The Qatar Free Zones Authority (QFZA) has approved “investment applications” from major international and local companies valued at more than QR1bn.

The QFZA is the authority that develops free zones in Qatar and sets the strategic direction as well as formulates and governs policies for businesses operating in the free zones. “The approved investments totalled more than QR1bn, in the first six months alone, of accepting investment applications,” the QFZA said yesterday.

The QFZA has directed the funds towards significant economic, industrial, and technological projects in the free zones, having briefed the Supreme Council for Economic Affairs and Investment on the progress report of the QFZA and the projects it works on.

The QFZA also revealed that it has approved a range of partnerships between private sector and global companies across different fields.

HE Minister of State and Chairman of the Qatar Free Zones Authority, Ahmad bin Mohamed al-Sayed said, “Prior to the official launch of the free zones, QFZA was able to attract and approve investment applications and register a group of major international companies in various fields, reflecting the confidence investors have in Qatar.”

He stressed that the investments in the free zones will directly contribute to positioning Qatar as an attractive destination for investors from around the world, and platforms to attract international companies that want to do business with a partner that is a national company in the private sector and with other international companies.

Al-Sayed said the move comes in line with the QFZA’s commitment to supporting the national economy in line with the Qatar National Vision 2030.

“We encourage the private sector to leverage the facilities these international partners and create value for the national economy through joint ventures,” al-Sayed added.

The QFZA also announced that it is in the process of finalising the infrastructure of its free zones, which will be ready for inauguration soon. Investors from Qatar and abroad can apply to invest and register in the free zones through the QFZA.

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Africa sees plant sales, visa reforms boost GDP

By Yolande Pitkethly

South Africa is making progress on its goal of bolstering exports, with a $19 billion manufacturing, mining, and services sector set to make up 74.6% of revenue, according to a Bloomberg report. The country has been working to improve its export performance, and the efforts appear to be paying off, with exports exceeding $177 billion last year. The government has set a target of doubling exports by 2024, and so far, the country is well on track to achieving this goal.

Global wildlife pact imperiled by backsliding from southern Africa

By Bongani Mthembu

Southern African leaders have been accused of backsliding on their commitment to protect wildlife and biodiversity, as evidenced by the latest report from the Southern African Wildlife College (SAWC). The report highlights that despite the continent's rich biodiversity, many countries in the region are not doing enough to protect their wildlife.

Nigeria fears fiscal crisis as debts take big slice of revenue

By Bobby C. Smith

Nigeria's government is facing a fiscal crisis as its revenues are being siphoned off by external debts. The country's debt servicing costs now exceed 70% of its revenue, leaving little room for investment in public services and social programs. The situation is particularly dire for the country's education and healthcare sectors, which are already struggling to meet basic needs.

What to know about recessions, including the next one

By Bloomberg QuickTake

Recessions can be devastating for the economy, but they are a natural part of the business cycle. Understanding how they work can help us prepare for them. Here's what you need to know:

1. How recessions happen

A recession is triggered by a combination of factors, such as a slowdown in consumer spending, a decline in investment, or a rise in interest rates. This can lead to a decrease in overall demand, which in turn can lead to a slowdown in production and employment.

2. How long recessions last

Recessions can last anywhere from a few months to a few years. The average duration of a recession is about two years.

3. What triggers recessions

Recessions can be caused by a variety of factors, including a slowdown in consumer spending, a decline in investment, or a rise in interest rates. Other factors that can trigger recessions include political instability, natural disasters, and global economic shocks.

4. What makes a recession mild or severe

The severity of a recession is determined by a number of factors, including the duration, the depth of the decline, and the extent of the damage to the economy. A mild recession is one that lasts for a shorter period of time and affects a smaller number of people, while a severe recession is one that lasts for a longer period of time and affects a larger number of people.

5. How to avoid recessions

While it's impossible to avoid a recession altogether, there are steps that can be taken to reduce the risk of a recession. These include maintaining a strong fiscal policy, keeping a strong monetary policy, and ensuring that the economy is well-prepared for any potential shocks.

Bloomberg QuickTake Q&A

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Toyota pulls Suzuki firmly into its orbit via stake deal

Toyota Motor Co and Suzuki Motor Corp will take small equity stakes in each other, a step toward automakers sharing technology to manage scale and cost advantages, making Spice's gains on styling. The companies intend to cooperate on a new car model with improved aerodynamics and aluminum-intensive lightweight materials.

The deal is the latest example of how automakers are teaming up to share development costs and boost development. The tie-up is expected to avert strike action for the first time in eight years, sending the auto industry's sentiment.

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Pakistan to okay e-commerce policy framework next week

T he federal cabinet of Pakistan is likely to approve the country’s new e-commerce policy framework next week with the cabinet minister for commerce, a member of the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf government, saying the plan is already being discussed with stakeholders.

The Pakistan Business and Investment Forum (PBIF), a Chinese state-owned business and investment promotion agency, has announced plans to launch digital online merchant accounts by online businesses, with the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) and the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) already to have a mandate to operate and regulate the digital currency.

The framework, which will be presented at the Cabinet meeting, is expected to include a regulatory framework for digital payment systems, a digital identity system, and a digital certification system. It will also cover areas such as digital payments, digital identity, and digital certification.

The framework will be developed in collaboration with the SECP and the FBR, and will be based on international best practices. It will also include provisions for data privacy and security, and will be subject to a legally binding agreement.

The framework will be open for comment within the next few weeks, and a draft will be presented to the Cabinet for approval.

It will also include provisions for the prevention of money laundering and terrorist financing, and will be subject to oversight by the SECP and the FBR.

The framework is expected to be implemented within the next few months, and will be subject to regular review and updating.

The framework will be a significant step forward in the development of Pakistan’s digital economy, and will provide a foundation for future growth and development in the sector.
Asian markets mixed as trade dispute continues

Recession signals keep EM currencies subdued

Gold prices hit six-year peak

Russian stocks likely to falter this year, rebound in 2020
Gold investors are flourishing as the growing risk of negative rates in financial markets this year adds up to a positive outcome. According to the latest Bloomberg survey, bulls believe the market is in a golden age, with the precious metal heading for record highs above $1,900 an ounce in 2019.

The gold rush has been fueled by a series of catalysts, including concerns over economic growth, geopolitical tensions, and the rise of negative interest rates in major economies. With central banks cutting rates and some even considering unconventional policies, the demand for gold as a safe-haven asset has surged.

“Gold has traditionally been viewed as a haven in times of uncertainty and economic stress,” said Harry Tchilinguirian, head of commodity strategy at BNP Paribas. “With the global economy facing a number of challenges, including trade tensions and geopolitical risks, gold has become an increasingly attractive asset.”

Bullish sentiment is also bolstered by the performance of gold stocks, which have outperformed many other sectors. However, some analysts caution that the rally could be constrained by technical factors, such as resistance levels and overbought conditions.

The latest market closing figures show that gold stocks are continuing to rise, with many reporting strong earnings growth and positive fundamentals. This optimism is likely to support the gold rally in the short term, but investors should remain vigilant and manage risk accordingly.

For more details, please see the full article in Bloomberg. Visit the website for the latest updates on the gold market and analysis on its future prospects.
A strong dollar while looking at a computer screen with the Bloomberg display showing the movement of the value of the pound sterling against the US dollar in London yesterday. The pound slumped almost 1% versus the dollar and euro on reports that Britain will seek to extend the suspension of parliament, making a no-deal Brexit more likely.

The pound fell versus the dollar and euro yesterday as Britain’s government moved to extend the suspension of parliament, increasing the likelihood of a no-deal Brexit. Britain’s economy slipped more than 0.5% against both currencies in early business, before losing the last of its gains after the pound slumped 0.9% versus the dollar and 1% against both currencies in early trade, with most of their earnings in profit-taking, whereas companies, companies notably saw their shares take a tumble.

Across Europe, London’s FTSE 100 gained 0.4% to close at 7,242.42, while Paris’ CAC-40 lost 0.3% at 5,888.85. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson yesterday announced that the annual suspension of parliament would be extended until October 14, just in time for the European Union. "Such an event would be tantamount to extending the Brexit deadline past the original October 31, 2019, Brexit deadline, which would allow the UK to secure a deal without the need for a second extension of the Brexit deadline. The pound’s plunge helped London’s FTSE 100 rebound, with the FTSE 100 rising 0.1% to 7,242.42, as investors welcomed news of a potential Brexit delay. The pound’s rise, however, was short-lived, as investors continued to worry about the impact of a no-deal Brexit on the British economy.

In commodities, oil prices slid Tuesday, with the Brent crude oil price falling below $50 per barrel, its lowest level ever, on reports that a new government in China was focusing on the internal market rather than boosting exports. Although the US-Japan war was in positive territory mid-session, as the S&P 500 Index rose, the dollar weakened against all major currencies, including the euro, yen, and pound, making it more attractive to investors. A dollar rally, on the other hand, could push down the pound sterling, which has been performing well as a safe haven currency in recent months. The dollar’s rise was also fueled by expectations of a possible US-China trade deal, which would support the US dollar.

Pound dives on increased no-deal Brexit prospect amid extension of suspension of parliament

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Rupee loses mojo in another ugly August for India's currency

Bloomberg

The rupee's resilience in the face of economic headwinds has come to an end, with India's currency losing its year-to-date gains in the space of just one month.

The country's massive domestic market is now dragging on the rupee as growth at home slows, foreigners pull cash from local equities and the currency increasingly tracks the yuan as the trade war heats up.

"Even though India is directly less vulnerable to US-China tensions, it can't remain completely insulated," said Dushyant Padmanabhan, a forex strategist at Nomura Holdings Inc in Singapore. The economic slowdown and capital outflows don't bode well for the rupee, he said.

The rupee is set for its worst monthly loss in six years and some analysts worry of even more pain to come. JPMorgan Chase & Co expects it to approach the record low hit last October by year-end, while Nomura forecasts the currency to finish 2019 at 72.5 per dollar.

Here are some of the reasons behind the currency's rapid reversal:

**Growth slowdown**

Demand for everything from cars to cookies has waned as India's lingering shadow-banking crisis weighs on private consumption, which accounts for almost 60% of the gross domestic product. And the increasingly bitter trade war has complicated the government's task of re-igniting Asia's third-largest economy. Not surprisingly, data due tomorrow will likely to show that gross domestic product slowed in the June quarter, to 5.7% from a year earlier.

"Fundamentals remain challenging for the rupee, and we will keep depreciating given the global and local headwinds," said Ashish Vaidya, head of trading at DBS Bank Ltd in Mumbai. India no longer享有 "a premium" over other emerging markets, he said.

**Equity outflows**

Foreigners have pulled $3.8 billion from local shares since July, as anxiety on the super-rich announced in the budget last month combined with the trade war to push the currency down. Large outflows have fueled the rupee's weakness and the size of the drop has caught a lot of people by surprise," said Mitul Kotecha, senior emerging-markets strategist at TD Securities in Singapore.

**China angle**

Rupee's fortunes are also getting linked to the moves in the yuan, according to JPMorgan, which has moved away from its call of rupee outperformance against the more-trade oriented currencies like the Korean won.

"If the CNY continues to depreciate against the USD, as we expect, we believe the rupee will depreciate proportionally with the CNY," analysts including Sajid Chinoy and Jonathan Cavenagh wrote in a recent note.

**Seasonality**

Weak fundamentals aside, the currency is also in a seasonally weak month. The rupee has slid an average 2.3% in August over the past nine years, data compiled by Bloomberg show. Yet this time, the losses are much larger than usual and much of the gains accumulated in June and July...
After blacklisting, US said to receive 130-plus licence requests to sell to Huawei

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US Commerce Department said it has received 130-plus licence requests from companies for licences to sell components from Huawei Technologies Co Ltd to US firms, according to three people familiar with the process, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The standstill coincides with US President Donald Trump's Threat to up the ante in the US-China trade war, which has already brought its own share of licence applications to sell to Huawei, the world's top producer of telecommunications equipment.

The state has raised the spectre of billions of dollars in lost sales for chipmakers, software companies and others from US firms in Huawei's supply chain.

US officials have also said they're all afraid to make a decision that could mean billions of dollars of lost sales for Huawei, the world's top producer of telecommunications equipment.

Huawei, the world's top producer of telecommunications equipment and software, has so far not been granted any licences for sales to US firms.

A spokesman for the Commerce Department said the requests had been submitted by US companies for components from Huawei and that the department was reviewing them.

The department received 130-plus licence requests from US firms to sell components from Huawei, according to three people familiar with the process, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The US Commerce Department on Monday said it has received 130-plus licence requests from US companies to sell components from US firms to Huawei, in addition to the 50 or so that US Commerce Deputy Assistant Secretary Alan Bartell said last week that the US department had reviewed.

The trade talks could spur licence applications from US companies to sell to Huawei, a gesture welcomed by Huawei, which is pursuing an initial public offering.

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21% rise in number of new firms registered at QFC during H1 2019

The Qatar Financial Centre (QFC), one of the world’s leading and fastest-growing business and financial centres, has witnessed a 21% year-on-year growth in the number of firms registered during the first half of 2019 (H1 2019). The QFC has intensified efforts to license new firms by simplifying business processes and speeding up applications, with the number of firms on its platform against 71 last year, the authority (QFCA) chief executive.

Moreover, foreign business councils were turned net sellers to the tune of QR29.84mn on Tuesday. Some of them include Doha Bank, Qatar First Bank, Qatar and Al Khaliji; while Gulf institutions and 7.7% respectively. The index had seen a monthly 2.1% contraction in price of dairy products and 0.1% in cement and basic chemicals. The manufacturing sector PPI fell a month by 0.5% in July 2019, said the figures released by the Planning and Statistics Authority (PSA).

According to the 2018 World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report, Qatar ranked first nationally in the ease of doing business, which is a key driver of the QFC’s success. The World Bank’s 2019 Global Economic Monitor ranked Qatar as first for year-on-year personal domestic product growth, making the country a prime destination for firms setting up in the region.

Oil prices rose more than 1% on steep drop in US crude inventories

Brent, WTI both higher than $60; US weekly crude production falls to 12.5mn bpd – EIA

Reuters

New York

Oil prices were up more than 1% yesterday after data showing a steep fall in US crude stocks was demand caused by the trade war between the world’s two biggest economies.

Brent crude futures gained $0.50 or 1.0% at $50.94 per barrel by 0620 GMT (0420 EDT), while US Intermediate crude futures rose $0.53 or 1.1% to $47.27 a barrel.

The Energy Information Administration said the ongoing trend of narrowing net imports has yielded a massive draw to crude stocks, with imports dropping sharply last month by 3.4 million barrels per day, and exports jumping along 3.0 million barrels per day, said Matthew Smith, director of commodity research at services, compared with 0.1% weightage in the PPI basket, whereas insurance gained 4.1% in cement and other non-metallic products and 0.2% in grain mill and other products. The manufacturing sector PPI index was a 0.5% gain in July 2018 at the rate of paper and paper products and 0.3% at 0.5% in grain mill and other products. Nevertheless, there was a 5.6% increase in the price of plastics and plastic products, 4.8% for dairy products, 3.9% in other chemical products and foods and 0.8% in beverages.

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Russia aims high with new passenger version

By Pratap John

Russia yesterday unveiled to clients in new passenger version of the Sukhoi Superjet 100 at Zhukovsky, Russia, ahead of an international air show in June. “The Superjet 100 is a mid-range transport aircraft and is designed to replace the outdated regional jets in many countries,” said Oleg Panteleyev, the chief executive of the aircraft maker.

The Russian government has so far sold 98 of the aircraft to customers in 17 countries, but the program has faced numerous delays and setbacks, including a number of crashes in recent years.

In August 2019, the Russian government announced a major upgrade to the Superjet, including the replacement of its engines with more powerful and efficient ones. The upgrade is expected to improve the aircraft’s range and fuel efficiency, making it more competitive in the global market.

However, the program remains plagued by technical problems, and many customers have expressed concerns about the aircraft’s reliability and safety.

In response to these challenges, the Russian government has decided to invest heavily in the Superjet program, including the development of a new passenger version.

The new version, which is scheduled to enter service in 2022, is expected to have a range of up to 3,000 miles and can carry up to 150 passengers in its standard configuration.

The Russian government is investing around $1 billion in the development of the new passenger version, and the aircraft is expected to be delivered to customers within the next few years.

The new version of the Superjet is expected to be used by a number of international airlines, including Aeroflot, the national carrier of Russia, and Thai Airways, the national carrier of Thailand.

The aircraft is also expected to be used by a number of regional airlines, including Air Astana, the flag carrier of Kazakhstan, and Air Moldova, the national carrier of Moldova.

The new passenger version of the Superjet is expected to be more fuel-efficient and have a longer range than its predecessor, making it a attractive option for airlines looking to replace their older regional jets.

By Byxis Mechevar

Korean Air Lines has been considering using unsupervised routes between South Korea and Japan despite the rising supply and slowing demand, a company spokesperson said.

The airline has been discussing the possibility of using unsupervised routes between South Korea and Japan, where air travel restrictions have been lifted, in order to maximize its resources.

Korean Air Lines is considering reducing the number of flights between the two countries, or operating flights by a smaller aircraft, as a way to reduce costs.

The airline is also considering using unsupervised routes in other areas, including the US and Europe, where air travel restrictions have been lifted.

By Byxis Mechevar

The Federal Aviation Administration is likely to conduct its certification flight for Boeing Co’s 737 MAX in October, a key milestone towards returning the grounded jetliner to the skies.

The agency has been working closely with Boeing for several months, as the company must perform a series of final certificatory tests before submitting its recertification request.

Those tests, which will include flight tests and other evaluations, are expected to take several weeks to complete.

If the FAA approves the recertification request, the 737 MAX will be cleared to return to service in the US, and eventually in other markets around the world.

By Byxis Mechevar

Airbus has launched a new version of its A320 family of planes, the A320neoLR, which can fly up to 7,500 nautical miles on a single tank of fuel.

The new version of the A320, which is unveiled in Tokyo, is designed to compete with Boeing’s 737 MAX, and can carry up to 226 passengers in its standard configuration.

Airbus said the A320neoLR is expected to enter service in 2022, and will be used by a number of airlines around the world.

By Byxis Mechevar

Japan is considering extending its travel restrictions to South Korea, where cases of the new coronavirus have been detected.

The Japanese government has been discussing the possibility of extending its travel restrictions to South Korea, which has been designated as a “special travel region” by the Japanese government.

The travel restrictions, which were introduced in July, are designed to help contain the spread of the new coronavirus in Japan.

If Japan extends its travel restrictions to South Korea, it would be the second time the travel restrictions have been extended.

In June, the Japanese government extended its travel restrictions to the US, the UK, and other countries, after the spread of the new coronavirus to those countries.

If Japan extends its travel restrictions to South Korea, it would be the second time this year that the travel restrictions have been extended.

The Japanese government has been discussing the possibility of extending its travel restrictions to South Korea, as cases of the new coronavirus continue to increase in South Korea.

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Boeing 737 MAX certification flight likely to occur in October

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