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AMCHAM GUATEMALA
AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

USA OUTLOOK

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER
AUGUST 03 TO AUGUST 07

AUGUST 03, 2026

Photo: NY TIMES

Jay Clayton Sworn In as Director of National Intelligence

Jay Clayton was officially sworn in as **Director of National Intelligence (DNI)** after a brief delay following his Senate confirmation, ending Bill Pulte's tenure as acting director. The delay drew attention from lawmakers, as Pulte used his time in office to declassify documents related to foreign election interference and claimed to have significantly reduced the size of the intelligence office. Clayton, however, signaled that his focus would be on leading a streamlined organization rather than pursuing additional restructuring.

In his first public statement as DNI, Clayton emphasized the importance of providing accurate and timely intelligence to the president, policymakers, military leaders, and Congress. He also pledged to strengthen transparency and accountability across the intelligence community, stressing that intelligence agencies should never be used for political purposes. His remarks suggested a more institutional approach than that of his predecessor, while still supporting efforts to improve efficiency.

Clayton's confirmation process became politically contentious after he declined to explicitly acknowledge Joe Biden's 2020 presidential election victory, costing him Democratic support despite initially receiving bipartisan backing. As he begins his tenure, he faces the challenge of restoring confidence in the intelligence community while balancing calls from the Trump administration and some Republican lawmakers for reforms and a leaner intelligence bureaucracy.

Source: https://www.nytimes.com/2026/08/03/us/politics/jay-clayton-national-intelligence-director.html

AUGUST 04, 2026

Stocks Hit a Record as Worries About Middle East and A.I. Ease

The **S&P 500** reached a new record high, rising **1.8%** as investor confidence improved amid easing concerns over Middle East tensions and renewed optimism surrounding major technology companies. The rally was supported by strong corporate earnings, expectations that the Federal Reserve may delay additional interest rate increases, and signs of progress in negotiations to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, which helped push oil prices below **$80 per barrel** for the first time in three weeks.

Technology stocks rebounded after a recent sell-off, with the Nasdaq gaining more than **9%** since the previous week as fears over excessive artificial intelligence spending eased. Investors were further encouraged by robust earnings reports, with **86% of S&P 500 companies** exceeding analysts' expectations. Despite the market's recovery, analysts caution that risks remain, including uncertainty over long-term AI investment returns, inflationary pressures, and geopolitical developments that could quickly shift market sentiment.

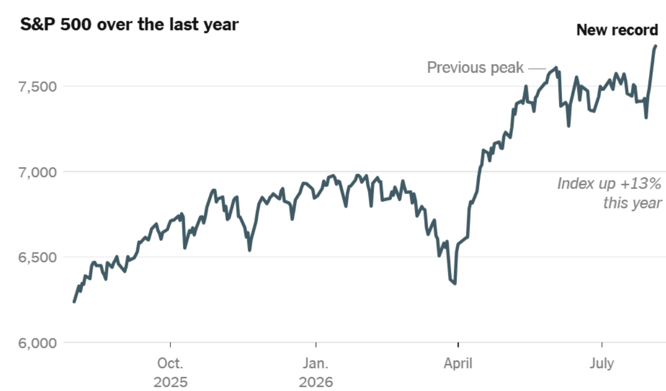

Photo: NYTIMES

Source: https://www.nytimes.com/2026/08/04/business/stock-market-record.html

AUGUST 05, 2026

Photo: NY TIMES

The Left Wins a Nail-Biter in Michigan: 8 Takeaways From Tuesday's Primaries

The Democratic primary in Michigan highlighted the growing strength of the party's progressive wing, as **Dr. Abdul El-Sayed** narrowly defeated Representative Haley Stevens in one of the most closely watched Senate races of the 2026 election cycle. The result was a setback for the Democratic establishment, despite Stevens receiving significant financial backing from pro-Israel groups and national party allies. The race also underscored the limitations of polling, which had projected a much wider victory for El-Sayed.

The outcome reflected broader ideological shifts within the Democratic Party, particularly on issues such as healthcare, economic inequality, and U.S. policy toward Israel. El-Sayed's campaign energized progressive voters and younger constituencies, while Stevens struggled to maintain support among moderates despite her fundraising advantage. The close result illustrated the increasingly competitive balance between the party's progressive and establishment factions.

Looking ahead, the Michigan Senate race is expected to be one of the most competitive contests in the country, with Republicans preparing to portray El-Sayed as too liberal for the state's general electorate. The election will be closely watched as a key battleground that could help determine control of the U.S. Senate and provide further insight into the political direction of both major parties.

Source:
https://www.nytimes.com/2026/08/05/us/politics/michigan-primary-elections-takeaways.html

AUGUST 06, 2026

Senate Panel Votes to Hold Fauci in Contempt of Congress

The Senate Homeland Security Committee voted along party lines to hold **Dr. Anthony Fauci** in contempt of Congress after he repeatedly invoked his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination during a hearing on the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic. Republicans argued that Fauci waived that protection because he had received a presidential pardon, while Democrats denounced the move as politically motivated and defended his constitutional right to remain silent. They also criticized the committee for bypassing the full Senate before referring the matter to the Department of Justice.

The vote reflects the continued partisan divide over Fauci's role during the pandemic and revives longstanding Republican allegations regarding U.S.-funded research in Wuhan, China, which Fauci has consistently denied. While Republicans say the action is necessary to ensure accountability, Democrats argue it is an attempt to revisit pandemic-era political battles rather than address current priorities. The legal question of whether Fauci's presidential pardon affects his Fifth Amendment protections remains disputed among constitutional experts.

Photo: NYTIMES

Source:
https://www.nytimes.com/2026/08/06/us/politics/fauci-contempt-of-congress.html


Photo: NYTIMES

Warsh and the Fed Face a New Test

The latest U.S. labor market data showed an unexpected slowdown, with the economy losing **23,000 jobs in July**, marking the first monthly decline in employment in several months. Although the unemployment rate edged down to **4.1%**, downward revisions to previous months' job gains suggested that hiring momentum has weakened more than previously estimated. The report raised concerns that businesses are becoming more cautious amid persistent inflation, elevated borrowing costs, and global economic uncertainty.

The weaker-than-expected employment figures have complicated the outlook for the **Federal Reserve**, particularly for Chairman **Kevin Warsh**, who has emphasized the need to restore price stability while maintaining flexibility in monetary policy. The slowdown in hiring strengthens the argument for keeping interest rates unchanged, even as inflation remains above the Fed's long-term target. Markets responded by lowering expectations of a rate increase at the central bank's September policy meeting.

Despite the softer labor market, the broader U.S. economy continues to show mixed signals. Consumer spending and business investment have remained relatively resilient, but slowing job creation suggests economic growth may be losing momentum. Investors will now closely monitor upcoming inflation and employment data, as these indicators are expected to play a decisive role in shaping the Federal Reserve's next policy decisions and the broader economic outlook.

Source:

https://www.nytimes.com/2026/08/07/business/dealbook/jobs-warsh-fed-rates.html