Foreign Currency

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian	91	91.8
Bahrain	310.5	312.5
Canadian	92.1	93.35
China	18.45	18.6
Danish	18.55	18.85
Euro	141.7	142.9
Hong Kong	15	15.25
Indian	1.7	1.77
Japanese	1.06	1.09
Kuwait	385.5	388
Malaysian	29.55	29.9
NewZealand	82.9	83.6
Norwegians	14.6	14.85
Omani	303.5	305.5
Qatar	32.4	32.75
Saudi Riyal	31.8	32
Singapore	89.25	90.05
Swedish	13.6	13.85
Swiss	119.5	120.4
Thai	3.6	3.7
U.A.E	32.8	33.05
UK Pound	163	164.75
US	122	122.55

Tokyo stocks close higher

TOKYO

Tokyo stocks closed higher on Wednesday, as Chinese stocks rebounded after tumbling on trade war fears sparked by US President Donald Trump threatening fresh tariffs on Chinese imports. The benchmark Nikkei 225 index rose 1.24 percent or 276.95 points to close at 22,555.43, while the broader Topix index was up 0.51 percent or 8.83 points at 1,752.75. The dollar fetched 110.20 yen in Asian trade, up from 110.08 yen in New York late Tuesday. A cheaper yen inflates exporter profits abroads and makes their goods competitive in foreign markets. "Tokyo shares rose, reacting positively to the limited losses on the Chinese market in the morning session," Yoshihiro Ito, chief strategist at Okasan Online Securities, said in a commentary. "The dollar is also back to the 110 yen level," he added. In Tokyo share trading, pharmaceuticals were high, with Daiichi Sankyo soaring 5.14 percent to 4,230 yen. Takeda surged 2.35 percent to 4,302 yen while Eisai jumped 2.30 percent to 8,169 yen. Exporters were up with Sony rising 1.84 percent to 5,404 yen and Olympus 0.24 percent to 4,130 yen.—AFP

Telstra to axe 8,000 jobs

SYDNEY

Australia's dominant telecommunications company Telstra Wednesday announced plans to axe 8,000 jobs—a quarter of its workforce—as part of a drastic new strategy to cope with an increasingly competitive industry. The decision by the company, one of Australia's largest employers, is part of a shake-up targeting an extra Aus$1 billion (US$750 million) in cost-cutting by 2022, on top of Aus$1.5 billion previously announced. To create a leaner operation, it will also split its mobile and infrastructure divisions into separate businesses. "We are creating a new Telstra that is able to continue to lead the market," said chief executive Andrew Penn. "In the future our workforce will be a smaller, knowledge-based one with a structure and way of working that is agile enough to deal with rapid change. "This means that some roles will no longer be required, some will change and there will also be new ones created." The cuts come less than a month after Telstra said its 2017/18 earnings will likely be at the bottom of its guidance range of Aus$10.1 billion to Aus$10.6 billion, blaming increasing competition in mobile and fixed broadband.—AFP

Boeing targets 2025 for new jet

PARIS

The head of Boeing (BA.N) jetliner sales said on Wednesday he was confident a possible new mid-market jet with the potential to carve out new routes would be ready to enter service in 2025, but stressed the planemaker would not be rushed into a decision.

FILE PHOTO: Ihssane Mounir, then senior vice president of sales and marketing, northeast Asia, for Boeing, speaks aboard a new 787-9 ready for delivery to ANA Holdings Ltd at Boeing's delivery center in Everett, Washington, U.S. August 17, 2016/File Photo Boeing is studying plans for what industry sources describe as a hybrid jet combining a wide cabin and a restricted cargo space, moulded to fly efficiently in a space between the industry's single-aisle jets and wide-body long-haul aircraft. But it has been taking longer than expected to resolve questions about how to build the jet at a low enough cost to fit the market niche, prompting some suppliers to urge a decision soon to avoid slipping past a desired 2025 debut date.

Ihssane Mounir, senior vice-president for commercial sales and marketing at Boeing, told French journalists Boeing would "protect" the targeted 2025 date for entry into service, which some analysts see as ideally suited to planned replacement cycles. He declined to say when Boeing could make a decision on the possible twin-aisle plane, which has been the source of speculation among airlines and investors for around two years.

"We will take the time to do this right...but we will protect the date of introduction for the aircraft," Mounir told the AJPAE French aerospace journalists' association. "Based on where we are today, we are very comfortable with the fact we can do it by 2025, but we haven't made a decision." Experts say the call on whether to launch the plane is one of the most significant decisions Boeing will make in coming years, because it will prepare ground for the next generation of smaller single-aisle jets by pioneering new production methods.

The search for cheaper new ways of building planes at high volume to meet growing demand is fast emerging as a strategic battleground between Boeing and European arch-rival Airbus, which unveiled more robots and automation last week. Mounir deflected a question about future successors to the single-aisle 737, saying Boeing was comfortable with its record order book for the current model.

But he said the new mid-market plane would focus on what he described as a "revolutionary production system" incorporating new digital technology. "It's not a plane that will be technologically much more advanced than what we have today. What will be very advanced is the production system," Mounir said. Mounir said "conservative" estimates showed global demand for 4,000 to 5,000 middle-of-the market jets over 20 years.

Mounir dismissed reported plans by Airbus to enhance its best-selling A321 single-aisle jet, saying it would not cover the same range or operate as economically as Boeing's proposal. Reuters reported this week that Airbus is considering adding extra endurance to the longest-range version of its A321 jet in a potential new variant dubbed A321XLR. Mounir said talks with Brazil's Embraer (EMBR3.SA) over a possible commercial aerospace venture were "advanced". Boeing insists it is not a "must-do" deal, however.—Reuters

Moody's Investor Service reaffirms Pak ratings

OBSERVER REPORT

ISLAMABAD

Moody's Investor Service, on Wednesday reaffirmed Pakistan's local and foreign currency long-term issuer and unsecured debt ratings as B3. While reaffirming the credit rating, Moody's has appreciated Pakistan's robust growth potential, supported by ongoing improvements in energy supply and infrastructure which have the potential to raise economic competitiveness over time. The outlook has, however, been changed to Negative on account of factors which may impact the external account situation.

The Government is fully aware of the challenges facing its external account and short to medium term remedial measures are already being put in place. To curtail aggregate demand, interest rate has been enhanced by 75 basis points since January 2018. The added exchange rate flexibility is expected to contribute towards containing the current account deficit.As exports pick up, 13.3 percent increase in July-April period, and CPEC related imports peak out, the current account deficit is expected to peak this year and decline in the coming years.FDI and remittances have also rebounded with an increase of 2.5 percent and 3.9 percent respectively during current financial year.The Government has also successfully decelerated the import bill through imposition of regulatory duties on non-essential and luxury items. Following clearance from the Supreme Court of Pakistan, the recently announced Amnesty Scheme is also expected to bring additional inflows. The country has sufficient foreign exchange reserves to meet its obligations on account of external debt repayments.

The Government is fully committed to maintain sound policies with the aim of sustaining macroeconomic stability and accelerating economic growth. The growth trajectory achieved over recent years is testimony to the success of the Government's reforms agenda.

Heavy investments in the energy and infrastructure sectors under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), keeping inflationary pressure to levels below 4 percent, achieving fiscal discipline and introducing greater transparency are some of the highlights of the recent past. The Government is, therefore, confident of the outlook on its external account.

Top central banks see growing gloom global trade war

SINTRA (PORTUGAL)

A developing trade war between the world's biggest economies is weighing on business confidence and could force central banks to downgrade their outlook, the world's most powerful policymakers argued on Wednesday. After imposing punitive tariffs on a number of its top trading partners, the United States earlier this week threatened China with further duties on $200 billion, escalating a conflict that has already drawn retaliatory steps from nearly all corners of the world.SS

Sitting side by side in a Portuguese hilltop town, the heads of the U.S. Federal Reserve, the European Central Bank, the Bank of Japan and the Reserve Bank of Australia all took a gloomy view on the escalating conflict, arguing that the consequences are already evident. "Changes in trade policy could cause us to have to question the outlook," Fed Chair Jerome Powell said in some of his strongest remarks yet on the issue.

"For the first time we are hearing (from business leaders) about decision to postpone investment, postpone hiring, postpone making decisions," he said. The U.S. could be a victim of its own policies, Deutsche Bank's analysts argued, predicting a hit to growth and corporate earnings. "Our analysis indicates that such a further escalation of the trade dispute to include $200 billion of imports could reduce real GDP growth by roughly -0.2 to -0.3 percentage points," Deutsche said, adding that this could reduce S&P 500 earnings growth by 1 to 1.5 percent.

Such a trade war would come at an especially sensitive time for central banks, as they try to move past crisis-era unconventional measures and build policy buffers for any potential downturn at the end of the current business cycle. Appointed by U.S. President Donald Trump late last year, Powell took charge of the Fed in February, just as the trade dispute with China was beginning to intensify.

While not directly criticizing the administration, the comments to a European conference indicate that the Fed is already contemplating how to shape its own policy amid rising global tensions that could curtail an economic expansion now in its 10th year. "If you ask is it in the forecast yet, is it in the outlook, the answer is no. And you don't see it in the performance of the economy," Powell said.—Reuters

IBA–CICT to participate as an Academic Strategic Partner in InfoSec 2018 Conference

KARACHI

The Center for Information & Communication Technology (CICT), IBA Karachi and Total Communications Pakistan, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding the IBA-CICT's participation as an academic strategic partner for InfoSec 2018. The MOU was signed by Mr. Imran Batada, Director ICT & CICT, IBA Karachi and Mr. Faisal Rahim, CEOTotal Communications Pakistan.

InfoSec, an annual high profile event of Pakistan in Information Security will have participation from the financial sector, telecom industry, armed forces, intelligence agencies, ministries, foreign missions, academia, and technology companies.

The conference was initiated 10 years ago and this year for the first time, the IBA-CICT is collaboratingwith Total Communications as an academic strategic partner. The event will be held on July 12, 2018.

Mr. Imran Batada congratulatedthe whole team of InfoSec conferenceand said, "The IBA management believes that these kind of collaborations would foster the productivity of the conference, the IBA-CICT would also actively help the organizers in the selection of the track, keynote speakers and moderation of the event, along with organizing asession."—PR

China, Britain seek deeper insurance cooperation under BRI

LONDON

Chinese and British companies anticipate more cooperation in insurance to forestall risks as both sides are set to deepen coordination in projects under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), speakers told a high-profile Sino-UK BRI insurance cooperation forum held in London.

London, as a natural partner for the Belt and Road Initiative, has a lot to offer for cooperation with China in assessing project risks and insurance, said Catherine McGuinness, chairman of Policy and Resources Committee, City of London.

In insurance specifically, the London market is "a leader in innovative product development and has historically embraced insuring new risks," she said. These innovations include The Joint Code of Practice for Risk Management of Tunnel Works and private markets political risks insurance — structured to protect equity and debt capital invested through the life cycle of infrastructure projects on a global basis, she noted.

Proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013, the Belt and Road Initiative aims to achieve policy, infrastructure, trade, financial and people-to-people connectivity along and beyond the ancient Silk Road trade routes, thus building a new platform for international cooperation to create new drivers of growth.

So far, over 100 countries and international organizations have responded positively to the initiative and pledged their support. More than 80 countries and international organizations have signed cooperation agreements with China.—Xinhua

LCCI holds seminar on 'Tax Amnesty Scheme-2018'

Extension in Tax Amnesty Scheme 2018 to prove beneficial

SALIM AHMED

LAHORE

An extension in Tax Amnesty Scheme 2018, coupled with awareness campaign, would help highest number of business to avail full benefit of this good initiative by the previous regime. This scheme is beneficial for both the government and the business community as it would help promote documented economy besides giving business doing people an opportunity to legalize their undeclared assets.

This was crux of the speeches delivered by the LCCI President Malik Tahir Javaid, Vice President Zeshan Khalil, Commissioner Inland Revenue Aisha Imran Butt and other experts at a seminar on "Tax Amnesty Scheme 2018", jointly organized by the LCCI and Federal Board of Revenue, at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce.

The LCCI President Malik Tahir Javaid said that Tax Amnesy Scheme 2018 would relieve pressure on the economy as it would generate additional revenue for the government while businessmen can declare their assets or income and they cannot be asked about their source. He said that reasonable extension in Tax Amnesty Sechme 2018 would enhance the chances of its success as businessmen would get more time to understand.

"We have always demanded for broadening the tax net and lowering down the tax rate. We expect that this Tax Amnesty Scheme will go a long way in achieving the desired results. TAS-2018 would help broadening the tax net and would reduce the burden from the existing taxpayers. It is a matter of conern that just around 1.2 million income tax return filers in a country of more than 200 million people that's why Tax-to-GDP ratio in Pakistan is poor", the LCCI President added.

Malik Tahir Javaid said that the last Tax Amnesty Scheme was announced in 2015 and more or less seven hundred thousand individuals benefitted from it. The new scheme is better than the previous one because this time the government has lowered down the rate of tax so that maximum number of people could take full advantage of it. Now, such individuals who keep undeclared assets in the form of cash, prize bonds, cars and property etc. may avail this terrific facility.

By paying tax from 2% to 5% maximum, all these undeclared assets can be legalized. He said that this scheme also covers the foreign bank accounts as well as such immoveable assets which have been kept abroad and never declared. This scheme also guarantees that the benefiters upto a certain limit would not be questioned about declaring the source of income.

Commissioner Inland Revenue Aisha Imran Butt said that all possible measures are being taken to make amnesty scheme a success. She briefed the participants about the Tax Amnesty Scehme 2018 and other relevant affairs. The LCCI Vice President Zeshan Khalil said that this golden opportunity must be availed by the business community and they should give legal status to their undeclared assets by paying 2 to 5% tax only. Income tax has been reduced to make tax payment more sustainable. He said that under the Tax Amnesty Scheme 2018, Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC) number has been given the status of National Tax Number. People will now be able to use their CNIC number to file taxes by simply filling out a form. People having income upto Rs. 1.2 million annually have been given tax exemption. The previous maximum income exempt from income tax was Rs. 400,000 only. People who make between Rs1.2m to Rs2.4m annually will be liable to pay five per cent in income tax, he added. Mian Muhammad Ashraf, Ijaz A Mumtaz, Amjad Ali Jawa, Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, Kashif Anwar and Executive Committee Members also spoke on the occasion.

Corporate World

KARACHI: The Federal Secretary of Commerce Mohammad Younus Dagha visited head office of State Life Insurance Corporation and chaired a meeting that was held to discuss Gulf operations as well as matters related to the management of the corporation and expansion of its business.

LAHORE: The officers of concerned departments are presenting bouquet of flower to Punjab Caretaker Minister for Food, Agriculture, Livestock, Planning and Development and Energy Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan.

SIALKOT: A group photo of representative of Akhuwat Dr. Amjad Kamran during signing of MOU of Akhuwat College at SCCI.

LAHORE: Malik Tahir Javaid, President Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry addressing the participants of seminar on Tax Amnesty Scheme.