



ONE BANK
AAM Nasir Uddin, mayor of Chattogram City Corporation; Md Shamsuddoha, chief executive officer, and Md Fazlur Rahman Chowdhury, additional deputy managing director of One Bank, attend a deal signing ceremony recently facilitating payment of holding tax and trade licence and other fees through the bank's branches.

Airbus wins China order for 300 jets as Xi visits France

REUTERS, Paris

Airbus signed a deal worth tens of billions of dollars on Monday to sell 300 aircraft to China, coinciding with a visit to Europe by Chinese President Xi Jinping and matching a China record held by US rival Boeing.

The deal between Airbus and China's state buying agency, China Aviation Supplies Holding Company, which regularly coordinates headline-grabbing deals during diplomatic visits, will include 290 A320-family jets and 10 A350 wide-body jets.

French officials said the deal was worth some 30 billion euros at catalogue prices. Planemakers usually grant significant discounts.

The larger-than-expected order, which matches an order for 300 Boeing planes when US Donald Trump visited Beijing in 2017, follows a year-long vacuum of purchases in which China failed to place significant orders amid global trade tensions.

It also comes as the grounding of the Boeing 737 MAX has left uncertainty over Boeing's immediate hopes for a major jet order as the result of any warming of US-China trade ties.

There was no evidence of any direct connection between the Airbus deal and Sino-US tensions or Boeing fleet problems, but China watchers say Beijing has a history of sending diplomatic signals or playing off suppliers through state aircraft deals.

"The conclusion of a big (aviation) contract ... is an important step forward and an excellent signal in the current context," French President Emmanuel Macron said in a joint address with his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping.

The United States and China are edging towards a possible deal to ease a months-long tariff row and a deal involving as many as 200 to 300 Boeing jets had until recently been expected as part of the possible rapprochement.

China was also the first to ground the newest version of Boeing's workhorse 737 model earlier this month following a deadly Ethiopian Airlines crash, touching off a series of regulatory actions worldwide.

Flooding woes add to trade war stress in 'Trump country' farm belt

REUTERS, Columbus, Nebraska /Chicago

Nebraska grain farmer Ryan Ueberhein was barely breaking even after the US-China trade war pushed prices for his soybean crop to a decade low. Then the nearby Elkhorn River burst its banks as flooding swept across the US farm belt.

Ueberhein's farm was left covered in debris after the roiling water receded. He has mounting debts. And he is worried that President Donald Trump may not be able to strike a trade deal with China that would end tariffs on US soybean exports - and allow him to sell whatever grain is left intact at a better price.

Frustration is building across farm country at what feels like a never-ending season of bad news.

The trade war "keeps damaging us," said Ueberhein, 34, of Valley, Nebraska, who voted for Trump. "What the president is doing, we stand by him, but ... we can't keep getting hit just because a deal can't be made quickly."

US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin are set to arrive in China this week for another round of trade talks with their Chinese counterparts. The two sides have yet to agree on many core issues.

Farmers who spoke to Reuters remained supportive of Trump.

Soybean exports to China hit a four-year low in February because of the trade war. China is the biggest buyer of US soybeans, which are the largest single US agricultural export. A near halt in exports has hit a rural economy already struggling after years of oversupply cut farm incomes by 50 percent in the past five years.

Debt in the agrarian economy has hit

levels last seen during the US farm collapse of the 1980s.

The Nebraska Rural Response Hotline, which provides support to farmers and ranchers, has received a record number of calls about financial distress, said John Hansen, president of the Nebraska Farmers Union. Calls about suicide and depression were up, too, he said.



A farm which was damaged by heavy flooding is pictured outside Winslow, Nebraska, US.

The latest piece of bad news came on March 11, when the Trump administration released its 2020 budget and proposed a 15 percent cut for the US Department of Agriculture, calling its subsidies to farmers "overly generous."

It did not matter to farmers, who helped vote Trump into office, that the budget will not pass muster with Democrats who con-

trol the House of Representatives, Hansen said. Some farmers took the proposed cut to subsidies for crop insurance as an insult.

"How many times do you have to kick us when we're down?" he said.

That insurance is crucial to Richard Oswald, who farms near Phelps City, Missouri. The flood has already swallowed his childhood home, many of his fields and

bolster the levees and dams throughout the Midwest.

But this year, as the trade war dragged on, he dropped the policy to reduce expenses. So he will get no insurance money for the lost corn, Oswald said.

A few days ago, one of his lenders called. Oswald didn't have to pay the loan right away, the lender said, but he would have to repay it sooner or later.

"Help needs to come from Congress, but Congress is so divided, I don't know what's going to happen," Oswald said.

Trump approved a disaster declaration for Nebraska on Thursday, making federal funding available in nine counties that bore the brunt of the recent floods. On Saturday, he approved one for flood-affected counties in Iowa.

Greg Ibach, a USDA under secretary, is touring the damage in Nebraska, and Bill Northey, another under secretary, will head to Iowa, agency officials told Reuters.

US Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa said the farm belt states would need more aid, suggesting a separate relief bill to offer compensation to farmers for livestock killed in the floods and grains in storage that will have to be destroyed.

"The United States government has always been the insurance of last resort," Grassley said in a phone interview on Friday.

Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts put agricultural flood damage for the state at nearly \$1 billion. Iowa officials are projecting losses of at least \$1.6 billion, with at least \$214 million in damage to the agriculture sector. Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds said her state would need assistance beyond what is granted through disaster declarations.

more than 20,000 bushels of corn. His four grain bins have burst, after water-logged corn expanded and split open.

"If our government and leaders can't step up and start to lead, we're done for," he said. For years, Oswald paid extra for flood insurance. He hoped that government talk of investing in improving US infrastructure would come through - and

Apple stretches to take on Netflix, Amex, Disney

JENNIFER SABA, for Reuters

Apple has one big challenge - create new revenue streams - and many less than convincing solutions. Chief Executive Tim Cook unveiled a dizzying array of new subscription services on Monday that cover news, television and gaming.

The \$880 billion tech firm introduced a credit card too. The offerings ranged from confusing to mildly innovative.

The bar for Apple launches was set high more than a decade ago by the iPhone. It was revolutionary and destructive. Nearly all the leading handset makers at the time - BlackBerry, Nokia, Motorola - saw their businesses upended.

The slowdown in iPhone sales

justifies switching from device sales - which still make up almost \$9 of every \$10 Apple makes - to subscriptions. That's where the new products come in. News Plus offers 300 magazine titles like People and Cosmopolitan and a smattering of newspapers for some \$10 a month.

Nice, but hardly comprehensive. The New York Times and the Washington Post are notably absent. Separately, Apple is also getting into gaming.

Where Cook has his work cut out is in taking on Netflix, the video streaming company. After 10 years of tinkering, Apple has now gone all-in with a service endorsed by Hollywood stars like Oprah Winfrey and Steven Spielberg. But Apple TV Plus is a mashup of different tiers, channels and partnerships - far from simple.

More promising is the Goldman Sachs-backed credit card. Apple is touting ease, security, convenience and cash incentives to lure in customers. It comes with novelties like having no card number.

It could at least push entrenched financial players JPMorgan, Capital One, Bank of America and Citigroup to up their game. But it's hardly industry-changing, or likely to unseat the oligopoly. Those four already have more than half the US market, according to Accenture data.

The trouble is nothing that was revealed in Cook's two-hour event on Monday was a must-have for consumers. That's reflected in the market response - neither Apple's shares, nor those of targets like Walt Disney, Netflix or the big banks, moved much.



BRAC BANK
Zaman Md Bahadur Khan, executive director of the Systems Solutions and Development Technologies (SSD-tech) Ltd, and Siraj Siddiquey Shakil, head for digital banking and e-commerce at retail banking of Brac Bank, exchange a memorandum of understanding at the bank's head office in Dhaka recently. The bank's debit and credit cardholders will enjoy 50 percent discount on installation and another 10 percent on monthly internet packages for the first six months availing Carnival Internet, a brand of SSD-tech.



ACI MOTORS
Robiul Haque, business manager at ACI Motors, authorised distributor of Yamaha motorcycles in Bangladesh, and Zahidul Islam, brand manager, receive a crest at Dhaka Bike Show in International Convention City Bashundhara recently on the Yamaha pavilion being adjudged the top installation by bikebd.com.

Samsung Elec flags earnings miss as chip prices slide

REUTERS, Seoul

Samsung Electronics Co Ltd said on Tuesday first-quarter profit would likely miss market expectations due to falls in chip prices and slowing demand for display panels, in an unprecedented statement ahead of its earnings guidance.

The announcement came after the Apple Inc supplier and rival told shareholders last week that slack global economic growth and softer demand for memory chips, its core business, would weigh on operations in 2019.

"The company expects the scope of price declines in main memory chip products to be larger than expected," Samsung said in a regulatory filing pre-empting its earnings guidance due next week.

Samsung did not elaborate on the purpose of its filing. A company official confirmed the

global leader in smartphones, televisions and computer chips had not previously provided comment before its official earnings estimate.

The firm was forecast to post a 7.2 trillion won (\$6.4 billion) operating profit for the January-March period, according to Refinitiv SmartEstimate, more than 50 percent below the 15.6 trillion won recorded in the same period a year ago.

Its sales were expected to fall to 53.7 trillion won from 60.6 trillion won a year ago, Refinitiv shows. "Inventories piling up on its memory chip side and the weak performance of its display panels business due to bad sales of Apple's iPhones are hurting profitability for Samsung," said Lee Won-sik, an analyst at Shinyoung Securities.

DRAM chip prices fell more than 20 percent on average in the first quarter, according to DRAMeXchange, a unit of Trendforce that traces

memory chip prices.

Daiwa Securities forecast Samsung's display panel division to swing to an operating loss of 620 billion won in the first quarter, while the semiconductor business's operating profit would shrink.

Uncertainties over US-China trade tensions and China's sluggish economy are clouding the outlook for global electronics makers, analysts say.

Chipmakers in particular have been hit hard by a glut in the global semiconductor industry triggered by weakening smartphone sales and falling investment from data center companies.

Samsung told shareholders at its annual general meeting last week that sales of memory products would likely revive in the second half of the year after a tough first half. Investors also took heart when US chipmaker Micron Technology Inc forecast a recovery in the memory chip market around the middle of the year.