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USA OUTLOOK

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Foto: CNN.com

Pentagon seeking patriotic investors to fund American small drones

The Pentagon on Monday said it was seeking to recruit investors to invest in American small drones to provide an alternative to Chinese models, the first effort under a new Defense Department program aimed at linking "trusted" sources of private capital with "innovative companies critical to defense industrial base and national security."

Ellen Lord, the Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment, told reporters Monday that the Trust Capital Marketplace, as the program is officially known, will focus first on investment for small drones because it is a technology that everyone can understand and Chinese companies currently dominate their manufacture.

Lord pointed to Chinese moves to flood the market with low-cost Unmanned Aerial Systems, the military term for drones, as one reason American investors are needed to fund US-based innovation.



Foto: Investing.com

U.S. Agriculture secretary says Trump will announce way to boost biofuel demand soon

U.S. President Donald Trump will announce a plan to boost demand for biofuels within weeks, Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue said on Wednesday, as the administration seeks to assuage farmers angered by its expanded use of waivers freeing refineries from their obligation to blend ethanol into the fuel supply. The Trump administration has scrambled Cabinet members for several weeks now to churn out a plan that would quell the uproar among American farmers, who say the biofuel waivers granted by the Environmental Protection Agency to small refining facilities undermine demand for the corn-based fuel. The EPA announced this month a decision to grant 31 biofuel waivers to small oil refineries facing financial hardship.



Foto: Reuters

U.S. says 'premature' to discuss future Afghan counterterrorism mission

The top U.S. military officer said on Wednesday it was too early to talk about the future of U.S. counterterrorism forces in Afghanistan, as U.S. and Taliban forces appear close to an agreement to end the 18-year war.

Negotiations over how to end the 18-year war in Afghanistan have been held in Doha, capital of Qatar, since late last year. The ninth round of talks began last week.

The Taliban said on Wednesday it was close to an agreement with U.S. officials on a deal that would see U.S. forces withdraw from Afghanistan in exchange for a Taliban promise that the country would not become a haven for international militants.

The Taliban now controls more territory than it has since 2001 and the war has ground to a stalemate, with casualties rising among civilians as well as combatants.



Fuente

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-afghanistan-military/u-s-says-premature-to-discuss-future-afghan-counterterrorism-mission-idUSKCN1V12EN?il=0>



Foto: Moneycontrol

Wall Street climbs on energy, financials boost

U.S. stocks climbed on Wednesday, recovering from early declines on gains in energy and financial shares, but investors remained leery about the potential for another flare-up in the U.S.-China trade war. The financial sector .SPSY was up 0.91%, recouping all of the prior day's losses that came on a deepening of the U.S. Treasury yield curve inversion, which often precedes a recession.

Gains in the benchmark S&P 500 index .SPX were also supported by a 1.40% jump in energy .SPNY stocks after industry data showed a fall in stockpiles of U.S. crude, boosting oil prices, which settled up more than 1.5%.

The two have been the worst performing of the 11 major S&P sectors in August.

Investors took some relief in the lack of new developments on the trade front, although the U.S. Trade Representative's office on Wednesday reaffirmed President Donald Trump's plans to impose an additional 5% tariff on a list of \$300 billion of Chinese imports starting on Sept. 1 and Dec. 15.



Fuente

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-stocks/wall-street-climbs-on-energy-financials-boost-idUSKCN1V11FP?il=0>



Foto: National Post

In watershed discovery, skull of ancient human ancestor unearthed

Scientists on Wednesday announced the landmark discovery in Ethiopia of a nearly complete skull of an early human ancestor that lived 3.8 million years ago, a species boasting an intriguing mixture of apelike and humanlike characteristics.

The fossil dubbed MRD, which provides insight into a pivotal period for the evolutionary lineage that eventually led to modern humans, belongs to the species *Australopithecus anamensis*, which first appeared roughly 4.2 million years ago.

This species is considered the direct ancestor of *Australopithe-*

cus afarensis, the species best known from the famous partial skeleton nicknamed Lucy unearthed in 1974 about 35 miles (56 km) from of the site in the Afar region of Ethiopia where the MRD skull was found in 2016. Lucy dates from about 3.2 million years ago.

The discovery finally allows scientists “to put a face to the name” regarding *Australopithecus anamensis*, said paleoanthropologist and study co-author Stephanie Melillo of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Germany.