



Economic Headlines

Wednesday, 31 October 2018

Skyscraper farms are about to go global

In a suburb of Kyoto in Japan, surrounded by technology companies and startups, Spread Co. is preparing to open the world's largest automated leaf-vegetable factory. It's the company's second vertical farm and could mark a turning point for vertical farming — bringing the cost low enough to compete with traditional farms on a large scale. For decades, vertical farms that grow produce indoors without soil in stacked racks have been touted as a solution to rising food demand in the world's expanding cities. The problem has always been reproducing the effect of natural rain, soil and sunshine at a cost that makes the crop competitive with traditional agriculture. Spread is among a handful of commercial firms that claim to have cracked the problem with a mix of robotics, technology and scale. Its new facility in Keihanna Science City, known as Japan's Silicon Valley, will grow 30,000 heads of lettuce a day on racks under custom-designed LED lights. A sealed room protects the vegetables from pests, diseases and dirt. Temperature and humidity are optimized to speed growth of the greens, which are fed, tended and harvested by robots... Spread plans to export its farming system to more than 100 cities worldwide... "We are targeting countries where fresh vegetables cannot be produced because of scarce water, extremely low temperatures or other natural conditions," Inada said. "Our mission is to provide infrastructure for vegetable production to anybody, anywhere in the world." – [Moneyweb](#)

Factbox: Ten years of bitcoin

Bitcoin, the world's first and most famous cryptocurrency, celebrates its tenth birthday on Wednesday... The following are some major milestones in bitcoin's first decade:

- Oct. 31, 2008 The still-unidentified Satoshi Nakamoto releases a nine-page academic paper that sets out how bitcoin would work.
- Jan. 3, 2009 Nakamoto mines the first "block" of bitcoins on the blockchain. Days later, Nakamoto sends bitcoins in its first ever transaction.
- October 2009: The New Liberty Standard establishes the value of bitcoin at 1,309.03 bitcoins to 1 dollar.
- May 22, 2010 Software developer Laszlo Hancz buys two pizzas for 10,000 bitcoins, widely seen as the first time the digital currency is used for its intended purpose - the purchase of goods.
- Nov. 28, 2013: As media attention intensifies, Bitcoin tops \$1,000 for the first time.
- Aug. 1, 2017: Chicago exchange operators Cboe Global Markets Inc and CME Group Inc launch bitcoin futures trading

- Dec. 18, 2017: Bitcoin hits its record high of \$19,666 on cryptocurrency exchange Bitstamp
- June 29, 2018: Bitcoin slides to its lowest level since its December peak
- Oct. 19, 2018: The global money-laundering watchdog says it will set out by next year rules for how governments should regulate cryptocurrency exchanges – [Reuters](#)

Dollar at 16-month peak, yen weakens as BOJ in no hurry to exit stimulus

The Japanese yen edged lower against the dollar on Wednesday after the Bank of Japan signaled it was a long way off from exiting crisis-era stimulus, while the greenback scaled 16-month highs versus its key rivals on continued strength in the U.S. economy... The dollar index, a gauge of its value versus six major peers, climbed to a fresh 16-month high to hit 97.06. The U.S. currency benefited from stronger than expected U.S. economic data as well as deteriorating fundamentals for the euro, which makes up around 58 percent of the index. U.S. consumer confidence rose to an 18-year high in October, driven largely a robust labor market, suggesting strong economic growth could persist in the near term. – [Reuters](#)

Markets LIVE: Rand off to shaky start...

The rand started the day on the back foot, with Asian markets staging a rare rally following a bounce on Wall Street... A strong close on Wall Street last night has pushed Asian stock markets higher this morning. US indices all finished around 1.5% up as the dollar remained strong and US Treasury yields rose. The 10-year yield climbed to 3.13% while the 30-year yield was at 3.36%. Locally, poor unemployment numbers are not helping the rand which is at 14.6500 this morning after hitting 14.5400 yesterday. The Reserve Bank hinted at an imminent rate hike yesterday after expressing concerns for the inflation outlook. The SARB said that the rand is undervalued and interest rates are too low. – [Fin24](#)

South African Unemployment Rate Persists Near 15-Year High

South Africa's jobless rate persisted near a 15-year high in the third quarter as the economy struggles to recover from a recession. Unemployment rose to 27.5 percent from 27.2 percent in the three months through June, Statistics South Africa said in a report released on Tuesday in Johannesburg. The median of five economists' estimates in a Bloomberg survey was 27.4 percent. Africa's most-industrialized economy hasn't expanded by more than 2 percent annually since 2013 and has battled to create jobs. The nation may not be able to achieve a goal of reducing unemployment to 6 percent by 2030, President Cyril Ramaphosa said at a summit about job creation last month. A report from the country's National Planning Commission showed reducing unemployment to 21 percent by 2030 would require economic growth of about 3 percent, more than triple the forecast for this year. – [Bloomberg](#)



Stats of the Day



Data Releases

| Local Time | Country | Indicator Name | Period |
|------------|------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| 03:00 | China (Mainland) | NBS Non-Mfg PMI | Oct |
| 03:00 | China (Mainland) | NBS Manufacturing PMI | Oct |
| 03:00 | China (Mainland) | Composite PMI | Oct |
| 12:00 | Euro Zone | HICP Flash YY | Oct |
| 12:00 | Euro Zone | HICP ex F&E Flash YY | Oct |
| 12:00 | Euro Zone | HICP ex F,E,A&T Flash YY | Oct |
| 12:00 | Euro Zone | HICP Flash MM | Oct |
| 12:00 | Euro Zone | CPI NSA | Oct |
| 12:00 | Euro Zone | Unemployment Rate | Sep |
| 13:00 | United States | MBA Mortgage Applications | 22 Oct, w/e |
| 13:00 | United States | Mortgage Market Index | 22 Oct, w/e |
| 13:00 | United States | MBA Purchase Index | 22 Oct, w/e |
| 13:00 | United States | Mortgage Refinance Index | 22 Oct, w/e |
| 13:00 | United States | MBA 30-Yr Mortgage Rate | 22 Oct, w/e |
| 14:00 | South Africa | Trade Bal (Incl. Region) | Sep |
| 14:15 | United States | ADP National Employment | Oct |
| 14:30 | United States | Employment Wages QQ | Q3 |
| 14:30 | United States | Employment Benefits QQ | Q3 |
| 14:30 | United States | Employment Costs | Q3 |
| 15:45 | United States | Chicago PMI | Oct |

Source: Thomson Reuters

Market Overview

| Money Market | | Change | Latest |
|-----------------------------|---|---------|-------------|
| 3 months | → | 0.00% | 7.02% |
| 6 months | → | 0.00% | 7.68% |
| 9 months | ↑ | 0.01% | 7.98% |
| 12 months | ↓ | -0.01% | 8.39% |
| Bonds | | Change | Latest |
| GC21 (R208 : 7.75%) | ↑ | 0.04% | 8.61% |
| GC24 (R186 : 9.28%) | ↑ | 0.06% | 10.58% |
| GC27 (R186 : 9.28%) | ↑ | 0.06% | 10.68% |
| GC30 (R2030 : 9.73%) | ↑ | 0.07% | 11.23% |
| GC32 (R213 : 9.83%) | ↑ | 0.07% | 11.56% |
| GC35 (R209 : 9.99%) | ↑ | 0.07% | 11.49% |
| GC37 (R2033 : 9.94%) | ↑ | 0.07% | 11.87% |
| Commodities | | %Change | Latest |
| Gold | ↓ | -0.70% | \$ 1,220.83 |
| Platinum | ↑ | 0.09% | \$ 833.01 |
| Copper | → | 0.00% | \$ 6,160.00 |
| Brent Crude | ↑ | 0.12% | \$ 76.40 |
| Main Indices | | %Change | Latest |
| NSX (Delayed) | ↓ | -0.30% | 1246.92 |
| JSE All Share | ↓ | -0.67% | 50,974.74 |
| S&P 500 | ↓ | -0.66% | 2,641.25 |
| FTSE 100 | ↑ | 0.09% | 7,032.86 |
| Hangseng | ↓ | -0.91% | 24,585.53 |
| DAX | ↓ | -0.38% | 11,292.43 |
| JSE Sectors | | %Change | Latest |
| Financials | ↓ | -0.46% | 15,690.31 |
| Resources | ↓ | -0.18% | 40,341.67 |
| Industrials | ↓ | -1.16% | 60,246.00 |
| Forex | | %Change | Latest |
| N\$/US Dollar | ↓ | -0.39% | 14.6629 |
| N\$/Pound | ↓ | -0.82% | 18.6802 |
| N\$/Euro | ↓ | -0.56% | 16.6489 |
| US Dollar/ Euro | ↓ | -0.17% | 1.1354 |
| Namibia Monthly Data | | Latest | Previous |
| Namibia Inflation (Sep 18) | | 4.8 | 4.4 |
| Bank Prime | | 10.50 | 10.50 |
| BoN Repo Rate | | 6.75 | 6.75 |

Source: Bloomberg

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