This file photo shows a Wawa convenience store in Philadelphia. The convenience store chain is facing a wave of lawsuits over a data breach that affected its 850 locations along the East Coast. (AP)

Wawa facing lawsuits over data breach at all of its stores

The Wawa convenience store chain is facing a wave of lawsuits over a data breach that affected its 850 locations along the East Coast.

Wawa Inc discovered malware on its payment processing servers this month before stopping the breach Dec 12, the company has said. Officials with the company, based in Wawa, Pennsylvania, believe the malware had been collecting card numbers, customer names and other data since as early as March.

The Philadelphia Inquirer reported Friday that at least six lawsuits seeking class-action status have been filed in federal court in Philadelphia.

"The data breach was the inevitable result of Wawa's inadequate data security measures and cavalier approach to data security," said one suit, filed by the law firm Chimicles Schwartz Kriner & Donaldson-Smith, of Haverford.

A Wawa spokesman declined to comment on the pending litigation.

The breach affected all stores, which stretch along the East Coast from Pennsylvania to Florida. In-store payments and payments at fuel dispensers were affected, but cash machines were not.

Wawa has said it will offer free credit card monitoring and identity theft prevention services to anyone whose information might have been collected.

Police are investigating, and the company has also hired a forensics firm to conduct an internal investigation. (AP)

Global stock markets mostly higher

US equities nearly flat; S&P 500 notches 5th weekly gain

BEIJING, Dec 28, (AP): Global stock markets moved mostly higher on Friday amid optimism that US-Chinese trade relations are improving and on early reports that online Christmas shopping was up over last year in the US.

European markets rose in midday trading and Wall Street was primed for more gains after reaching new highs yet again on Thursday. Hong Kong finished with gains and Tokyo declined.

Investors welcomed US President Donald Trump's comment that an interim "Phase 1" trade deal with China was "getting done." Trump said he and Chinese President Xi Jinping would hold a signing ceremony.

Traders still are waiting to see details of the agreement aimed at helping to settle a 17-month-old trade war between the two countries.

Chinese customs data this week showed November soybean imports rose in a possible boost to American farmers. Midwestern farm states were battered by Beijing's earlier suspension of purchases of US soybeans, the biggest Chinese import from the United States, in response to Trump's tariff hikes on goods from China.

"Broadly risk sentiment is positive," Mizuho Bank said in a report.

In midday trading, Frankfurt's DAX rose 0.5% to 13,375 and France's CAC 40 also gained 0.5% to 6,058. London's FTSE turned around after early losses and was up 0.3% to 7,656.

On Wall Street, futures for the benchmark Standard & Poor's 500 index and the Dow Jones Industrial Average were up 0.3%.

On Thursday, both reached new highs. The S&P 500 rose 0.5% and the Dow gained 0.4%. The Nasdaq composite climbed 0.8%.

Investors welcomed a report by Mastercard SpendingPulse that showed US online Christmas shopping rose 18.8% over a year earlier.

In Asia, the Shanghai Composite Index was off 2 points at 3,005.04 and Tokyo's Nikkei 225 fell 0.4% to 23,837.72. Hong Kong's Hang Seng index gained 1.2% to 28,202.10 and Seoul's Kospi added 0.3% to 2,204.21.

Sydney's S&P-ASX 200 gained 0.4% to 6,821.70 and India's Sensex advanced 0.8% to 41,507.97.

Benchmarks in Taiwan and Singapore advanced while New Zealand declined.

Also Friday, Japan's government reported factory output fell 0.9% in November compared with the previous month. Japanese retail sales rose 4.5% over a month earlier but inventory levels were high.

Currency traders watch monitors at the foreign exchange dealing room of the KEB Hana Bank headquarters in Seoul, South Korea on Dec 27. Asian stocks followed Wall Street higher on Friday amid optimism US-Chinese trade relations are improving. (AP)

Despite optimism about US-Chinese trade, traders still are concerned about bigger unresolved disputes.

The coming year also has the added complication of the US presidential election.

Benchmark US crude gained 15 cents to $61.83 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Brent crude, used to price international oils, advanced 9 cents to $66.85 per barrel in London.

The dollar weakened to 109.50 yen from Thursday's 109.57 yen. The euro rose to $1.1152 from $1.1100.

US

Major US stock indexes ended essentially flat Friday after a day of mostly listless trading. Even so, the S&P 500 closed out the week with its fifth straight weekly gain.

The benchmark index squeaked out a tiny gain that was good enough for its 35th record high this year. The Dow Jones Industrial Average also notched a slight gain, giving it its 22nd all-time high of 2019. The Nasdaq composite closed with a modest loss, snapping the index's 11-day winning streak.

Investors drove up shares of stocks in defensive sectors, including household goods makers, real estate companies and utilities. Those gains were checked by losses in energy, financial and communication services stocks. Bond yields fell.

With two days of trading left in 2019, the market is on track for its best year since 2013.

"Some of the selling today is just profit-taking," said Ben Phillips, chief investment officer at EventShares. "People are just maybe checking out for the rest of the year and taking some profits on positions because there are a lot of things that are up meaningfully."

The S&P 500 inched up 0.11 points, or less than 0.1%, to 3,240.02. The index has finished with a weekly gain 11 out of the past 12 weeks.

The Dow rose 23.87 points, or 0.1%, to 28,645.26. The Nasdaq composite slipped 15.77 points, or 0.2%, to 9,006.62.

Smaller company stocks took the brunt of the selling. The Russell 2000 index fell 8.64 points or 0.5%, to 1,669.03. More stocks declined than rose on the New York Stock Exchange.

Bond prices rose. The 10-year Treasury yield fell to 1.87% from 1.90% late Thursday.

A truce in the 17-month US-China trade war and positive signs for the economy have helped keep investors in a buying mood. Fears about a possible recession have also faded since the summer after the Federal Reserve cut interest rates three times and signaled that it will keep them low for a long time.

Still, as the market prepares to close out a strong year of gains next week, uncertainty remains over the final details of the "Phase 1" trade deal and whether Washington and Beijing will be able to resolve remaining differences not addressed by the initial pact. The US presidential election could also drive volatility in the markets next year.

"If the trade deal really gets done, that's improvement in sentiment, which drives markets and CEO confidence, and then you still have very easy money out there and the Fed doesn't plan on changing that," Phillips said. "All those things combined suggest that equities should rise in the next 12 months, though maybe not as strong as 2019."

Trading volume remained lighter than usual Friday. General Mills was among the biggest gainers in the S&P 500 as traders shifted assets into traditionally defensive sector stocks. The consumer foods company rose 1.5%.

Investors also favored real estate and utilities stocks. Kimco Realty gained 1.5% and American Water Works rose 0.9%.

Several airlines fell. American Airlines Group was the biggest decliner in the S&P 500, shedding 4.2%. Southwest Airlines and Alaska Air Group lost 1.1%.

Devon Energy led a slide in energy sector stocks, shedding 2.4%.

Investors bid up shares in Michaels Cos. after the arts and crafts retailer hired an executive from Walmart to be CEO. The stock vaulted 32.9%.

Oil prices rebounded from an early stumble. Benchmark US crude rose 1 cent to settle at $61.72 per barrel. Brent crude, used to price international oils, gained 24 cents to close at $68.16 per barrel.

In other commodities trading, wholesale gasoline fell 1 cent to $1.74 per gallon. Heating oil was little changed at $2.05 per gallon. Natural gas slid 14 cents, or 5.9%, to $2.16 per 1,000 cubic feet.

The price of gold rose $3.70 to $1,518.10 per ounce. Silver fell 5 cents to $17.94 per ounce. Copper dropped 2 cents to $2.83 per pound.

Asia

Asian stocks followed Wall Street higher on Friday amid optimism US-Chinese trade relations are improving.

Hong Kong's benchmark rose 1.3% while Shanghai and Hong Kong also rose and Tokyo was unchanged.

Investors welcomed President Donald Trump's comment that an interim "Phase 1" trade deal was "getting done." Trump said he and Chinese President Xi Jinping would hold a signing ceremony.

Markets have been encouraged by positive comments about the agreement, though details have yet to be released.

Chinese customs data this week showed soybean imports rose in November in a possible boost to American farmers. Midwestern farm states were battered by Beijing's suspension of purchases of US soybeans, the biggest Chinese import from the United States, in response to Trump's tariff hikes in a fight over China's technology ambitions and trade surplus.

"Broadly risk sentiment is positive," Mizuho Bank said in a report.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng rose to 28,222.40 and the Shanghai Composite Index gained 0.8% to 3,030.13. Tokyo's Nikkei 225 was off 3 points at 23,921.97.

Seoul's Kospi gained 0.3% to 2,204.03 and Sydney's S&P-ASX 200 added 0.3% to 6,814.10.

Benchmarks in Taiwan and Singapore advanced while New Zealand declined.

The S&P 500 rose 0.5% to 3,239.91 and the Dow gained 0.4% to 28,621.39. The Nasdaq composite climbed 0.8% to 9,022.39.

Investors welcomed a report by Mastercard SpendingPulse that showed US online Christmas shopping rose 18.8% over a year earlier.

Despite optimism about a US-Chinese trade truce, traders still are concerned about bigger unresolved disputes.The coming year also has the added complication of the US presidential election.

exchange rates – Dec 28

		US dollar			Sterling pound			Euro			Japanese yen			Swiss franc			Canadian dollar			Swedish krona			Saudi riyal			UAE dirham			Bahraini dinar			Omani riyal		
		Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer
BEC	Buy	.300020	.301950	.301950	.391975	.391475	.391475	.333639	.335639	.335639	.002696	.002695	.002695	.306346	.307345	.307345	.227644	.225643	.225643	.028575	.027461	.027461	.080060	.080560	.080560	.082217	.081429	.081429	.801015	.800091	.800091	.785262	.779031	.779031
	Sell	.304750	.304300	.304300	.405875	.402475	.402475	.347339	.344639	.344639	.002876	.002875	.002875	.317346	.314345	.314345	.236644	.235643	.235643	.033575	.032461	.032461	.081360	.081200	.081200	.083043	.082878	.082878	.809065	.808591	.808591	.793154	.789981	.789981
Muzaini	Buy	–	.296650	.296650	–	.394420	.394420	–	–	–	–	.002799	.002799	–	.309520	.309520	–	.232140	.232140	–	–	–	–	.081470	.081470	–	.082850	.082850	–	.808020	.808020	–	.793026	.793026
	Sell	–	.304100	.304100	–	–	–	–	.341050	.341050	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Commercial Bank	Buy	.297000	.302150	.302150	.391000	.395439	.395439	.334000	.336988	.336988	–	.002759	.002759	.307000	.309501	.309501	.229000	.230931	.230931	–	.032388	.032388	.080528	.080556	.080556	.082217	.082289	.082289	.801015	.801906	.801906	.785262	.787054	.787054
	Sell	.306050	.305750	.305750	.403000	.400150	.400150	.343000	.341003	.341003	–	.002792	.002792	.317000	.313188	.313188	.238000	.233682	.233682	–	.032773	.032773	.081338	.081516	.081516	.083043	.083270	.083270	.809065	.811460	.811460	.793154	.796431	.796431
Gulf Bank	Buy	–	.302900	.302900	–	.390177	.390177	–	.333526	.333526	–	.002736	.002736	–	.305925	.305925	–	.228638	.228638	–	.031906	.031906	–	.080240	.080240	–	.081949	.081949	–	.798288	.798288	–	.781919	.781919
	Sell	–	.305000	.305000	–	.402121	.402121	–	.343689	.343689	–	.002820	.002820	–	.315320	.315320	–	.235635	.235635	–	.032883	.032883	–	.081922	.081922	–	.083666	.083666	–	.815181	.815181	–	.800230	.800230
NBK	Buy	–	.302400	.302400	–	.389040	.389040	–	.332190	.332190	–	.002732	.002732	–	.304720	.304720	–	.226040	.226040	–	.032030	.032030	–	.080700	.080700	–	.082410	.082410	–	.802280	.802280	–	.786240	.786240
	Sell	–	.305500	.305500	–	.399440	.399440	–	.342010	.342010	–	.002813	.002813	–	.314490	.314490	–	.234080	.234080	–	.032500	.032500	–	.081460	.081460	–	.083170	.083170	–	.810310	.810310	–	.793440	.793440
Burgan Bank	Buy	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	.338430	.338430	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	.032580	.032580	–	.081460	.081460	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
	Sell	–	.303400	.303400	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
ABK	Buy	.300400	.302900	.302900	.388520	.392020	.392020	.331640	.334640	.334640	–	.002760	.002760	–	.307310	.307310	–	.229550	.229550	–	–	–	–	.080000	.080000	–	.082000	.082000	–	.796310	.796310	–	.782990	.782990
	Sell	.306500	.305000	.305000	.399610	.397320	.397320	.341390	.339430	.339430	–	.002790	.002790	–	.312290	.312290	–	.232690	.232690	–	–	–	–	.081540	.081540	–	.083370	.083370	–	.812080	.812080	–	.795680	.795680
KFH	Buy	.301190	.301900	.301900	.388445	.380756	.380756	.331851	.330067	.330067	–	.002694	.002694	–	.301358	.301358	–	.226142	.226142	–	.031916	.031916	.080293	.080293	.080293	.082016	.082016	.082016	.799079	.799079	.799079	.783688	.783688	.783688
	Sell	.306720	.305000	.305000	.399932	.406077	.406077	.342269	.342637	.342637	–	.002849	.002849	–	.317147	.317147	–	.235539	.235539	–	.032529	.032529	.081453	.081453	.081453	.083213	.083213	.083213	.810610	.810610	.810610	.792558	.792558	.792558
KBE	Buy	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	.795520	.795520	.795520

		Danish krone			Indian rupee			Pakistani rupee			Sri Lankan rupee			Bangladesh taka			Philippine peso			Australian dollar			Hong Kong dollar			Singapore dollar			Jordanian dinar			Egyptian pound		
		Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer
BEC	Buy	.041495	.041494	.041494	.003582	.004194	.004194	.001324	.001932	.001932	.001318	.001635	.001635	.002945	.003536	.003536	.005910	.005517	.005517	.204672	.202671	.202671	.036709	.036598	.036598	.219689	.220689	.220689	.423210	.423420	.423420	.018933	.018280	.018280
	Sell	.046495	.046494	.046494	.004354	.004275	.004275	.002094	.001966	.001966	.001898	.001678	.001678	.003746	.003569	.003569	.006210	.006009	.006009	.216672	.215671	.215671	.039849	.039698	.039698	.229689	.226689	.226689	.432210	.430920	.430920	.021674	.019024	.019024
Muzaini	Buy	–	–	–	–	.042950	.042950	–	.001961	.001961	–	.001671	.001671	–	.003560	.003560	–	.005985	.005985	–	–	–	–	.038815	.038815	–	.224300	.224300	–	.429240	.429240	.020900	.188300	.188300
	Sell	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Commercial Bank	Buy	–	.045220	.045220	.004000	–	–	–	–	–	.002000	–	–	–	–	–	.005000	–	–	.209000	.210644	.210644	–	.038803	.038803	–	.223442	.223442	.420000	–	–	.012000	–	–
	Sell	–	.045759	.045759	.006500	.004291	.004291	–	.001976	.001976	.003500	.001687	.001687	–	.003620	.003620	.007900	.006034	.006034	.219000	.213154	.213154	–	.039265	.039265	–	.226105	.226105	.440000	.432064	.432064	.023000	.019726	.019726
Gulf Bank	Buy	–	.044665	.044665	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	.208201	.208201	–	.038486	.038486	–	.221410	.221410	–	–	–	–	–	–
	Sell	–	.046027	.046027	–	.004357	.004357	–	.002001	.002001	–	.001711	.001711	–	.003668	.003668	–	.006121	.006121	–	.214662	.214662	–	.039656	.039656	–	.228250	.228250	–	.435882	.435882	–	.020162	.020162
NBK	Buy	–	.044740	.044740	–	.004205	.004205	–	–	–	–	.001652	.001652	–	–	–	–	.005790	.005790	–	.206360	.206360	–	–	–	–	.221770	.221770	–	.422350	.422350	–	.018220	.018220
	Sell	–	.045430	.045430	–	.004314	.004314	–	.001980	.001980	–	.001700	.001700	–	–	–	–	.006060	.006060	–	.214890	.214890	–	–	–	–	.226870	.226870	–	.435810	.435810	–	.019460	.019460
Burgan Bank	Buy	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
	Sell	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	.017300	.017300
ABK	Buy	–	–	–	–	.004250	.004250	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	.209000	.209000	–	–	–	–	.222810	.222810	–	.424980	.424980	–	.017830	.017830
	Sell	–	–	–	–	.004350	.004350	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	.212160	.212160	–	–	–	–	.225760	.225760	–	.432770	.432770	–	.019410	.019410
KFH	Buy	–	.044522	.044522	–	.004188	.004188	–	.001933	.001933	–	.001657	.001657	–	.003515	.003515	–	.005855	.005855	–	.202998	.202998	–	–	–	–	.221188	.221188	–	.424733	.424733	–	.018434	.018434
	Sell	–	.045517	.045517	–	.004322	.004322	–	.001973	.001973	–	.001689	.001689	–	.003636	.003636	–	.006095	.006095	–	.217343	.217343	–	–	–	–	.226850	.226850	–	.430974	.430974	–	.019614	.019614
KBE	Buy	–	.045020	.045020	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

		Cyprus pound			Yemeni riyal			Thai baht			South African rand			Korean won			Syrian pound			Iranian Riyal			Lebanese pound			Malaysian ringgit			Indonesian rupiah			New Zealand dollar		
		Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer
BEC	Buy	–	–	–	.000989	.000979	.000979	.009755	.009709	.009709	–	–	–	.000252	–	–	.001290	.001290	.001290	–	–	–	.000103	.000188	.000188	.069689	.068689	.068689	.000017	.000016	.000016	.197442	.195442	.195442
	Sell	–	–	–	.001069	.001079	.001079	.010305	.010259	.010259	–	–	–	.000267	–	–	.001510	.001510	.001510	–	–	–	.000253	.000208	.000208	.075689	.075689	.075689	.000023	.000023	.000023	.206942	.204035	.204035
Muzaini	Buy	–	–	–	–	.001221	.001221	–	.010098	.010098	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	.002030	.002030	–	.077775	.077775	–	–	–	–	–	–
	Sell	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Gulf Bank	Buy	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	.199929	.199929
	Sell	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	.021988	.021988	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	.000022	.000022	–	.206048	.206048
ABK	Buy	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
	Sell	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
KFH	Buy	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	.009840	.009840	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	.072311	.072311	–	–	–	–	–	–
	Sell	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	.010283	.010283	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	.074554	.074554	–	–	–	–	–	–
KBE	Buy	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

travellers cheques

	US dollar	Sterling	Euro
BEC	.301950	.391475	.335639
Commercial Bank	.302150	.395439	.336988
Gulf Bank	.302900	.390177	.333526
Al-Ahli Bank	.302900	.392020	.334640

local gold —

	Gold 999 kg	Gold 999 10 tola	Gold ounce	Gold gm 22k	Gold gm 21k	Gold gm 18k	100 gm 999	10 gm 999
BEC	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Muzaini Exchange	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

All rates in KD per unit of foreign currency