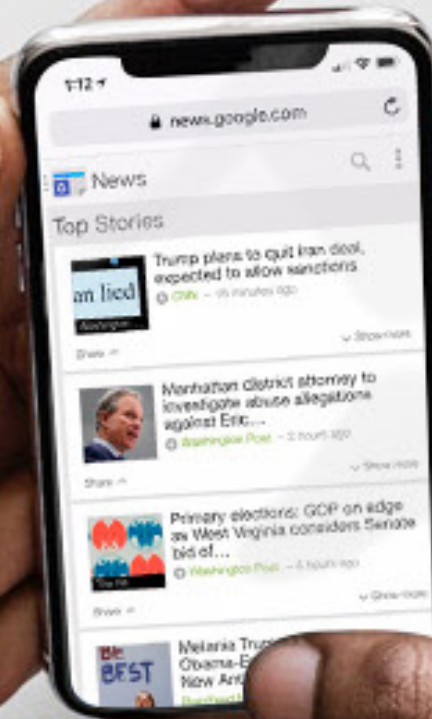




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USA OUTLOOK

Weekly newsletter | December 2 to 5



Foto: Nasdaq

Wall Street Falls for Third Straight Day as Trade Hopes Dim

Wall Street set course for its third consecutive sell-off on Tuesday as investor optimism over a potential near-term respite from the U.S.-China trade war evaporated following commentary from President Donald Trump and Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross.

All three major stock indexes stepped further away from last week's record highs that were fueled by hopes that an interim deal between the United States and China was in the offing. Those hopes dimmed as President Trump suggested a deal might have to wait until after the 2020 election, and separately, Secretary Ross confirmed that new tariffs on Chinese imports would go into effect on Dec. 15 as scheduled, unless substantial progress was made.

These comments, on the heels of France's threatened retaliation over potential new U.S. duties on French products, itself a retaliation against a proposed French "digital tax," suggested that America's hydra-headed tariff war against its major trading partners would continue to dominate markets for the foreseeable future.



Foto: The Guardian

Nestlé Cannot Claim Bottled Water is 'Essential Public Service,' Court Rules

Michigan's second-highest court has dealt a legal blow to Nestlé's Ice Mountain water brand, ruling that the company's commercial water-bottling operation is "not an essential public service" or a public water-bottling operation is "not an essential public service" or a public water supply.

The court of appeals ruling is a victory for Osceola Township, a small mid-Michigan town that blocked Nestlé from building a pumping station that doesn't comply with its zoning laws. But the case could also throw a wrench in Nestlé's attempts to privatize water around the country. If it is to carry out such plans, then it will need to be legally recognized as a public water source that provides an essential public service. The Michigan environmental attorney Jim Olson, who did not represent Osceola Township but has previously battled Nestlé in court, said any claim that the Swiss multinational is a public water utility "is ludicrous".

The Osceola case stems from Nestlé's attempt to increase the amount of water it pulls from a controversial wellhead in nearby Evart from about 250 gallons per minute to 400 gallons per minute. It needs to build the pump in a children's campground in Osceola Township to transport the increased load via a pipe system.



Foto: USATODAY.com

It's Not a Hotline, It's a 'Warmline': It Gives Mental Health Help before a Crisis Heats Up

Unlike a hotline for those in immediate crisis, warmlines provide early intervention with emotional support that can prevent a crisis – and a more costly 911 call or ER visit. The lines are typically free, confidential peer-support services staffed by volunteers or paid employees who have experienced mental health conditions themselves.

"Warmlines help people who think, 'I don't know why I'm not feeling great, or who to turn to, or where to get care, and I don't know for sure if I even need care,'" said Sarah Flinspach, a project coordinator for the National Council for Behavioral Health, which advocates mental health care services. "It might be the call that helps someone go back to work that day."

A 2018 survey from the National Council and nonprofit philanthropy Cohen Veterans Network cited knowledge gaps as one of the primary barriers that prevent Americans from getting mental health care. It said 46% of those who have never sought treatment would not know where to go if they needed mental health services for themselves, a family member or a friend.

How to find a warmline near you: an unofficial list by state location is available at www.warmline.org. The site notes which lines are nationally accessible and welcome calls from anywhere. Every line varies by hours, geographic coverage and training of the person answering the call. The National Alliance on Mental Illness also can refer callers to a list of warmlines through its HelpLife at 800-950-NAMI (6264), Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. ET. Someone on immediate danger can call 911 and declare a psychiatric emergency or call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-TALK (8255).



Foto: CBS News

Impeachment Hearings Live Updates: Pelosi Asks Committee Chairs to Proceed with Articles of Impeachment

House speaker Nancy Pelosi said Thursday that President Trump's wrongdoing strikes at the heart of the Constitution and asked House committee chairs to proceed with articles of impeachment, saying lawmakers have "no choice but to act." Her address, in which she invoked principles espoused by the nation's founders, came shortly after Trump went on Twitter to urge House Democrats to impeach him quickly, if they plan to do it, and suggested that he would call an expansive list of witnesses during a trial in the Republican-led Senate.

At the heart of the Democrats' case is the allegation that Trump tried to leverage a White House meeting and military aid, sought by Ukraine in the face of Russian military aggression, to pressure President Volodymyr Zelensky to launch an investigation of former vice president Joe Biden and his son Hunter Biden, as well as a probe of an unfounded theory that Kyiv conspired with Democrats to interfere in the 2016 presidential election.



Foto: Reuters

U.S. Vaping-Related Deaths Rise to 48, Cases of Illness to 2,291

As of December 4, 2019, there were 2,291 hospitalized cases reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) from 50 states, the District of Columbia, and two U.S. territories. There are more deaths under investigation, health officials said.

Last month, U.S. officials reported the discovery of Vitamin E acetate — believed to be used as a cutting agent in illicit vaping products containing marijuana components — in all lung samples from 29 patients.

CDC has called Vitamin E acetate as a "chemical of concern" and recommended that the substance not be

added to e-cigarette, or vaping products, while the investigation is underway. Investigators had earlier pointed to vaping oils containing THC, the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana, as being especially risky.

The spate of serious respiratory illnesses has led to U.S. officials urging people to stop vaping, especially those products containing THC.