LONDON: World stock markets mostly rose yesterday following a buoyant-busting US jobs report that looks set to prompt an offset hike in US interest rates tomorrow.

In a busy week for global monetary policy, the Japanese and British central banks also met this week. Moreover, stock markets have been relatively stable despite the announcement by China of plans to buy up to 1.5 trillion yuan ($225 billion) of its reserves in the next three months.

The news yesterday that Britain has increased its holdings of US Treasuries further contributes to the possibility of a Fed rate hike. British pound rose more than 0.5 percent against both the euro and Japanese yen.

In a sign that the Fed is ready to raise rates, US treasuries fell to their lowest levels in three weeks, with the yield on the 10-year note rising to 1.89%.

The Federal Reserve is expected to keep interest rates unchanged, but it will likely signal a more hawkish outlook for future rate hikes. This could push the dollar higher, as investors price in the possibility of additional rate hikes from the Fed in the coming months.

The big question for investors will be whether the Fed will follow through with a rate hike after its policy meeting tomorrow. The minutes of the last meeting showed that the Fed is divided on the timing of the next rate hike.

For all the somewhat hopeful talk from the Fed, the dollar wobbled yesterday, but the key now will be what the statement and press conference say. “The dollar wobbled yesterday following a forecast-busting US jobs report that was released by the Labor Department, while the European Central Bank (ECB) announced yesterday that it will increase its monthly asset purchase program in March, but is expected to taper purchases later this year. The ECB has already indicated that it is prepared to lower interest rates further if inflation remains below its target of 2%.

Markets are already fully priced for a Fed rate hike this week, with the US Federal Reserve expected to raise its benchmark rate by 0.25 percentage points. However, some analysts believe that the Fed could raise rates by as much as 0.5 percentage points, which would be a larger increase than expected.

Oil prices continued to suffer amid concerns over the global oversupply of crude. Brent crude fell below $50 per barrel yesterday, and is now at its lowest level since January 2016.

World stock markets eked out some gains yesterday after a strong US jobs report helped Wall Street end the week on a high note, offsetting a number of potential "event risks" this week, which kept sentiment in check.

For an article on the possible impact of a Fed rate hike this week on the stock market, please see "The Fed and Stock Market," which explains how higher interest rates could affect the stock market.

For more information, visit Global Investment House’s website at: www.globalinvest.org

THEFT OF AN ASSET

LONDON: Investors around the world are preparing for a series of events this week that could have a significant impact on global stock markets. And for once, they’re not discussing the US presidential election.

On Friday, the US Federal Reserve will release its policy statement and hold a press conference, which will provide clues on the timing of the next rate hike. The Fed has already indicated that it is prepared to raise interest rates by 0.25 percentage points at its next meeting in March, but some analysts believe that the Fed could raise rates by as much as 0.5 percentage points.

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The Big Week for Markets

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