

U.S. stocks stage big rally, erase 600 point drop in Dow

NEW YORK (AP) — Wall Street staged a swift, last-minute turnaround Thursday that rescued stocks from a steep dive and put the market on track to end a topsy-turvy, volatile week with a gain.

The comeback reversed a 611 point drop in the Dow Jones Industrial Average. The S&P 500 and Nasdaq eked out modest gains after having been down 2.8 and 3.3 percent, respectively.

Thursday's sharp swing in stocks followed their best day in 10 years. Even so, the market remains headed for what could be its steepest annual loss since the financial crisis.

The market's sharp downturn that began in October has intensified this month, erasing all of its 2018 gains and nudging the S&P 500 closer to its worst year since 2008. Even with the two-day winning streak, the Dow, S&P 500 and Nasdaq are all down more than 9 percent for the month and stocks are on track for their worst December since 1931.

"There are reasons we should be volatile, including a lot of unknowns as we head into 2019, starting with tariffs," said JJ Kinahan, chief markets strategist for TD Ameritrade, noting that below-average trading volume this time of year is also contributing to the market's volatility this week.

Furious Iraqi lawmakers demand U.S. troop withdrawal

BAGHDAD (AP) — President Donald Trump's surprise trip to Iraq may have quieted criticism at home that he had yet to visit troops in a combat zone, but it has infuriated Iraqi politicians who on Thursday demanded the withdrawal of U.S. forces.

"Arrogant" and "a violation of national sovereignty" were but a few examples



AP Photo/Richard Drew
Specialist Charles Boeddinghaus, left, and trader Gregory Rowe work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange on Thursday.

of the disapproval emanating from Baghdad following Trump's meeting Wednesday with U.S. servicemen and women at the al-Asad Airbase.

Trips by U.S. presidents to conflict zones are typically shrouded in secrecy and subject to strict security measures, and Trump's was no exception. Few in Iraq or elsewhere knew the U.S. president was in the country until minutes before he left.

But this trip came as curbing foreign influence in Iraqi affairs has become a hot-but-ton political issue in Baghdad, and Trump's perceived presidential faux-pas was failing to meet with the prime minister in a break with diplomatic custom for any visiting head of state.

On the ground for only about three hours, the American president told the men and women with the U.S. military that Islamic State forces have been vanquished, and he defended his decision against all advice to withdraw U.S. troops from neighboring Syria. He said the U.S. was once again respected as a nation, and declared: "We're no longer the suckers, folks."

Despite #MeToo, rape cases still confound police

NEW YORK (AP) — The #MeToo movement is empowering victims of sexual assault to speak up like never before, but what should be a watershed moment for

may be driven, at least in part, by a greater willingness by police to correctly classify rape cases and leave them open even when there is little hope of solving them.

But experts say it also reflects the fact that not enough resources are being devoted to investigating sexual assault at a time when more victims are entrusting police with their harrowing experiences.

"This is the second-most serious crime in the FBI's crime index," said Carol Tracy, executive director of the Women's Law Project in Philadelphia, "and it simply doesn't get the necessary resources from police."

Police successfully closed just 32 percent of rape investigations nationwide in 2017, according to the data, ranking it second only to robbery as the least-solved violent crime. That statistic is down from about 62 percent in 1964, despite advances such as DNA testing.

Nationwide internet outage affects CenturyLink

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — Many CenturyLink customers across the U.S. were without internet Thursday amid a lengthy outage that stretched from New York to California.

The outage began early in the day and continued into the evening. CenturyLink's network was "still experiencing a disruption," but the telecommunications company was working to restore services, Monroe, Louisiana-based CenturyLink said in a statement.

The statement provided no other details, including the cause of the problem and how many customers were affected.

Jessica Rosenworcel, a member of the Federal Communications Commission, said via Twitter it was a nationwide outage and her agency needed to investigate.

In Idaho, the internet problems caused the temporary shutdown of phone services at the Idaho Department of Correction and the state's Department of Education, *The Idaho Statesman* reported.

Storm whips up blizzards, dumps snow in Dakotas, Minnesota

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Post-holiday travelers were finding driving difficult as a winter storm dumped heavy snow and whipped up gusty winds across parts of the Dakotas and Minnesota on Thursday.

Up to 11 inches (28 centimeters) of snow had fallen in the Moorhead-Alexandria area of western Minnesota by mid-afternoon Thursday, and it was still snowing, said meteorologist Tyler Hasenstein of the Twin Cities National Weather Service.



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