



## Oil falls

AFP, London

World oil prices fell Friday on worries about weak energy demand in the United States and over the strength of China's economy, traders said.

New York's main contract, light sweet crude for March delivery, sank 98 cents to \$75.15 dollars a barrel.

Brent North Sea crude for delivery in March dived 1.06 dollars to \$73.52 dollars a barrel.

The US Department of Energy (DoE) on Thursday said that gasoline, or petrol, reserves in the world's biggest economy increased by a stronger-than-expected 3.9 million barrels in the week ending January 15, striking a two-year high.

It also said refineries operated at 78.4 percent of capacity last week, their lowest rate in at least two decades apart from the immediate aftermath of a hurricane.

However, US crude stocks fell 400,000 barrels, according to the DoE report, confounding expectations of a large gain of 1.9 million barrels.

The United States is the world's largest energy consuming nation, followed by number two China.

## Weekly Currency Roundup

Jan 17-Jan 21st, 2010

### International Markets

The euro fell broadly this week. By the end of the week the euro had hit its weakest against the dollar in nearly six months on Thursday stung by concerns over Greece and other peripheral euro zone countries. Technical forces are also playing into the mix as recent breaches of key support levels have added to the selling momentum. Ongoing weakness in the single European currency prompted a broad rise in the dollar, which extended this week's winning streak and hit a 4-1/2-month high against a currency basket.

Analysts said the US currency benefited from a slide in global share prices and the dollar index's vault above its 200-day moving average on Thursday. The euro dropped under its 200-day moving average against the dollar on Wednesday for the first time since May 2009. Analysts said this suggested it may be prone to more weakness.

The Australian dollar slipped as robust Chinese growth and higher inflation data raised speculation of further monetary tightening, which could hurt commodity-linked currencies. China's annual gross domestic product expanded 10.7 percent in the fourth quarter, while third quarter growth was revised up to 9.1 percent. Growth for the year was 8.7 percent, surpassing Beijing's 8.0 percent target. That raised speculation of further tightening after recent steps by China's central bank to rein in liquidity. On Thursday, it guided rates on 3-month bills higher. China is Australia's top trading partner, making the Aussie sensitive to growth expectations for China.

### Local Money Market

The call money rate traded in the range of 4.0 percent.

### Local Market FX

The USD remained steady against the BDT this week. The market was active and there was ample liquidity.

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