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Southern DAILY

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Southern Daily News is published by Southern News Group Daily

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Tuesday, December 18, 2018 | www.today-america.com | Southern News Group

S&P 500 hits 14-month low on economic jitters ahead of Fed

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Wall Street's major indexes all slid more than 2 percent on Monday, with the benchmark S&P 500 closing at its lowest level in 14 months, on concerns of slowing economic growth ahead of a highly-anticipated decision from the Federal Reserve this week on the course of interest-rate hikes.

The S&P 500 hit its lowest level since October 2017 to breach lows reached during its sell-off in February. The small-cap Russell 2000 index confirmed a bear market, having fallen more than 20 percent from its Aug. 31 closing high.

A profit warning from British retailer ASOS raised concerns about weakening consumer strength, despite robust U.S. retail sales data on Friday. The National Association of Home Builders Housing Market Index indicated homebuilder sentiment had fallen to a three-and-a-half-year low.

The S&P 500 briefly erased its losses in late morning trade, but the index resumed its steep decline after Jeffrey Gundlach, chief executive of DoubleLine Capital, said that U.S. stocks were in a bear market.

Concerns about flagging consumer sentiment pushed down S&P 500 consumer discretionary stocks, which tumbled 2.8 percent. Shares of Amazon.com Inc dropped 4.5 percent, creating the biggest drag on the S&P 500 and the Nasdaq. Retail stocks declined overall, with the S&P 500 Retailing Index falling 3.4 percent.

Investors said market skittishness was likely to persist heading into the Federal Open Market Committee meeting on Tuesday and Wednesday.

An indication that the Fed would slow its pace of interest-rate hikes could calm markets, but the central bank's intentions remain unclear, said Ryan Detrick, senior market strategist at LPL Financial in Charlotte, North Carolina.

"We're all holding our breath for the Fed," Detrick said. "If the Fed takes its foot off the pedal for the first half of next year, that would get rid of one uncertainty."

The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 507.53 points, or 2.11 percent, to 23,592.98, the S&P 500 lost 54.01 points, or 2.08 percent,



to 2,545.94 and the Nasdaq Composite dropped 156.93 points, or 2.27 percent, to 6,753.73. The Cboe Volatility Index, the most widely followed gauge of expected near-term gyrations for the S&P 500, finished up 2.89 points at 24.52, its highest close in seven weeks. Shares of insurer UnitedHealth Group Inc fell 2.6 percent after a federal judge late on Friday ruled that the Affordable

Care Act, commonly known as Obamacare, was unconstitutional. UnitedHealth was the biggest drag on the Dow. Johnson & Johnson shares fell for a second consecutive session following a Reuters report that the company knew for decades that its baby powder contained asbestos. J&J shares ended 2.9 percent lower.

U.N. Security Council mulls Myanmar action; Russia, China boycott talks

UNITED NATIONS (Reuters) - The U.N. Security Council is considering action to push Myanmar to work with the United Nations to address the Rohingya refugee crisis, although China and Russia have so far boycotted talks on a British-drafted resolution, diplomats said on Monday.

The draft resolution aims to put a timeline on Myanmar allowing the return of more than 700,000 Rohingya Muslim refugees from neighboring Bangladesh and addressing accountability, said diplomats, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The Rohingya have fled Myanmar's Rakhine state since August last year, when attacks on security posts by Rohingya insurgents triggered a military crackdown that the United Nations, the United States, Britain and others described as ethnic cleansing.

Myanmar denies the accusations of ethnic cleansing.

The draft resolution would warn that the 15-member

Security Council could consider further steps, including sanctions, if there was not enough progress made by Myanmar, diplomats said. It would also ask U.N. officials to report back regularly to the council.

It was unclear if or when the draft resolution could be put to a vote. A resolution needs nine votes in favor and no vetoes by Russia, China, the United States, Britain or France to pass.

"I think it's inappropriate, untimely and useless," Russian U.N. Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia told Reuters on Monday.

China's U.N. Ambassador Ma Zhaoxu declined to comment. Myanmar's U.N. Ambassador Hau Do Suan did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The draft was circulated to council members late last month and diplomats said that there had been several rounds of discussions. Russia and China attended an initial meeting, but have not taken part in any further

talks, diplomats said.

The text would push Myanmar to implement

a memorandum of understanding with the U.N. development and refugee agencies that Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi's government signed in June, as well recommendations made by the Rakhine Advisory Commission that was led by former U.N. chief Kofi Annan.

Saudi Arabia chides U.S. Senate over Khashoggi
The draft resolution does not include a referral of the situation in Myanmar to the International Criminal Court, diplomats said.

U.N. Security Council envoys traveled to Bangladesh and Myanmar in late April.

In October, China, backed by Russia, failed to stop a Security Council briefing by the chair of a U.N. inquiry that accused Myanmar's military of genocide against Rohingya Muslims. Myanmar has rejected the findings of the U.N. report.

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Houston rapper in viral Snapchat video shooting sentenced

A Houston rapper was sentenced to a year behind bars after pleading guilty to shooting a gun from a moving vehicle in a now-viral Snapchat video, his attorney confirmed Monday.

Michael Anthony Cuellar, 30, pleaded guilty last week to the misdemeanor of deadly conduct for shooting into a ditch in 2017, said lawyer Paul Looney.

"Nobody was ever in danger, he shot into a bar ditch," Looney said. "He fired a gun inside the city limits. He did the same thing that thousands of other people are about to do on New Year's Eve, and it's the same level of crime.

According to the court records, Cuellar is a local rapper who goes by the name "Money Mike." Court records alleged that he was a known drug dealer, a claim his lawyer disputed.

Looney has said Cuellar is a family man who has a relationship with his children, including coaching youth soccer. Cuellar and Sierra Tarbutton, 28, were charged with felony criminal mischief, after police saw video from Sept. 26, 2017 of the two shooting blindly from a car into a neighborhood deserted because of Hurricane Harvey a few weeks before.

The video clips posted on the social media platform Snapchat apparently show the couple smiling as they fire more than a dozen shots into a neighborhood near the 15800 block of Memorial Drive. The two were identified after



police compared the videos to other social media accounts and law enforcement search engines, according to court records.

Looney said the video actually proves Cuellar's account that he was shooting into a ditch.

"If you go back and take a look at the video, you can see the barrel has a slight downward trajectory," Looney said. "We went out and hired experts and they documented all of that."

The lawyer said Cuellar paid experts thousands of dollars to show that he was shooting down, yet



still had to take the maximum jail time when he pleaded guilty to the misdemeanor.

"It took a lot of documentation before anyone was willing to take the risk of discounting the case to a misdemeanor," Looney said. "They hammered him because it wasn't his first rodeo." Looney noted that the area in which the couple allegedly fired shots had been evacuated or was practically deserted because of Hurricane Harvey.

Tarbutton, who had other cases pending when she was arrested, pleaded guilty last year in exchange for a five-years prison sentence.

Houston, other Texas cities rank in top 10 for porch pirates

These guys are worse than the Grinch. You order that perfect Christmas gift for a friend or loved one. You race home to pick up your package, only to find some porch pirate has snatched it before you could even wrap it.

If this problem seems to happen more in Houston and other large Texas cities, you are right.

Houston ranks seventh among large metro areas around the country for package thefts during the holidays, according to insurance and FBI data compiled by the site.

Other Texas metro areas on the list include Austin at number one and the Dallas-Fort Worth area at number eight. Year round, nearly 20 people for every 1,000 Houstonians experience theft, according to the site.

Take advantage of local lockers (like Amazon Locker) instead of having packages dropped off at your door Utilize video surveillance or high-tech doorbells (like Ring) to see your stuff

Deliver packages to your place of work or pick them up from a local delivery storefront

For even more of a reason to safeguard your packages, review site SafeWise.com.



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Editor's Choice



People attend a protest to support Imelda Cortez who waits for a hearing under charges of attempted aggravated murder, as she supposedly tried intentionally to induce an abortion in Usulután



Pictures of the Year: As smoke clears, capturing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict



A man dressed as Santa Claus rides his sleigh near the Santa Claus Office located on the Arctic Circle near Rovaniemi



REFILE - QUALITY REPEAT People attend a protest against a proposed new labor law, billed as the “slave law”, outside the headquarters of the Hungarian state television in Budapest, Hungary, December 17, 2018. REUTERS/Marko Djurica



A demonstrators wearing a Guy Fawkes mask on his back stand in front of riot police during a protest against a proposed new labor law, billed as the “slave law”, outside the headquarters of the Hungarian state television in Budapest, Hungary, December 17, 2018. REU-



FILE PHOTO: U.S. flags fly over the Trump International Hotel in Washington, U.S., August 3, 2018. REUTERS/Brian Snyder/File Photo



Colombian Vice President, Marta Lucia Ramirez, attends a promotion ceremony at a military school in Bogota



Colombian President, Ivan Duque, attends a promotion ceremony at a military school in Bogota

Dogs could be trained to sniff out malaria in people according to new research aimed at preventing the spread of the deadly disease.

Researchers found that dogs could scent malaria in samples of socks worn by infected children.

They say their findings could potentially lead to the first rapid and non-invasive test for malaria.

Although the research is in its early stages, the scientists hope trained sniffer dogs could help to stop malaria spreading between countries and lead to infected people being spotted earlier and treated quickly.

The research is being presented today (Monday, 29 October 2018) at the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene Annual Meeting in New Orleans, USA.



Malaria is carried by some mosquitos.

Principal Investigator Professor Steve Lindsay, in the Department of Biosciences, Durham University, UK, said: "While our findings are at an early stage, in principle we have shown that dogs could be trained to detect malaria infected people by their odour with a credible degree of accuracy."

"This could provide a non-invasive way of screening for the disease at ports of entry in a similar way to how sniffer dogs are routinely used to detect fruit and vegetables or drugs at airports."

"This could help prevent the spread of malaria to countries that have been declared malaria free and also ensure that people, many of whom might be unaware that they are infected with the malaria parasite, receive antimalarial drug treatment for the disease."

The research was funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. It was carried out by Durham University, the charity Medical Detection Dogs, the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) and the University of Dundee (all UK), the Medical Research Council Unit The Gambia at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, and the National Malaria Control Programme, The Gambia.

Researchers from the MRCG and the LSHTM used nylon socks to collect foot odour samples from apparently healthy

Animals Could Be Used To Provide Fast, Non-Invasive Tests To Prevent Spread Of Disease

Sniffer Dogs Are Able To Detect Malaria In People By Smelling Socks, Study Finds

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



Springer spaniel Freya (Shown above) was able to be trained by scientists to identify children with malaria by smelling their socks. (Photo/ PA)

children aged five to 14 in the Upper River Region of The Gambia in West Africa.



Using a simple finger-prick test the children were also screened to determine if they had the malaria parasite Plasmodium falciparum in their blood.

The sock samples were transported to the Medical Detection Dogs charity in Milton Keynes, UK where two dogs, a Labrador-Golden Retriever cross called Lexi and a Labrador called Sally, were trained to distinguish between the scent of children infected with malaria parasites and those who were uninfected.

In total 175 sock samples were tested including those of all 30 malaria-positive children identified by the study and 145 from uninfected children.

The dogs were able to correctly identify

70 per cent of the malaria-infected samples. The dogs were also able to correctly identify 90 per cent of the samples without malaria parasites.

Malaria is a life-threatening disease caused by parasites transmitted to people through the bites of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes, but it can be prevented and cured.



According to the World Health Organization (WHO), since 2000 six countries have been certified malaria free, with another 12 countries reporting that no malaria cases have originated within their borders.

Despite this success, however, progress in global malaria control has stalled. According to the WHO's latest World Malaria Report, there were an estimated 216 million cases of malaria in 2016, an increase of five million cases over the previous year. Deaths stood at approximately 445,000, a similar number to the previous year. Identifying people infected with the malaria parasite, but not presenting symptoms, is critical as they can be treated with antimalarial drugs and the spread of the disease can be prevented.

Sniffer dogs could provide a non-invasive, portable and rapid test for identifying malaria carriers and would be particularly useful in settings where there are few individuals with malaria parasites. Confirmation of the disease would then be made by taking a finger-prick sample of blood

using a rapid diagnostic test following World Health Organization guidelines.



An accompanying study introduced a fake bio-detection dog to Gambian villages to gauge their acceptability, with researchers reporting that most people were favourably disposed to their use in principle.

Since the initial study a third dog, a Springer Spaniel called Freya, has also been trained to detect malaria.

Study co-author Dr Claire Guest, Chief Executive Officer of Medical Detection Dogs, said: "MDD have had positive results training dogs to detect diseases including cancer and diabetes sugar changes by odour. This is the first time we have trained dogs to detect a parasite infection and we are delighted by these early results. "The possible potential to train dogs to detect tropical disease where diagnostics are poor, such as leishmaniasis and trypanosomiasis is huge. I believe that this study indicates that dogs have an excellent ability to detect malaria and if presented within an individual infected with the parasite or a piece of recently worn clothing, their accuracy levels will be extremely high. This is a reliable, non-invasive test and is extremely exciting for the future."

Surveys of schoolchildren were undertaken by the Medical Research Council Unit The Gambia and ARCTEC at LSHTM. Sock samples were processed before being sent to Medical Detection Dogs.

Co-author Professor James Logan, Head of the Department of Disease Control, at

the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, said: "Worryingly, our progress on the control of malaria has stalled in recent years, so we desperately need innovative new tools to help in the fight against malaria."

"Our results show that sniffer dogs could be a serious way of making diagnosis of people who don't show any symptoms, but are still infectious, quicker and easier." Co-author Professor Umberto D'Alessandro, Unit Director at the MRCG at LSHTM, said: "Detecting malaria-infected but otherwise healthy people is a laborious and time-consuming process that requires collecting a blood sample to be then processed in a well-equipped laboratory. "New approaches to facilitate the identification of infected individuals to be treated would help enormously in addressing the human reservoir of infection and possibly reduce malaria transmission. The opportunity to use trained dogs for this purpose is promising. Results show that it may be possible to identify infected people by their body odour."

The results of the study are broadly in line with the criteria for procurement of rapid diagnostic tests.



The researchers say that in future artificial odour sensors might be developed to detect malaria parasites, but until then trained dogs could be a useful alternative at ports of entry.

However, they say that further research is needed to see if dogs can directly sniff out malaria in people infected with the disease.

Future studies are also needed to see if dogs can detect malaria in the odour of infected people from other parts of the world before the animals could be used in the field, the researchers added. (Courtesy <https://www.eurekalert.org>)

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Measles cases worldwide jumped more than 30 percent last year compared to 2016, with increases recorded in wealthy European countries like Germany where vaccination coverage has historically been high, the UN said last Thursday. The World Health Organization said the worrying trend of resurgent measles cases was a near global phenomenon, but the causes varied among regions. In Europe, experts blamed the problem in part on complacency and misinformation about a vaccine proven to be both effective and safe. Martin Friede, WHO's director of immunisation, vaccines and biologicals told reporters that "supposed experts making accusations against the vaccine without any evidence" has had an impact on parents' decisions.



Measles vaccine.

He specifically cited medically baseless claims linking the measles vaccine to autism, which have been spread in part on social media by members of the so-called "anti-vax" movement. But cases have also spiked in Latin America, partly due to "a collapsing health system in Venezuela," the head of the vaccine alliance Gavi, Seth Berkley, said in a statement. A crippling political and economic crisis in Venezuela has triggered massive inflation, with hospitals struggling to maintain stocks. "What is more worrying than the increase in the cases reported is that we are seeing sustained measles transmission in countries that had previously not seen

Measles Cases Have Risen 30 Percent Worldwide Per UN

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



The overall global fight against measles had made big strides since 2000, which makes the recent setbacks frustrating for WHO.

measles transmission for many years," Friede said. "This suggests we are actually regressing."

measles elimination certificate withdrawn over the last 12 months. A country loses its measles elimination status when "the same type of virus has



Multiple countries -- notably Germany, Russia and Venezuela -- have had their

'Not Rocket Science' WHO stressed that the overall global fight against measles had shown impressive results this century. In 2000, there were more than 850,000 cases reported worldwide, compared to 173,000 last year. That progress made the recent setbacks all the more frustrating, said WHO immunisation expert Ann Lindstrand. "We have a safe and effective vaccine," she told reporters. "This is not rocket science, we know what to do." According to WHO guidelines, preventing measles outbreaks requires 95 percent coverage of the first dose of the vaccine.



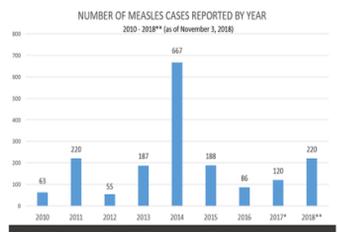
Global coverage has stalled at 85 percent for several years, but the figure is lower in poorer regions like Africa, which had a coverage rate of 70 percent in 2017. Measles is a highly contagious disease, which can cause severe diarrhoea, pneumonia and vision loss and can be fatal in some cases. (Courtesy <https://sg.news.yahoo.com>)

Related

Measles Cases and Outbreaks Measles Cases in 2018

As of November 3, 2018, 220 individual cases of measles have been confirmed in 26 states and the District of Columbia. The states that have reported cases to

CDC are Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and Washington.



*Cases as of December 30, 2017. Case count is preliminary and subject to change.

**Cases as of November 3, 2018. Case count is preliminary and subject to change. Data are updated monthly.

Source: Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR), Notifiable Diseases and Mortality Tables Measles Outbreaks

A total of 15 outbreaks (defined as 3 or more linked cases) have been reported so far in 2018.

Outbreaks in countries to which Americans often travel can directly contribute to an increase in measles cases in the U.S.

- Spread of Measles
- The majority of people who got measles were unvaccinated.
 - Measles is still common in many parts of the world including some countries in Europe, Asia, the Pacific, and Africa.
 - Travelers with measles continue to bring the disease into the U.S.
 - Measles can spread when it reaches a community in the U.S. where groups of people are unvaccinated. (Courtesy <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/cases-outbreaks.html>)

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