

Tech woes, worsening tensions with China sink U.S. stocks

NEW YORK (AP) — Stocks fell sharply on Monday as investors responded to rising trade tensions between the United States and China and mounting scrutiny of big technology companies from consumers and politicians.

China imposed \$3 billion of tariffs on U.S. farm goods and other exports, bringing the world's two largest economies closer to a full-on trade conflict.

Amazon sank following weekend broadsides from President Donald Trump on Twitter, while Facebook tumbled as a widening privacy scandal continued to weigh on the company's stock.

The looming threat of tighter regulation of the tech sector in Europe and the U.S. prompted investors to pull money out of high-flying companies, such as Netflix, Microsoft and Alphabet, Google's parent company.

Among other recent winners, Intel dove 6.1 percent following a report in Bloomberg News that Apple plans to start using its own chips in Mac computers.

U.S. Rep. Esty won't seek re-election amid harassment queries

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — U.S. Rep. Elizabeth Esty announced Monday she will not seek re-election this year amid calls for her resignation over her handling of the firing of a former chief of staff accused of harassment, threats and violence against female staffers in her congressional office.

Esty, a Democrat from Connecticut and an outspoken #MeToo advocate, was accused of not protecting female staffers from the ex-chief of staff. Esty has said she regrets not moving along an internal investigation into the allegations, which revealed more widespread allegations of abuse, and regrets providing "even the slightest assistance to this individual as he sought a new job."

Esty said she determined "that it is in the best interest of my constituents and my family to end my time in Congress at the end of this year and not seek re-election."

Her announcement came hours after she asked the House Ethics Committee to review her actions.

"Although we worked with the House Employment Counsel to investigate and ultimately dismiss this employee for his outrageous behavior with a former staffer, I believe it is important for the House Ethics Committee to conduct its own inquiry into this matter," Esty said in a written statement, acknowledging "it certainly was far from a perfect process."

Israel in deal to resettle Africa migrants, then backtracks

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel announced a deal with the U.N. on Monday to resettle African migrants in Western nations, but hours later put the agreement on hold.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had announced the deal on national TV, saying Israel agreed to cancel the planned expulsion of tens of thousands of African migrants. He said the deal with the United Nations called for sending half of them to Western nations and allowing the rest to remain in Israel.

Late Monday, Netanyahu said he was "suspending" the deal in order to discuss the arrangement Tuesday with Israeli residents of

south Tel Aviv areas with large migrant populations.

"After meeting with the representatives I will re-examine the agreement again," he said.

Under the deal, roughly half of the 35,000 migrants living in Israel would be resettled in the West. But the rest would stay in Israel.

Most in Cosby jury pool have made up minds

NORRISTOWN, Pa. (AP) — Prosecutors and the defense began the difficult task of picking a jury for Bill Cosby's sexual assault retrial Monday amid a powerful #MeToo movement that has pierced

the consciousness of the men and women who will sit in judgment of the 80-year-old comedian.

All but one of the 120 potential jurors who answered questions about their background and views told a judge they had heard or seen something about #MeToo, the cultural campaign that's been exposing sexual misconduct in the entertainment and news industries.

Jury selection got off to an exceedingly slow start, with a single juror seated and three-quarters of the pool dismissed for cause — primarily because the prospective jurors already had formed an opinion about Cosby's guilt or innocence. In contrast, five jurors were

picked on opening day of Cosby's first trial.

Cosby is charged with drugging and sexually molesting a Temple University women's basketball administrator at his suburban Philadelphia home in 2004. He says the sexual encounter with Andrea Constand was consensual. His last trial ended in a hung jury.

Syrian rebels begin evacuating last stronghold near Damascus

BEIRUT (AP) — Syrian state media said Monday that the largest rebel group in the suburbs of Damascus has begun evacuating its

last stronghold after seven years of war, but the rebels refused to say whether they had surrendered, and it was unclear who was on board a dozen buses seen leaving the town.

Residents trapped inside Douma expressed fear that further foot-dragging could provoke another major government offensive, like the one that killed an estimated 1,600 people across the eastern Ghouta suburbs in February and March.

"We don't know what our choices are, we don't know what's in store for us," said local media activist Haitham Bakkar.

Douma was one of the earliest hubs of the Arab Spring uprising against

President Bashar Assad that swept through the country in 2011. Just 7 miles from the Old City of Damascus, it was part of the capital's Ghouta hinterland, once famed for its orchards and produce. The government responded to the protests by putting Douma and other suburbs around Damascus under siege, bombing hospitals and residential areas, and blocking the entry of food and medical relief.

On Monday, more than 600 people evacuated the town on buses sent by the government and the Syrian Red Crescent to take them to Jarablus, a northern Syrian town controlled by Turkish troops and allied Syrian forces.

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