



Ismail Bhuiyan, sales manager of Emirates in Bangladesh, and Mohammad Ayub, governor of Rotary International District 3281, sign a corporate deal at a programme in Dhaka. Emirates offers special discount on airfare to members and their families of Rotary Club.

ChemChina to file for anti-trust approval in US for takeover

AFP, Shanghai
 China's state-owned chemical corporation ChemChina has asked US anti-trust regulators to greenlight its \$43 billion acquisition of Swiss seed giant Syngenta, a report said Friday.
 China National Chemical Corp (ChemChina) has filed for approval from the Federal Trade Commission and the process is on track, Bloomberg News reported.
 Winning the approval is a critical step towards wrapping up the biggest overseas takeover ever for a Chinese firm.
 US regulators have been a stumbling block for other Chinese deals. In December, American President Barack Obama blocked a Chinese company's purchase of German semiconductor equipment maker Aixtron

over security concerns, resulting in the termination of the deal a few days later.
 Bloomberg said the proposed deal, announced last February, has faced delays as competition authorities are concerned the acquisition might raise prices or reduce choice for crop-protection products sold to farmers, and ChemChina has extended its offer for Syngenta numerous times.
 The EU announced in November that it would probe the deal to see if it would hurt competition as ChemChina also controls Adama, the largest supplier of generic crop protection products in Europe.
 ChemChina aims to obtain all regulatory approval in the first quarter of this year, its latest filings showed.
 The Chinese firm did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

India pressed ahead with banknote ban

REUTERS, New Delhi/Mumbai
 India pushed ahead with its decision to scrap banknotes even as the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) own board expressed concern whether the cash could be replaced quickly enough, the central bank has said in written testimony to parliament.
 The move comes amid growing criticism about whether the central bank and the government had sufficiently assessed the potential fallout from the Nov. 8 ban of about 86 percent of the cash then in circulation.
 Prime Minister Narendra Modi's shock move caused a severe cash shortage that brought large parts of the economy to a virtual standstill, as the central bank struggled to print new 500-rupee and 2,000-rupee notes to replace the old currency.
 A copy of the private testimony to a parliament panel, seen by Reuters, showed the central bank had also warned the government of "possible

inconvenience to the public for some time," among the potential consequences of the massive exercise.
 Despite its own doubts, the testimony showed, the RBI board approved the plan to ban 500-rupee and 1,000-rupee notes, as it believed the move would rein in counterfeiting and reliance on cash, and pull unaccounted cash into the financial system.
 "It might not immediately be possible to replace these notes fully in terms of both value and volume," the board felt at a meeting ahead of Modi's Nov. 8 announcement, according to the central bank submission.
 But the RBI's board ultimately believed that "corrective" action could be taken and decided to recommend the move, the document showed. The RBI also believed the impact of such an exercise would be "transitory", given its efforts to quickly replace the old notes, it said in the testimony.

The RBI's endorsement of the government action has drawn strong criticism from several former policymakers, including former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, the architect of India's 1991 financial reforms and a former central bank governor.
 The document also notes the proposal to ban the cash had come from the government, in a letter a day before the announcement that advised the RBI to "immediately" put the plan before its board for approval. Under India's RBI Act, such a move was necessary.
 The central bank did not immediately respond to Reuters' request for comments on its submission to parliament.
 Since Modi declared the ban, the central bank has been forced to announce a barrage of measures to soften the impact, including several high-profile reversals, undermining confidence in it.
 In a letter to RBI Governor Urjit

Patel, unions of central bank employees called such criticism "painful", and accused the government of steering decisions behind the replacement of the banned notes, saying that "blatantly encroaches" on the central bank's jurisdiction.
 The government, however, has denied it was taking the decisions during the implementation, saying that it was merely cooperating with the RBI and reiterating that it fully respected the autonomy of the central bank.
 Power and Coal Minister Piyush Goyal said such cooperation was necessary, since it involved an unprecedented "exercise" and that the flurry of action showed India's flexibility in taking the necessary measures.
 "They never had got an experience of this kind of a war-type situation," Goyal said, referring to the RBI. "So, every organisation which is doing this is doing it for the first time. You will learn as you go along."

Sri Lanka's airline sell-off stalls

AFP, Colombo
 Sri Lanka has failed to attract bids from international airlines to privatise its loss-making flag carrier, but will continue its efforts to salvage the company, a minister said Friday. The government received nine offers for Sri Lankan but none were from a major international airline operator, State Enterprise Development Minister Kabir Hashim said.
 "We are still evaluating the proposals, but we are keen to have an airline of international repute that can also bring in traffic that will help our tourism industry," the minister told reporters in Colombo.
 Of the proposals received, the government has shortlisted three, including one from ITPG, a San Francisco-based private equity firm. Hashim is heading a new three-member ministerial panel to decide the future of Sri Lankan which has debts and accumulated losses of over \$2 billion.
 "The new committee was appointed to explore other options," the minister said. "We don't know yet what those options are, but we want to get a good international (airline) partner very soon."

Official sources said the government was keen to attract a big operator from the Middle East or Asia.
 Late last year, Sri Lankan cancelled the previous government's order to lease four brand new Airbus A350-900 long-haul aircraft after paying a penalty of \$115 million to aircraft leasing giant AerCap.
 Minister Hashim said a separate order of four Airbus A350-900 planes will also be cancelled. Those were scheduled to be delivered after 2020.
 Former president Mahinda Rajapakse ordered all eight planes as part of a \$2.3-billion re-fleeting programme for the airline, which is now being investigated for corruption.
 Sri Lankan was profitable before Rajapakse cancelled a management agreement with Emirates in 2008 following a personal dispute. The carrier had refused to bump fare-paying passengers and give their seats to Rajapakse's family members.
 An angry Rajapakse removed the Emirates-appointed CEO of Sri Lankan from the post and replaced him with his own brother-in-law, who had no airline experience, and is now under investigation for corruption.



Sheikh Mohammad Khobir Uddin, managing director of RSS Thread and Accessories, briefs visitors about the products of the company at its stall at Garment Accessories and Packaging Expo 2017, at International Convention City Bashundhara in Dhaka. The fair ended yesterday.

Apple files \$1b lawsuit against chip supplier Qualcomm

REUTERS
 Apple Inc filed a \$1 billion lawsuit against supplier Qualcomm Inc on Friday, days after the US government accused the chip maker of resorting to anticompetitive tactics to maintain a monopoly over key semiconductors in mobile phones.
 Qualcomm is a major supplier to both Apple and Samsung Electronics Co Ltd for "modem" chips that connect phones to wireless networks. The two companies together accounted for 40 percent of Qualcomm's \$23.5 billion in revenue in its most recent fiscal year.
 In the lawsuit filed in US District Court for the Southern District of California, Apple accused Qualcomm of overcharging for chips and refusing to pay some \$1 billion in promised rebates. Apple said in its complaint that Qualcomm withheld the rebates because of Apple's discussions with South Korea's antitrust regulator, the Korea Fair Trade Commission.
 "If that were not enough, Qualcomm then attempted to extort Apple into changing its responses and providing false information to the KFTC in exchange for Qualcomm's release of those payments to Apple. Apple refused," Apple said in its lawsuit.
 In a statement, Qualcomm

General Counsel Don Rosenberg called Apple's claims "baseless."
 "Apple has been actively encouraging regulatory attacks on Qualcomm's business in various jurisdictions around the world, as reflected in the recent KFTC decision and FTC complaint, by misrepresenting facts and withholding information," Rosenberg said in the statement.
 "We welcome the opportunity to have these meritless claims heard in court where we will be entitled to full discovery of Apple's practices and a robust examination of the merits."
 Qualcomm's stock closed 2.4 percent lower at \$62.88 on the news.
 Qualcomm has patents for chips which include standard essential patents, a term used to describe technology that is required to be licensed broadly and on "reasonable" terms.
 In its lawsuit, Apple accused Qualcomm of refusing to license the technology to other manufacturers to prevent them from making the chips.
 It also accused Qualcomm of selling chips while requiring Apple to pay a separate licensing fee for the same chips, in a "no license, no chip" policy.
 In addition, Qualcomm pressured network carriers to not sell or support Apple devices made with Intel chipsets Apple said.
 The KFTC fined Qualcomm \$854

million in December for what it called unfair patent licensing practices.
 In February 2015, Qualcomm paid a \$975 million fine in China, while the European Union in December 2015 accused it of abusing its market power to thwart rivals.
 On Tuesday, the US Federal Trade Commission filed a lawsuit against Qualcomm, saying the San Diego-based company used its dominant position as a supplier of certain phone chips to impose "onerous" supply and licensing terms on cellphone manufacturers. Qualcomm said it would contest the FTC complaint.
 Qualcomm was the sole supplier of modem chips for Apple's phones until the release of the iPhone 7 in September. Intel Corp supplied about half of the modem chips for the newest models, said Stacy Rasgon, a senior analyst at Bernstein Research. Intel's shares closed up 1 percent at \$36.94 after the Qualcomm suit was announced.
 Apple made the move around the same time that Samsung, which had switched to using its own internal chips for its Galaxy S6 phones, returned to Qualcomm for the Galaxy S7.
 Qualcomm "has been able to manage through (the Apple contract loss) pretty well because they got back Samsung at the same time," Rasgon said.

Western Union to pay \$586m to settle US money laundering probe

AFP, New York
 Global payments company Western Union will pay \$586 million to settle a US criminal investigation that found it had a weak anti-money laundering program and looked the other way when employees collaborated in fraud.
 The settlement, which includes a deferred prosecution agreement, concerns violations uncovered between 2004 and 2012 in which the company failed to adequately safeguard its money transfer system from transaction that could have supported illicit activity such as human trafficking, drug dealing and other crimes.
 The settlement covers investigations by the US Justice Department and Federal Trade Commission. The agencies found instances where fraudsters posed as family members and sought funds for promised prizes or job opportunities.
 Various Western Union agents participated in the scam in exchange for a portion of the proceeds, the Justice Department said in a press release. And when Western Union became aware of the wrongdoing, it failed to terminate or take action against the employees.
 Western Union employees also worked to help customers get around requirements to file a currency transaction report when more

than \$10,000 is wired to a client in a single day. Western Union sent hundreds of millions of dollars to China in transactions designed to avoid the US Bank Secrecy Act that included large sums for human smuggling, investigators said.
 "As this case shows, wiring money can be the fastest way to send it -- directly into the pockets of criminals and scam artists," said acting assistant Attorney General David Bitkower. "Western Union is now paying the price for placing profits ahead of its own customers."
 The agency will "work to recoup losses and compensate victims."
 Western Union said it has boosted spending on compliance by 200 percent and now spends about \$200 million with about 20 percent of its staff dedicated to the oversight. It said its performance in detecting fraud has improved markedly since the period in question and that the dollar value connected to fraud relative to overall activity has fallen by 60 percent.
 "We share the government's goal of protecting consumers and the integrity of our global money transfer network, and we worked hard to resolve these matters with the government," the company said in a statement.
 Shares of Western Union fell 2.9 percent in midday trading to \$21.22.

Weakness in oil and gas dents GE earnings

AFP, New York
 Weakness in the oil and gas sector dented General Electric's fourth-quarter results, pushing revenues lower despite gains in other industrial divisions, the company reported Friday.
 Revenues fell two percent to \$33.1 billion, but net income jumped to \$3.5 billion, up about 38 percent compared to the final quarter of 2015, not counting earnings from discontinued operations.
 GE described the macro environment as "slow growth and volatile" but said it was "more optimistic about the US economy." Sluggish activity in oil and gas has been a drag on GE earnings in recent quarters due to a two-year slump in oil prices.
 A November agreement by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries to cut output sparked optimism of a more robust environment for companies like GE that supply drilling services and perform other functions.
 But GE said in a presentation that market pressures were continuing in oil and gas, and sales in this business fell 22 percent to \$3.4 billion.
 GE announced in October it was merging its oilfield services operations with Baker Hughes. With about \$32 billion in annual sales, the combined company is expected to have more leverage in negotiating service contracts with large oil producers.



Tarique E Haque, managing director of Tiffin Box Ltd, the franchisee of Burger King in Bangladesh, opens its fourth outlet at Dhanmondi in Dhaka.