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USA OUTLOOK

Weekly newsletter | September 23 to 26



Foto: morningbrew.com

US Labor Department Grants More Workers Overtime Pay

On Wednesday, the U.S. Department of Labor announced it had finalized a new rule on overtime pay. It expands the pool of workers eligible for at least time-and-a-half overtime pay. This rule will apply for those workers who make less than \$35,568 per year, reaching for an estimated of 1.2 million workers who may qualify for overtime.

Previously, on 2016, the Obama administration tried to jack the salary ceiling up to \$47, 476, but a federal judge blocked the move, besides legal challenges in 21 states and conflicting interests with over 50 business groups, arguing that Obama's proposed rule would be too costly for firms.



Foto: ABS-CBN News

US and Japan Sign Limited Trade Deal, Leaving Autos for Future Talks

Donald Trump and the Prime Minister of Japan, Shinzo Abe, signed on Wednesday a limited trade deal that cuts tariffs on US farm goods, Japanese machine tools and other products, while leaving aside car duties. The first phase deal would open up Japanese markets to some \$7 billion worth of US products annually, cutting Japanese tariffs on American beef, pork wheat and cheese.

Robert Lighthizer, US Trade Representative, said after a signing ceremony that the two countries would tackle cars in a later round of negotiations. Lighthizer also said that the US is not intended to impose additional car tariffs. Autos are the biggest source of the \$67 billion US trade deal, and Trump has frequently complained that US automakers do not enjoy equal access to Japan's market. A Japanese government statement also said further talks would seek to eliminate the existing 2.5% U.S. tariff on Japanese cars and would not result in the imposition of U.S. import quotas on Japanese autos.



Foto: One America News Network

Investors Race into US Stock Funds with Largest Weekly Surge Since June

On Wednesday, investors in New York jumped back into mutual funds and exchange-traded funds by sending approximately \$11.8 billion in net assets in US stocks. This was the greatest weekly surge into domestic equities since early June. The money came as the Federal Reserve cut interest rates last week as expected.

Over the last two weeks, investors have sent nearly \$20 billion into US stock funds, but despite those gains, the US equity funds have lost over \$84 billion for the year to date. World stock funds have lost nearly \$1.8 billion in outflows, continuing a streak in which investors have pulled nearly \$41 billion from the category.



Foto: NBC News

Trump Impeachment: Pelosi Launches Inquiry into Ukraine Claims

The US Democratic Party, move by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, has begun a formal impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump over allegations that he pressured the Ukrainian president to investigate his leading political rival Joe Biden.

If the inquiry moves forward, the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives will vote on any charges; If the measure is to be carried, Mr. Trump would become the third president in the US history to be impeached. There is strong support from House Democrats for impeachment, but the proceedings would be unlikely to pass de Republican-controlled Senate.

If the process moves forward the House of Representatives will vote on one or more articles of impeachment. If any pass, the process would next move to the Senate, where a two-third majority is required.



Foto: The New York Times

US Will Remain in Postal Treaty After Emergency Talks

This Wednesday, the US agreed to stay in a UN body that has regulated international mail service for more than a century, after delegates agreed during emergency talks to change the way postal fees are structured. Previously, the Trump administration had threatened to leave the body if its members did not change the system of fees that postal services charge for collection and delivery of international mail and small parcels.

The administration's primary concern has been the sliding scale of fees that allowed China to take advantage of lower rates that are available to developing countries. Now, the deal struck will allow the US to start setting its own postal fees, a move that will help companies compete with China's lower

fees. President Trump's trade adviser, Pete Navarro, said the decision would save the US between \$300 and \$500 million a year.