



Anjan Chowdhury, managing director of Square Toiletries, speaks at the annual sales conference of Square Toiletries (zone one) at Ratnodweep Resort in Pabna yesterday.

India raises import taxes in move set to spook some foreign firms

India on Saturday raised taxes on imports of goods such as electronic items, toys and furniture, aiming to give impetus to domestic manufacturing in a move that will hit Sweden's IKEA and other foreign firms.

The measures, announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her 2020-21 budget, come amid criticism from some companies that India has increasingly resorted to protectionist rules that discriminate against foreign companies.

Taxes on imports of items including kitchenware, fans and small electrical appliances will be doubled to 20 percent, while the levy on furniture including seats, lamps and mattresses will be raised to 25 percent from 20 percent.

IKEA's India CEO Peter Betzel said the company was disappointed with the increase. "We are further evaluating the impact of the hike on our total business," he said.

Sitharaman defended the decision,

saying the rationale was that if certain goods were being manufactured locally at "equal quality, if not better, (then) we had no reason to import."

Taxes on imported toys would be tripled to 60 percent, a move one industry executive said could hit imports of toys made by firms such as Lego, Hasbro and Mattel, and boost smuggling of unbranded toys from abroad.

"It's a protectionist move," said the executive.

The new tariffs also come as India and the United States try to resolve trade differences and have been at odds over certain tariffs. Washington has been urging India to not impose trade barriers that restrict growth of American firms.

The government also said a tax of 5 percent will be imposed on imported medical device to fund health infrastructure. The measure could hit firms such as Abbott which are already battling price caps imposed by the government.

"It would make some imported medical devices costlier and that increase will likely be passed on to consumers," said an India-based executive of foreign medical device company.

The duty on shelled walnuts will be raised to 100 percent from 30 percent while certain car and smartphone parts will also face higher import taxes.

Chinese central bank to pump \$173b into economy in virus fight

AFP, Beijing

China's central bank said Sunday it would pump 1.2 trillion yuan (\$173 bln) into the economy as it ramps up support for a nationwide fight against a deadly virus that is expected to hit growth.

The People's Bank of China (PBOC) said in a statement it would launch a 1.2 trillion yuan reverse repurchase operation on Monday to maintain "reasonable and abundant liquidity" in the banking system, as well as a stable currency market, during the epidemic.

It added that the overall liquidity of the banking system would be 900 billion yuan (\$129 billion) more than in the same period last year.

The move will kick in on the day that China's financial markets reopen, following an extended Spring Festival break.

The SARS-like virus which originated from the central Chinese city of Wuhan, has now infected over 14,000 people in the country and claimed more than 300 lives.

The PBOC also announced measures Saturday to step up monetary and credit support for enterprises which are helping in its fight against the virus, such as



Security personnel and local officials stand guard at an entrance of a residential area for migrant workers in a village on the outskirts of Beijing yesterday.

medical companies. China's central bank urged financial institutions to provide "sufficient credit resources" to hospitals and medical research units, among other measures.

Authorities also relaxed tariffs on goods imported for use in the virus fight -- including those from the United States, with which it has been engaged in a bruising trade

war for around two years. The move to inject liquidity into its financial system comes as authorities work to shore up confidence in an already slowing economy.

- 'Short-term' hit - The China Securities Regulatory Commission said Sunday that "the epidemic's impact on the market is short-term, and will not affect the longer-

term trend", reported the state-run People's Daily.

But China's travel and tourism sectors have already taken a hit over an unusually quiet Spring Festival break this year, with large-scale events cancelled, public attractions closed and people urged to stay home to help contain the outbreak.

China has advised its citizens to postpone trips abroad and cancelled both overseas and domestic group tours. Cinemas were made to close during what would otherwise have been a prime time for blockbuster releases.

Other countries have told their nationals to avoid travel to the country as well, with various airlines trimming their schedules. Manufacturing has also been halted.

Toyota, IKEA, Starbucks, Tesla, McDonald's and Volkswagen are among corporate giants temporarily halting production or shuttering outlets in China.

Tech giant Tencent was among companies telling staff to work at home until February 10.



Zahir Ahmed, vice chairman of ADN Group, receives an 'International Finance Award' accorded to ADN Telecom by UK-based International Finance Magazine as the most innovative telecommunications service provider at a hotel in Dubai recently.

Japan seeks to contain economic impact of virus

REUTERS, Tokyo

Japan on Saturday moved to contain the economic impact of a coronavirus outbreak originating in China as strict new measures aimed at limiting the spread of the virus, including targeting foreign visitors, came into effect.

Japan had 17 confirmed cases as of Friday, including some without symptoms. One of the most recent was a bus guide who worked on a bus tour for tourists from China - the same tour as a bus driver who also came down with the virus.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told a Saturday meeting of a government task force coordinating Japan's response to the virus to come up with steps aimed at easing the impact of the outbreak on Japan's economy.

Abe has made tourism a key part of his economic policy, with a large proportion of foreign visitors from China, and major Japanese companies have a number of factories in China.

"I ask ministers to compile measures to use reserves (in the state budget) and implement them as soon as possible," Abe was quoted by Kyodo news agency as saying.

Bangladesh Election Commission Tender for Goods (Single Lot) advertisement with detailed specifications and terms.

Huawei 5G troubles to test Nordic competitors' bandwidth

AFP, Helsinki

Tougher UK and EU rules restricting 5G network supplier Huawei should be a golden opportunity for competitors Nokia and Ericsson, but the companies may struggle to meet the increased demand, analysts warned.

On Tuesday, Britain imposed a 35 percent cap on the role of "high-risk vendors" in building the country's next-generation communications network, over security concerns.

The change will hit Chinese giant Huawei, whom critics accuse of being ultimately under the control of Beijing, an allegation it strongly denies.

The EU followed by releasing guidelines urging member states to avoid dependency on "high risk" suppliers, though the bloc stopped short of naming Huawei or calling for an outright ban. On the face of it, the biggest beneficiaries from this week's announcements appear to be the Chinese firm's two largest competitors, Nokia and Ericsson.



Huawei booth is pictured at the venue of a congress of the Social Democratic Party in Berlin.

"BT in the UK thinks it's going to cost it 500 million (\$660 million) to switch out Huawei, so a good chunk of that will now be going to Nokia and Ericsson," analyst Matthew Howett of Assembly Research told AFP.

On Friday, Nokia welcomed the EU's guidelines and commitment to cybersecurity, saying in a statement that "5G starts and ends with trust and security."

"Ericsson stands ready to support this process to ensure a high level of protection for European citizens and business." But industry watchers claim that fulfilling the increased demand left by market leader Huawei may not be straightforward.

"A discussion needs to take place about Huawei's perceived leadership position, and how ready Nokia and Ericsson are to step up to that over the next three year period," Howett said.

"Can they give network operators the equipment they need in the timescale?" Last year Nokia downgraded its 2020 earnings forecast in the face of fierce competition over the 5G networks market, while chief executive Rajeev Suri played down the firm's delays in delivering some equipment orders.

Government notice regarding recruitment for Bangladesh Police, including details of the exam, syllabus, and application process.