

Asian markets spooked by US tech sell-off

By [Asia-Pacific Research](#)

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Asian stocks fell on Thursday following weak US economic data and a sharp sell-off in US technology shares.

The [Nasdaq index fell 2.4%](#) – its biggest drop since April 2014 – to 4,876 on concerns that technology and biotech stocks have become overvalued.

US stocks were also hit by news that durable goods orders fell last month.

Japan's [Nikkei 225](#) shares index closed 1.4% lower at 19,471.12 while South Korea's benchmark Kospi shed 1% to 2,022.56.

In Australia, the benchmark S&P/ASX 200 fell 1.6% to close at 5,879.06, marking its biggest fall in more than two weeks.

Chinese stocks bucked the trend, however, with the Shanghai Composite closing up 0.6% at 3,682.10.

But in Hong Kong, the [Hang Seng](#) index closed down 0.1% at 24,497.08

Geopolitical risk

Oil prices rose during Asian trade after Saudi Arabia, a major oil exporter, and its allies began airstrikes in Yemen, raising concerns on the disruption of supplies in the Middle East.

Brent crude rose by as much as 5%, approaching \$60 (£40) a barrel in Tokyo.

West Texas Intermediate crude futures, the US benchmark, gained about 4% to \$51 a barrel.

“With Saudi beginning to bomb targets in Yemen, in an attempt to defuse a coup by Shiite rebels, the geo-political risk quotient in the Middle East has ratcheted higher,” Vishnu Varathan from Mizuho Bank wrote in a report.

“If the strike morphs into a full-blown confrontation involving Iran, then oil will surge alongside gold and the US dollar while US treasury yields may be set for a renewed drop.”

‘Malicious attack’

Shares in Chinese water purification company Ozner Water International rose by more than 14% following a five-week long suspension.

The firm had been accused of making “false and misleading representations” over its profitability by short-seller Glaucus Research last month.

The allegations caused Ozner’s shares to lose a fifth of its value before trading was halted.

On Wednesday, Ozner addressed Glaucus Research’s claims as “unfounded allegations” [in a detailed statement](#) to the Hong Kong stock exchange.

“We will not tolerate what seems to be an outright malicious attack on the company for personal gains which harms the company’s reputation and business prospects,” it said.

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