone while the central bank raised interest rates. Mr. Powell promised further rate increases even as data showed signs of a weakening economy.

The S&P 500, the Dow Jones industrials and the Nasdaq have sold off sharply for December and are on track for their biggest annual declines since the 2008 financial crisis.

While US Treasury yields gained, investors ran from stocks, eyeing prospects of safer bets as they worried about the likelihood of a recession in 2023 according to Brian Overby, senior markets strategist at Ally.

The lack of big earnings reports or economic data on Monday likely sharpened investors' focus on economic fears and interest rates, according to Melissa Brown, global head of Applied Research at Qontigo in New York.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 162.92 points or 0.49% to 32,757.54; the S&P 500 lost 34.7 points or 0.9%, to 3,817.66; and the

Nasdaq Composite dropped 159.38 points or 1.49% to 10,546.03.

The biggest decliners among S&P industry sectors were communications services, which fell 2.2%, consumer discretionary, down 1.7% and technology, which lost 1.4%. Energy outperformed, closing up 0.13% as the sole industry out of 11 to manage a gain.

Market heavyweights such as Apple, Inc., Microsoft Corp. and Amazon.com, Inc. created some of the biggest drags on the market.

Trading in Tesla, Inc. was volatile with the electric carmaker closing down 0.24% after falling as much as 2.8% during the session. This was after a Twitter poll that showed a majority of respondents want Tesla Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Elon Musk to step down as CEO of the social media platform.

Shares of casino operators Melco Resorts & Entertainment tumbled just under 8% and Wynn Resorts lost 5.2% while Las Vegas Sands Corp. fell 2.3% after Macau said on Friday that six casino firms will invest around \$15 billion as part of new 10-year contracts they signed to operate in the world's biggest gambling hub.

Declining issues outnumbered advancing ones on the NYSE by a 2.80-to-1 ratio; on Nasdaq, a 2.63-to-1 ratio favored decliners. — **Reuters**

# Oil rises as China easing offsets recession fears

NEW YORK — Oil prices rose on Monday, as optimism around China relaxing its coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) restrictions outweighed fears of a global recession that would weigh on energy demand.

China, the world's top crude oil importer, is experiencing its first of three expected waves of COVID-19 cases after Beijing relaxed mobility restrictions but said it plans to step up support for the economy in 2023.

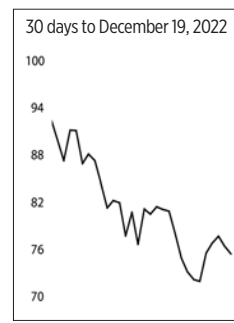
"There is no doubt that demand is being adversely influenced," said Naem Aslam, analyst at brokerage Avatrade. "However, not everything is so negative as China has vowed to fight all pessimism about its economy, and it will do what it takes to boost economic growth."

Brent crude gained 76 cents to settle at \$79.80 a barrel, while US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude rose 90 cents to \$75.19.

Prices regained gains earlier before rising again in a volatile session.

Oil surged toward its record high of \$147 a barrel earlier in the year after Russia invaded Ukraine in February. It has since unwound most of this year's

ASIA-DUBAI (DECEMBER CONTRACT)



NEW YORK-WTI (JANUARY CONTRACT)



LONDON-BRENT (FEBRUARY CONTRACT)

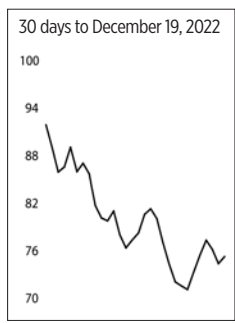


gains as supply concerns were edged out by recession fears.

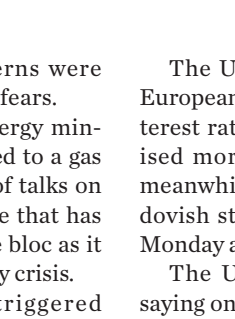
European Union energy ministers on Monday agreed to a gas price cap, after weeks of talks on the emergency measure that has split opinion across the bloc as it seeks to tame the energy crisis.

The cap can be triggered starting from Feb. 15 2023, the document detailing the final deal showed. The deal will be formally approved by countries in writing, after which it can enter into force.

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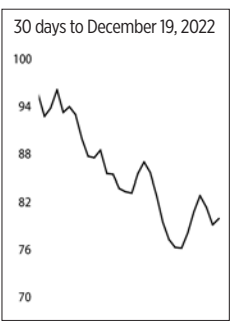


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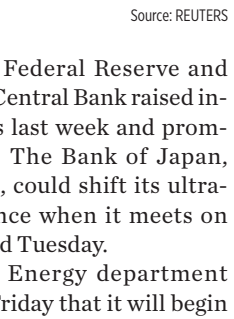
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## Gold bullion inches lower on rising yields

GOLD PRICES inched lower on Monday in thin trading, as rising yields on expectations of higher interest rates countered weakness in the US dollar.

Spot gold fell 0.2% to \$1,789.46 per ounce by 1:51 p.m. ET (1851 GMT), while US gold futures settled down 0.1% to \$1,797.

"We're just seeing a quieter day. We're starting to see some pre-holiday trading set in and the gold and silver traders are looking for a fresh fundamental input after recent central bank data," said Jim Wyckoff, senior analyst at Kitco Metals.

US Treasury yields rose on Monday, while the dollar eased. Higher interest

rates and bond yields increase the opportunity cost of holding the non-yielding bullion.

US Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said last week the central bank will deliver more interest rate hikes next year. Other major central banks have also signaled the same.

Prices could trade sideways to higher into the end of the year, with some early bargain hunting in the gold market, once bigger institutions and funds start to make some new purchases, Mr. Wyckoff added.

In top gold consumer China, coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is

sweeping through trading floors in Beijing and spreading fast in the financial hub of Shanghai.

However, the government said it would step up measures to stabilize its economy amid damage from COVID-19.

"You're going to need to see an uptick in economic activity in China in order to spark some of the industrial metals," said Phillip Streible, chief market strategist at Blue Line Futures in Chicago.

Spot silver fell 1% to \$22.97 per ounce; platinum dropped 1.1% to \$980.25; and palladium dipped 2.1% to \$1,677.04. — **Reuters**

### BoP, from S1/1

Latest data showed the trade deficit widened to \$49.98 billion as of end-October, from the \$32.40-billion gap a year ago. Imports rose 22.7% to \$115.99 billion in the 10-month period, while exports grew by 6.3% year on year to \$66.01 billion.

"The year-to-date levels, on the other hand, shows how imports growth are outpacing exports with local demand stronger during the holiday season, while external demand is dampened mostly by China's lockdowns, US inflation, and global slowdowns," Mr. Rocas said.

BSP data also showed gross international reserves (GIR) reached \$95.1 billion as of end-November, up 1.17% from \$94 billion in the prior month.

The dollar buffers are enough to service 7.2 months' worth of imports of goods and payments of services and primary income.

The GIR can also cover up to 5.8 times the country's short-term external debt based on original maturity and 3.8 times based on residual maturity.

"Moving forward, the BoP may remain in negative territory as external demand will remain down in the interim with our largest trading partner, China, just beginning to pivot towards looser curbs," Mr. Rocas said.

Earlier this month, China began dropping its "zero-COVID" policy, which included strict lockdowns and testing. However, health experts said China may face a large wave of coronavirus infections in the next few months.

### PEZA, from S1/1

"It's known now that the European economic situation is not quite optimistic, so that would may affect some of the investments that we will be expecting... Similar to North America, the recent increase in interest rates has put a halt to some of the optimistic projections for 2023," he said.

Mr. Barcelon said the Philippine government still has to address concerns of investors, such as power availability and high power rates, among others.

Mr. Panga, on the other hand, is confident that more foreign direct investments will enter the country in 2023.

"What is important is we keep building and sustaining the confidence of invest-



PEXELS-TARA WINSTEAD

"For the coming months, especially in December, BoP data could still improve with the expected seasonal increase in the country's structural inflows," Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. Chief Economist Michael L. Ricafort said in a note.

He cited remittances from migrant Filipino workers, foreign tourism receipts, as well as revenues from business process outsourcing and Philippine Offshore Gaming Operators, among others.

The BSP earlier said it expects the country to post a wider BoP deficit this year as the global outlook is clouded with uncertainty.

The country's BoP is now expected to end the year at a deficit of \$11.2 billion or equivalent to -2.8% of gross domestic product (GDP), bigger than the previous projection of a \$8.4-billion deficit (-2% of GDP) announced in September.

The BSP projected the GIR to hit \$93 billion by end-2022 and by end-2023, lower than the September projections of \$99 billion and \$100 billion, respectively. — **Keisha B. Ta-asan**

tors and the country's competitiveness in investment promotions and facilitations," Mr. Panga said.

The Philippine economy grew by 7.7% in the first nine months of the year, putting it on track to surpass the government's 6.5-7.5% full-year target.

"We are... actively engaging various government agencies and industry partners among others to aggressively promote the Philippines. We need to get our act together; we cannot do this alone. By doing that, we can achieve regulatory coherence and enhance further ease of doing business in the ecozones," Mr. Panga said. — **Arjay L. Balinbin**

## LANDBANK-funded 'Cocohub' boosts Cebu farmers' income

When Super Typhoon "Yolanda" devastated parts of the country in 2013, coconut farmers from Tuburan, Cebu struggled with lower productivity and income. They were left with damaged coconut farms, making it even harder to earn a living for their families.

This dire situation pushed the Lamac Multi-Purpose Cooperative (LMPC) to support its farmer-members by establishing a production center for diverse products made from coconuts, which provides farmers with higher income from selling all parts of their produce to LMPC at a competitive price, instead of relying solely on producing copra.

The Coconut Hub or 'Cocohub' facility, the first-of-its-kind in Cebu, commenced operations in 2020. Today, the center processes 15,000 seed nuts a day for the production of virgin coconut oil, coco sugar, coco baskets, ropes, mats, and anti-soil erosion nets, among others.

The Cocohub project benefits over 500 farmers from Tuburan and neighboring towns, while generating employment opportunities for women in the community who work full-time in the hub.

The operations of the Cocohub is backed by financial support from the Land Bank of the Philippines (LANDBANK) — a long-time development partner of the LMPC. Loans from the Bank are used as working capital for the purchase of furniture and fixtures, payment of raw materials to suppliers, and salary of the cooperative's workers.

"Malaki ang naitutulung ng LANDBANK upang mapanatili ang operasyon ng Cocohub, lalo na at hindi ganon kabilis ang return of investment dito. Parang pamilya na namin ang LANDBANK dahil lahat ng pangangailangang pampinansiyal ng LMPC ay sila talaga ang tumutugon," said LMPC General Manager Ma. Elena C. Limocan.

The Cocohub is a joint project with the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA), which provides the LMPC infrastructure support and essential equipment, including a decorticating machine.

Other government agencies and local government units (LGUs) are likewise supporting the project to



**The Coconut Hub of Lamac Multi-Purpose Cooperative (LMPC) at Barangay Colonia in Tuburan, Cebu produces various products made from coconuts, that has been helping increase the income of local coconut farmers while providing livelihood opportunities among women in the community. (Photos courtesy of LMPC)**

help sustain its operations. These include the Department of Science and Technology (DoST), Department of Trade and Industries (DTI), Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), and the Cebu Technological University (CTU), which provide information resources, product innovations, and relevant trainings to capacitate farmers as well as for marketing of the goods.

"LANDBANK is a proud partner of the LMPC Cocohub designed to uplift the lives of coconut farmers and communities in Cebu. This project is a shining example of how government partners working under a whole-of-nation approach can build a sustainable and inclusive agricultural value chain," said LANDBANK President and CEO Cecilia C. Borromeo.

### DEVELOPMENT PARTNER IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

The LMPC has been a consistent development partner of LANDBANK in the Visayas region since 1992. It is mainly engaged in credit extension through its 56 branches, assisting more than 120,000 farmers and fishers from the provinces of Cebu, Bohol, Negros Occidental and Leyte for their livelihood and agricultural projects.

LANDBANK's unwavering support to LMPC has also allowed the co-op to take on other meaningful projects and initiatives in support of various local communities.

The LMPC has participated in the Milk Feeding Program of the Department of Education (DepEd) that benefits thousands of undernourished students from Cebu and Negros Occidental. The co-op has an existing loan line from LANDBANK to augment its working capital for dairy production.

The LMPC is also instrumental in bringing basic banking services to underserved areas by equipping most of its branches with point-of-sale (POS) terminals under LANDBANK's Agent Banking Program (ABP), to facilitate banking transactions for local residents, especially in remote communities.

LANDBANK is the second largest universal bank in the country that is committed to serve the development requirements of cooperatives, thereby empowering them to become catalysts for inclusive growth in the countryside.

As of end-October 2022, LANDBANK's outstanding loans to the cooperative sector have reached P61.4 billion, helping over 1,300 co-ops nationwide.

### SPOT PRICES

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2022

**METAL**  
PALLADIUM free \$/troy oz 1,721.57  
PALLADIUM JMI base \$/troy oz 1,737.00  
PLATINUM free \$/troy oz 995.48  
PLATINUM JMI base \$/troy oz 1,008.00  
KRUGGERAND, fob \$/troy oz 1,791.00  
IRIDIUM, whs rot, \$/troy oz 4,790.00  
RHODIUM, whs rot, \$/troy oz 12,290.00

**GRAINS** (December 15, 2022)  
(FOB Bangkok basis at every Thursday)  
FRAGRANT (100%) 1st Class, \$/ton 874.00  
FRAGRANT (100%) 2nd Class, \$/ton 845.00  
RICE (5%) White Thai- \$/ton 465.00  
RICE (10%) White Thai- \$/ton 464.00  
RICE (15%) White Thai- \$/ton 460.00  
RICE (25%) White Thai- \$/ton (Super) 460.00  
BROKER RICE A-1 Super \$/ton 421.00

**FOOD**  
COCOA ICCO Dly (SDR)/mt 1,809.39  
COCOA ICCO \$/mt 2,406.36  
COFFEE ICA comp '2001 cts/lb 155.93  
SUGAR ISA FOB Daily Price, Carib. port cts/lb 18.97  
SUGAR ISA 15-day Avc. 18.67

### LIFFE COFFEE

New Robusta 10 MT - \$/ton

	High	Low	Sett	Psett
Jan.	1,951	1,928	1,945	1,933
Mar.	1,876	1,856	1,858	1,866
May	1,844	1,823	1,824	1,836
July	1,828	1,812	1,812	1,821

### LIFFE COCOA

(Ldn)-10 MT-E/ton

	High	Low	Sett	Psett
Mar.	1,982	1,957	1,975	1,966
May	1,909	1,886	1,902	1,893
July	1,886	1,867	1,881	1,872
Sept.	1,864	1,850	1,861	1,854

### COCONUT

MANILA COPRA (based on 6% moisture)  
Peso/100kg Buyer/Seller  
Lag/Qzn/Luc 22 3,400.00/3,450.00  
Philippine Coconut Oil - Crude  
CIF NY/NOLA 57.5000  
PALM OIL RAIL/NOLA 65.5000  
COCONUT OIL (PHIL/IDN), \$ per ton,  
CIF Europe  
Dec./Jan.'23 0.00/1,185.00  
Jan./Feb.'23 1,050.00/1,155.00  
Feb./Mar.'23 1,095.00/1,155.00  
Mar./Apr.'23 1,110.00/1,150.00

### LONDON METAL EXCHANGE

LME FINAL CLOSING PRICES, US\$/MT 3 MOS

ALUMINUM H.G.	2,361.00
ALUMINUM Alloy	1,860.00
COPPER	8,320.00
LEAD	2,160.00
NICKEL	27,215.00
TIN	23,507.00
ZINC	3,012.00