

Trump says deal 'could very well happen' with China

REUTERS, Washington

US President Donald Trump said on Saturday there has been progress toward a trade deal with China, but denied that he was considering lifting tariffs on Chinese imports.

"Things are going very well with China and with trade," he told reporters at the White House, adding that he had seen some "false reports" indicating that US tariffs on Chinese products would be lifted.

"If we make a deal certainly we would not have sanctions and if we don't make a deal we will," Trump said. "We've really had a very extraordinary number of meetings and a deal could very well happen with China. It's going well. I would say about as well as it could possibly go."

Chinese Vice Premier Liu He will visit the United States on Jan. 30 and 31 for the next round of trade negotiations with Washington.

That follows lower-level negotiations held in Beijing last week to resolve the bitter dispute between the world's two largest economies by March 2, when the Trump administration is scheduled to increase tariffs on \$200 billion worth of Chinese goods.

According to sources briefed on the ongoing negotiations, cited exclusively by Reuters on Friday, the United States is pushing for regular reviews of China's progress on pledged trade reforms as a condition for a trade deal - and could again resort to tariffs if it deems Beijing has violated the agreement.

"The threat of tariffs is not going away, even if



REUTERS/FILE

Shipping containers are seen at a port in Shanghai, China.

there is a deal," said one of three sources briefed on the talks who spoke with Reuters on condition of anonymity.

Chinese negotiators were not keen on the idea of regular compliance checks, the source said, but the US proposal "didn't derail negotiations."

A Chinese source said the United States wants "periodic assessments" but it was not yet clear how often.

"It looks like humiliation," the source said.

"But perhaps the two sides could find a way to save face for the Chinese government."

The Trump administration has imposed import tariffs on Chinese goods to put pressure on Beijing to meet a long list of demands that would rewrite the terms of trade between the two countries.

The demands include changes to China's policies on intellectual property protection, technology transfers, industrial subsidies and other trade barriers.



Quazi Osman Ali, CEO of Social Islami Bank, poses at a ceremony at Hotel Purbani International in Dhaka on Saturday on the bank presenting scholarships among students who excelled in SSC and HSC exams.

Jute goods makers target green consumers

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About the significance of participating in the fair, she said it would help her introduce her products to new buyers and visitors as well as generate brand value.

Munni manufactures about 200 jute products including panjabis, waistcoats, saris and toys. Wine bags are the most popular among foreign buyers.

Jute Crafts, a concern of Probity Expansive Assist Committee Foundation (PEACEF), a social welfare organisation, is showcasing jute products made by a number of survivors of the Rana Plaza collapse.

Afjal Hossain, executive director of the firm, said his organisation had provided jobs to 14 survivors.

This was the first time Jute Crafts is taking part in the fair after starting manufacturing of jute products in 2017.

"This fair is helping us market and advertise products, create buyers and boost sales," said Hossain.

Ishrat Jahan, proprietor of K2K Wears International, said earlier people used to consider jute goods as low-end products but now everybody considered it as environment-friendly products. "So, the demand for jute goods is steadily increasing globally," she said.

She said a number of buyers and exporters visited her stall in the fair. She bagged a spot order from a buyer from the UK - a feat she is treating as a success of her company.

Duty cuts for ATM, CCTV camera

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The plant, which is under construction, will initially assemble the products. Until October 2018, Bangladesh had 10,063 ATMs and 43,764 POS, with the number fast increasing, according to data from Bangladesh Bank.

At present, \$5,000 is needed for an ATM, according to Marbin. But the prices would come down upon domestic manufacturing.

"We have spoken with banks and came to know that they would roll out more ATMs if they get them at lower prices." Apart from ATMs, nearly 10 lakh CCTVs are sold annually in Bangladesh. As CCTVs are not a lifelong product, the demand for this will remain in the days ahead, he said.

"Our aim is to build, assemble and make, look for local customers as well as to export to other countries. We will be able to create jobs and skilled workforce if we can do import substitution," he added.

Md Mahfuzull Kabir, a deputy director of BHTPA, expected that more firms will join the queue to make ATMs and CCTV cameras after the duty benefit.

Lub-rref brings 'nanotech' lube

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The launching came through a seminar titled "Environment Friendly and Cost Effective Technology in Lubricants and Power Sector of Bangladesh" at Pan Pacific Sonargaon Dhaka. Mohammed Yousuf, managing director of Lub-rref (Bangladesh), said the "nanotechnology" aimed for five percent less fuel consumption, more power through improved engine performance, enhancing lifespan and reducing emissions, friction and wear.

It also forms a self-repairing protective layer on interacting surfaces, he said, adding that the Nynas oils had good flowing feature under low temperature, good heat distribution, low maintenance cost and were 100 percent recyclable after 50-60 years' use.

New vice chairman for Standard Bank



Mohammed Shamsul Alam

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Standard Bank recently saw the election of one of its founding directors, Mohammed Shamsul Alam, as vice chairman.

Alam is a managing partner of electronic home appliances importer M/S Radiovision, managing director of PAM Complex (pvt), a director of CIDER Education Services and a former director of MIDAS Finance, the bank said in a statement yesterday.

That may change once the company finally introduces the more affordable \$35,000 version of the Model 3; to date the average sale price has been

Musk's rare dose of realism could serve Tesla well

REUTERS, New York

Elon Musk is adding to the gloom that has enveloped much of the automotive sector in recent months. Tesla's chief executive on Friday effectively issued the firm's first profit warning. In an email to employees he wrote that he would be reducing staff by 7 percent.

In addition, he admitted not only that fourth-quarter profit would be lower than in the previous three months, but also that it would take "great difficulty, effort and some luck" to turn a "tiny profit" between January and the end of March. Shareholders immediately wiped almost 10 percent off the stock, reducing the company's market value to \$54 billion. But Musk's rare dose of realism could serve Tesla well.

Usually he's hyping up everything from the cars' performance to how quickly the company can produce them. His Friday missive, though, makes it clear that Tesla is currently struggling to sustainably make - or have a durable market for - 5,000 Model 3 sedans a week. Raising production and sales to 10,000 a week, as he has promised so often in the past, will be far harder, even after bringing European and Asian markets into the mix.

That may change once the company finally introduces the more affordable \$35,000 version of the Model 3; to date the average sale price has been

\$59,000, according to FactSet. Trouble is, Tesla will have to produce a lot more of the lower-priced cars to make up for the 41 percent sticker-price drop.

Culling some 3,400 employees would not help much. UBS reckons that would save some \$200 million a year, which would boost Tesla's estimated pre-tax margin for the year, all else being equal, by less than a percentage point to 2.4 percent, based on Refinitiv data.

Fewer staff could always make production harder. Sure, fast-

expanding firms gather flab that needs trimming and Tesla has doubtless learned from its year or more of what Musk dubbed "production hell." But the company also must address growing complaints about quality and after-sales customer service.

All of this sounds worrying - and it is. But if Musk's unusual openness about the company's current financial state is a sign of a more practical approach - whether by him alone or with a more engaged board of directors - that's no bad thing.

Yuiichiro Ishii, managing director and CEO of Bangladesh Honda Pvt Ltd, and Soichi Sato, director and chief production officer, attend the launch of locally assembled 110cc motorcycles Honda Dream Neo and Honda Livo, priced at Tk 97,000 and Tk 107,000 respectively, at Bangabandhu International Conference Center in Dhaka on Friday.

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Samsung makes new year's offers

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Samsung recently launched a "Wishful New Year Campaign" offering cash backs and gifts on the purchase of different products till February 28.

Customers with get Tk 1,900 to Tk 10,900 cash backs for refrigerators; Tk 1,000 to Tk 100,000 for televisions; Tk 3,000 to Tk 6,000 for ACs; Tk 500 to Tk 1,000 for microwave ovens and Tk 500 to Tk 10,000 for washing machines.

Customers can exchange televisions of any brand and model and receive cash backs of up to Tk 25,000, the company said in a statement yesterday.

On the purchase of QA65Q7F or QA65Q8C models of QLED TV, customers will get gifts such as washing machines, vacuum cleaners and microwave ovens.

With a Smart TV of 50MU6100 model, customers will receive a television of 40M5000 model for free. Likewise, with a purchase of a TV of 55M6300 model, buyers will get a 40M5100 model television.

"Today, Samsung has become one of the most popular consumer electronics brands in Bangladesh because of the love and support of our cherished customers," said Shahriar Bin Lutfor, head of consumer electronics at Samsung Bangladesh.

Small electric cars may be unaffordable for some, VW chairman says

REUTERS, Berlin

The move to electric vehicles will make cars significantly more expensive, meaning they may become unaffordable for people on low incomes in the future, the chairman of Volkswagen said in an interview published on Sunday.

The German carmaker is still reeling from a 2015 scandal over cheating on emissions tests and needs to ramp up production of electric vehicles to meet toughened European emissions-cutting targets.

Shahjalal Islami Bank reelects chairman



Akkas Uddin Mollah

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Shahjalal Islami Bank recently witnessed the reelection of its chairman, Akkas Uddin Mollah, at its 274th board meeting in Dhaka.

The meeting also elected two vice chairmen, Mohammed Younus and Md Abdul Barek, the bank said in a statement yesterday.

Mollah is the chairman and managing director of Russel Spinning Mills, Russel Garments, Ekram Sweaters, Russel Knitting, Russel Washing Plant, Shahan Colours, Tania Cotton Mills and PNR Fastener Co.

Toyota, Panasonic to set up battery JV in 2020

Panasonic already makes prismatic batteries for Toyota, whereas for Tesla, it makes cylindrical batteries of a type similar to those used in laptops.

The two companies may announce the joint venture plan as early as this week, according to the source.

The battery joint venture will help Toyota achieve an annual sales target of around 1 million zero-emission battery EVs and fuel-cell vehicles (FCVs) by 2030.

It will also give Panasonic cost and scale advantages in battery production at a time when China's Contemporary Amperex Technology has grown to be on par with the long-time industry leader on the back of the rapidly growing home market.

Coal import from India comes to a sudden halt

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He said small importers mainly bring in coal from India and they are suffering the most. There are about 2,000 small importers involved in coal imports, he said.

In the past, Bangladesh used to import 26 lakh to 27 lakh tonnes of coal annually from India, but it came down to 4-5 lakh tonnes recently as India allowed coal exports for a definite time slot, according to Ahmed.

Chandan Saha, president of the Sylhet Coal Importers Group, said many coal-laden trucks bound for Bangladesh have been stranded on the Indian side. The value of the stranded coal was about Tk 100 crore.

"Indian exporters have filed writ with the Supreme Court which, we hope, will clear the way for coal imports."



New panel demands election, not selection

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The trade body had taken more than three months to enlist his newly constructed factory in Cumilla. As a result, he could not go into production as per schedule although he is still paying high interest rate for bank loans. "This shows the BGMEA is not serious about the concerns of general members."

Alam said the current executive body does not know the real scenario of the garment sector.

"Many factories have faced closure for different reasons over the last few years, but they are not aware of it."

He said Bangladesh has the opportunity to grab more work orders that are being shifted out of China because of tariff war with the US. "We have the opportunity to grow more, but we have been failing at it."

He said the sector's target of exporting goods worth \$50 billion by 2021 would not be achieved as the country could not improve its capacity. In fiscal 2017-18, garment export receipts amounted to \$30.61 billion.