

Trump wants 'very big' U.S.-China trade deal, hints at delays

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - President Donald Trump said on Thursday he wanted a "very big deal" U.S. trade deal with China, but signaled there could be delays if negotiations fail to meet his goals of opening the Chinese economy broadly to U.S. industry and agriculture.

In remarks to reporters as a two-day round of high-level talks between U.S. and Chinese negotiators wound down, Trump said he did not know whether he would push back a deadline to raise U.S. tariffs on Chinese goods at the beginning of March.

U.S., China made 'some progress' on structural issues in trade talks: U.S. Chamber

Trump says he thinks U.S. will be able to do trade deal with China

"This isn't going to be a small deal with China. This is either going to be a very big deal, or it's going to be a deal that we'll just postpone for a little while," Trump, who has engaged in a series of fights with a variety of trade partners since becoming president in 2017, said at the White House. As delegations from the world's two top economies held the second of two scheduled days of talks in the U.S. capital aimed at easing a six-month-old trade war, Trump said no final accord will be made until he meets with Chinese President Xi Jinping in the near future.

U.S. negotiators have sought to resolve deep differences over China's intellectual property practices. Trump has threatened to raise tariffs on \$200 billion of Chinese goods to 25 percent from 10 percent on March 2 if an agreement is not reached and impose new tariffs on the rest of Chinese goods shipped to the United States.

Asked if he would postpone the U.S.-set deadline, Trump said: "I don't know." Trump said China wanted to strike a deal by March 1 to avoid the tariff increase and said he thinks he can get one, but it may not be totally fleshed out in writing by then. "I'd like to accommodate China if we can get the deal done," Trump said.

An official with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce business group said after being briefed on the talks that significant differences remained between the two sides, with no new Chinese proposals to address core U.S. demands that Beijing end forced transfers of U.S. technology to Chinese firms, heavy state industrial subsidies and discriminatory digital trade laws.

"Our sense from our discussions last week in China is that China is struggling to come up with anything on the technology transfer side, and from our standpoint that's problematic," Myron Brilliant, the chamber's head of international affairs, said.

Brilliant added that there was some progress in narrowing differences over enforcement of intellectual property rights such as copyright and piracy criminalization issues.

Trump was scheduled to meet with the leader of the Chinese delegation, Vice Premier Liu He, at the White House later in the day as talks conclude. Two White House officials said it was likely Liu would extend an offer for Trump to meet with Xi in China.

Trump has vetoed multiple proposed trade deals with China, choosing to push ahead with tariffs on Chinese goods to gain leverage.

The Republican president set a high bar for any agreement in the current round of talks, writing on Twitter, "China's representatives and I are trying to do a complete deal leaving NOTHING unresolved on the table."

Trump said he was looking for China to open its markets "not only to Financial Services, which they are now doing, but also to our Manufacturing, Farmers and other U.S. businesses and industries. Without this a deal would be unacceptable!"

U.S., China face major differences amid trade talks
 People's Bank of China Governor Yi Gang declined comment on Chinese proposals as he left the delegation's hotel for the meetings in Eisenhower Executive Office Building, next to the White House. Asked how the talks were going, Yi flashed a thumbs-up sign.

U.S. officials have demanded that Beijing make deep structural changes to its industrial policies, including broad new protections for American intellectual property and an end to practices that Washington has said force U.S. companies to transfer technology to Chinese firms in exchange for market access.



U.S. Under Secretary of State Andrea Thompson (L) and Deputy Director of the Department for Non-Proliferation and Arms Control of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Oleg Rozhkov (R) attends a panel discussion after a Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) conference in Beijing, China January 31, 2019. REUTERS/Thomas Peter/Pool

Venezuela's Guaido says police agents visited his home

CARACAS (Reuters) - Venezuela's self-proclaimed interim president, Juan Guaido, said on Thursday that agents from a feared special police unit had called at his home, a sign of increasing pressure on the opposition leader trying to replace socialist President Nicolas Maduro.

Venezuelan opposition leader and self-proclaimed interim president Juan Guaido speaks next to his wife Fabiana Rosales during a meeting with supporters to present a government plan of the opposition in Caracas, Venezuela January 31, 2019. REUTERS/Carlos Garcia Rawlins

The police had asked for his wife, who was at home with their 20-month old daughter while he was out at an event, said Guaido.

"I will hold you responsible for any threat to my baby," Guaido said at the end of a public event in Caracas. Guaido, the 35-year-old leader of the National Assembly, then left for home, asking diplomats to accompany him.

U.S. refiners cut processing as Venezuela sanctions lift
 The United States, which backs Guaido, has warned of "serious consequences" if Maduro's government harms him. Guaido later appeared at his building with his wife and daughter, saying "they will not intimidate this family."

Neighbors said men who identified themselves as belonging to the Special Actions Forces arrived at the gate of his apartment building in a white SUV. There was no obvious police presence by the time journalists arrived at Guaido's house.

The political fight between Maduro, sworn in for a second term this month, and Guaido, who declared himself interim president last week, has drawn in foreign powers.

On one side of the tussle for control of Venezuela - an OPEC member with the world's largest oil reserves but in dire financial straits - Guaido and Western backers led by the United States are insisting on an immediate transition and fresh elections.

On the other, Maduro, with backing from Russia, China and Turkey, says he will remain for his second six-year term despite accusations of fraud in his re-election last year and the economic meltdown. He has accused the opposition of attempting a U.S.-backed coup.

Maduro, who first took office in 2013, has faced waves of protests in recent years as he presided over the collapse of the economy, with hyperinflation and chronic food short-

ages. Some 3 million Venezuelans have left the country.

'VIOLATION' OF NORMS

As it seeks to shore up support for Guaido, the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump imposed sanctions on state-run oil firm PDVSA on Monday, aimed at severely curbing Venezuela's crucial crude exports.

A United Nations human rights expert denounced the sanctions, saying they would compound a grave humanitarian crisis.

"Coercion, whether military or economic, must never be used to seek a change in government in a sovereign state," said Idriss Jazairy, a U.N. special rapporteur studying the negative impact of sanctions.

"The use of sanctions by outside powers to overthrow an elected government is in violation of all norms of international law," he said in a statement in Geneva.

Slideshow (10 Images)

The European Union agreed on Thursday to lead an international contact group with South American nations to help resolve Venezuela's political crisis by seeking new elections, EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini said.

The group, which will include Britain, France, Germany, Bolivia and Ecuador, will end after 90 days if no progress is made and stands ready to consider more economic sanctions on Maduro's government.

"We have targeted sanctions in place and further ... sanctions might be considered by the ministers," Mogherini, the EU's top diplomat, told reporters after a meeting of EU foreign ministers in Bucharest.

Earlier, the European Parliament recognized Guaido as de facto head of state, a largely symbolic move. But lawmakers urged the EU's 28 governments to consider Guaido "the only legitimate interim president" until there were "new free, transparent and credible presidential elections."



Venezuelan opposition leader and self-proclaimed interim president Juan Guaido waves to his supporters as he carrying his daughter, outside their house in Caracas

2019 Is The Year Of The Pig On The Chinese Zodiac

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



The Pig is the twelfth of all zodiac animals. According to one myth, the Jade Emperor said the order would be decided by the order in which they arrived to his party. Pig was late because he overslept. Another story says that a wolf destroyed his house. He had to rebuild his home before he could set off. When he arrived, he was the last one and could only take twelfth place.

Personality and characteristics

Pigs might not stand out in a crowd. But they are very realistic. Others may be all talk and no action. Pigs are the opposite.

Though not wasteful spenders, they will let themselves enjoy life. They love entertainment and will occasionally treat themselves. They are a bit materialistic, but this is motivation for them to work hard. Being able to hold solid objects in their hands gives them security.

Men born in the Pig year are optimistic and gentle. They are very focused. Once they decide on a goal, they'll put everything into it.

They are not the best with money. Though cool-headed, they are also gullible. They trust others easily and are often scammed. This can cause them to lose a fortune.

Women born in the Pig year are full of excitement. They attend social events whenever possible and treat everyone genuinely. Combined with their easygoing personality, they gain everyone's trust. However, they are sometimes over-friendly. In their excitement, they can forget to give others personal space. They also have good fortune with wealth. As long as they keep at it, the efforts will not go to waste. Though they don't start with an advantage, their hard work will keep money

flowing in.

Compatibility

Most compatible with Pig: Tiger, Rabbit, Goat

Pigs are the most compatible with Tigers. The brave Tiger gives Pigs the security they need.

Least compatible with Pig: Snake, Monkey

Pigs and Snakes have clashing personalities and are the least compatible. They have biases against each other and can't compromise. It's hard to get along with Monkeys as well. The relationship is full of tension.

Careers fit for Pigs

Pigs are gentle and rarely lose their temper. Even when they do, it's never a dramatic commotion. They'll always try to compromise and settle things quickly. Because their goal in life is for everyone to live in harmony, they are suitable for careers related to charity and fundraisers.



Health and lifestyle

Pigs mostly have a great build and a resilient body. They are always spirited, as if they will never run out of energy. Their natural health is something Pigs are proud of.

But sometimes they can be overconfident and overlook some minor symptoms. If neglected for too long, even the smallest things can become grave.

Pigs in the Year of the Pig (2019)

The year of one's zodiac sign is their **本命年** (ben ming nian). It is traditionally the most unlucky year with trouble and danger lurking at every corner.

Similar to the previous year, Pigs may find luck in some areas of their life, but others

will require hard work to avoid potential pitfalls. Pigs will most likely experience many emotional ups and downs, making them feel frustrated and sad at times.

This will not be a transitional year for Pigs, and it is best to try and "stick it out" in situations if at all possible. While that can be terribly frustrating, try to remember that a key element to utilizing your luck is timing. Next year will bear good fruit for Pigs, but the time isn't right to harvest the fruits of your labor. Instead, familiarize yourself with possible oversights and improve upon them so you may take advantage of similar situations as they occur in the future. This is a key element in many Asian religions, that is to say, you may be stuck consulting the same problem over and over until you solve it.



Careers

Pigs' 2019 horoscope reveals that changing careers may bring unforeseen consequences, and in most cases should be avoided. Instead, keep your nose to the grindstone and be wary of conflict. Pigs have a way of directly confronting their problems and at times this can impair their ability to see the deeper meaning of an issue. While Pigs can expect confrontation this year it will be best to face these problems with patience and practicality, two tools that are in Pigs "tool belt" but aren't always utilized when they should be.

Luckiest Months: April 8th – July 20th
Unluckiest Months: September 12th – December 2nd

Education

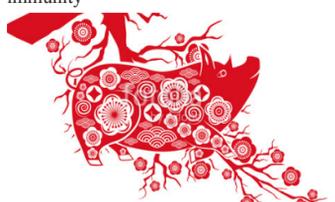
The education forecast for Pigs, however, reveals some good fortune. For those seeking higher education, it seems the stars are aligned in your favor. The 2019 Pig horoscope shows that investing in education will position them to take better advantage of future opportunities.

Health

Health can be rated as a mediocre category

for Pigs this year. While there are no major illnesses on your horizon, Pigs will have to pay attention to minor ailments to keep them from growing into something large.

If you feel ill, don't delay in consulting a physician or healer, this is a major key to staying healthy this year. Other than this, maintain a consistent exercise regimen and a diet made up of healthy, unprocessed foods. Add more fruits and vegetables to your diet for an extra boost to your immunity



Relationships

The love forecast for Pigs is also pretty unremarkable for 2019. It seems that while this is not the year for true romance,

Fortunately for Pigs, the lack of relationship drama means they can focus on making new friends and connections. Extending their network could have a significant impact on Pigs' future, and in some respects be more rewarding than an intimate relationship. Remember not to be too quick to jump into a relationship as it may lead to more problems than it is worth, focus instead on enlarging your circle of friends.

Lifestyle

Pigs are in for almost an unfair year it seems. This year is about favoring the characteristics of Pigs in order to succeed, but for Pigs, to whom this comes naturally, they will have a difficult year and must practice patience and discipline.

It is important to remember not to be short sighted. You could focus on this year and say it is unfair, or you could focus on the future and realize that this time is meant to set up opportunities for the long term and practice the elements that will make you successful in your future endeavors.

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And That Was From Before The Partial Shutdown
Customer Satisfaction Drops Across Federal Government



Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

The federal government's 11-year high in customer satisfaction—achieved last year following two years of progress—was short-lived.

Federal agencies collectively dropped 1.1 percent to 68.9 in the American Customer Satisfaction Index, which rates government and businesses performance on a 0 to 100 scale.

Overall, government agencies declined in all four major metrics measured—process, information, customer service and website—with several major agencies scoring among the lowest of all 380-plus companies measured by ASCI.

The Housing and Urban Development Department earned a 57, lowest among all agencies, below the departments of Veterans Affairs (63), Treasury (63) and Agriculture (68). Most IRS programs also scored in the low-to-mid 60s.

The governmentwide average was 68.9, and while lower than last year's peak, it is still the second-highest customer satisfaction mark since 2008.

Unfortunately, the downswing in momentum came at a terrible time, according to ASCI officials.

The organization, which based its federal rankings on interviews with approximately 2,800 government customers, said the prolonged government shutdown is sure to increase Americans' dissatisfaction with government services. HUD, for example, furloughed more than 90 percent of its employees during the shutdown, including those who engage with customers.

"While this data was collected prior to the start of the government shutdown, this overall decline couldn't have come at a worse time," said Forrest Morgeson, director of research and global CSI manager at the ASCI, in a statement. "In all likelihood, the shutdown will exacerbate Americans' declining satisfaction with the federal government in 2019."

There were bright spots. The Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation tied for the top score of 89 from retirees, while the Bureau of Consular Affairs, which processes passports, also earned an 89.

The Defense and Interior departments both scored 78. The Commerce Department earned a 74, one point ahead of the Justice and State departments.

ASCI's report indicates politics plays a role in shaping public perception of government performance.

Citizen satisfaction increased among Republicans, up 2.9 percent to 71, and among Independents, up 1.5 percent to 68. However, satisfaction among Democrats dropped 5.5 percent to 69 and individuals who labeled themselves "Other Party" declined 9.2 percent to 59. (Courtesy nextgov.com)

Related
Feds' Lost Spending Will Contribute to Shutdown's \$3B in Permanent Economic Damage



OVERVIEW

The immediate hit to the economy is \$11 billion in lost productivity, much of which will be recouped later this year, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

The U.S. economy will suffer a permanent \$3 billion hit as a result of the partial government shutdown, according to an estimate by the Congressional Budget Office, in large part due to lost economic activity by impacted federal employees.

More immediate effects will be much more severe, with the economy seeing \$11 billion in lost productivity in the fourth quarter of 2018 and the first quarter of 2019. Much of that will be recouped in the subsequent months of 2019, CBO found in its report, though some of the losses will never be recovered.

Federal agencies delayed a total of \$18 billion in discretionary spending, about half of which resulted from unpaid checks to employees and the other half from non-purchased goods and services. All federal employees affected by the shutdown will receive back pay: about \$3 billion will go to furloughed workers and \$6 billion to those forced to work during the appropriations lapse.

CBO made clear that while the macroeconomic impacts were real, federal employees—and the businesses they frequent—felt the most acute pains from the longest-ever shutdown. The overall impact to the 2019 gross domestic product will likely be around 0.02 percent, CBO estimated.



The Congressional Budget Office in Washington, D.C.

"Underlying those effects on the overall economy are much more significant effects on individual businesses and workers," CBO wrote. "Among those who experienced the largest and most direct negative effects are federal workers who faced delayed compensation and private-sector entities that lost business. Some of those private-sector entities will never recoup that lost income."

Some of the lost spending by furloughed employees will never be made up, CBO projected. Federal agencies are likely to make up their own missed spending by the end of the fiscal year, but the mix of goods and services will change. The government also lost out on revenues, the analysts said, which they may never recoup. The Internal Revenue Service lost about \$2 billion due to a lack of compliance activity, while the National Park Service lost a small amount of fees it will never recover. Agencies like the Securities and Exchange Commission and Federal Trade Commission will recoup the fees it failed to collect, CBO said.

The analysts found little impact from a loss of grants provided by federal agencies, which identified other means to dole out money. Those agencies used "funding

that had been appropriated in earlier years and was available for obligation," CBO said. It noted, for context, that nearly half of all discretionary spending appropriated in 2017 was made available for multiple years and 15 percent was made available indefinitely. The analysts said they did not observe any significant drop-off in this type of federal spending during the shutdown, so they did not account for it in their report.

CBO said it had difficulty in determining more indirect negative effects of the shutdown, such as businesses missing out on federal loans, permits and certifications. That could have led to delays in hiring decisions and other investments.



Federal employees may see some tweaks to their own bottom lines over the coming months. CBO predicted that many employees will "temporarily increase their spending on goods and services," though not necessarily on the same things they would have bought had they never faced delayed pay. Feds are also likely to face greater withholdings on their retroactive paychecks, which will be paid in a lump sum, but will be made whole when they file their tax returns next year.

Larry Kudlow, director of the White House's National Economic Council, dismissed CBO's report as dealing with "small fractions of numbers." He said the real impacts were only on the "hardships for individuals," not the economy as a whole.

"We frequently disagree with CBO, with all due respect," Kudlow said. "They're doing the best [they] can [but] no, I don't acknowledge that right now." He added, "Now that the government is reopened, the switch goes right back on. There is certainly no permanent damage to the economy." (Courtesy nextgov.com)

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