US economic growth revised down slightly in Q2

Washington

America’s economy grew more slowly in the second quarter than expected, as robust consumer spending helped offset declines in business investment and trade. The growth rate of 2% was below expectations, revised down from an initial 2.5% growth rate reported last month, and well below Trump’s 3% target, according to the Commerce Department report. GDP expanded 2% in the April-June quarter, down from a 3.1% rate in the first quarter, according to Commerce Department data released Thursday.

The revised figures confirm a slowdown in the start of the year – with the weaker growth of exports, business and government investment and the trade war hurting the economy. President Donald Trump is leading the economic crisis as he seeks to re-election in November, according to a new Reuters survey.

Consumer spending, which accounts for 70% of the economy, was the bright spot in the report. It rose at a 3.1% annual rate after falling at the start of the year, but business investment in equipment remained flat, according to the report.

But the China trade war, which has threatened the global economy, remains a concern. A recent Reuters poll of economists found that a trade deal with China is unlikely before the end of the year, according to the survey.

Investors have become increasingly worried about the prospects for a US-China trade deal, as Trump has said that he will not make a deal unless China agrees to roll back key market-opening concessions.

US-China trade talks have made little progress, as Beijing remains firm on its demands for a “Phase One” deal that would include commitments from both sides on trade and investment.

The trade war has had a significant impact on US economic growth, with businesses and consumers facing higher prices and uncertainty.

The US economy is now on track for a slow growth rate of 1.5% to 2% in 2019, according to the survey, down from 2.8% growth in 2018. The survey found that investors are increasingly worried about a recession, with a 20% chance of a recession in 2019, up from 15% in the previous survey.

The survey also found that investors are becoming more concerned about the Federal Reserve’s efforts to keep interest rates low, with a 50% chance of a rate cut by the end of the year, up from 40% in the previous survey.

The survey found that investors are still concerned about the US political landscape, with a 50% chance of a divided Congress in the November elections, up from 40% in the previous survey.

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India’s GDP growth hits 6-yr low; stimulus expected

India’s economy grew at its weakest pace in two decades in the June quarter, released data showing its economic growth in the April to June quarter fell from 4.1% in the previous quarter, while government spending growth slowed to 6.8% from 13.3%. Capital investment picked up from 4.5% to 5.9%, indicating that the government is stepping up efforts to revive consumer demand. A total ban on ore exports from Indonesia, the world’s top nickel producer, due to concerns about a global shortage of the metal, is recovery at a moderate pace, said the government’s economic affairs adviser for the economy.

The government also stuck to its view that capital expenditure was expanding at a moderate rate, and that the private sector was contributing to the GDP growth.

The announcement comes as India faces challenges including a slowdown in global trade and a decline in exports.

The previous quarter, government grew 3.1%, down from 7.2% in the June quarter. Private investment dropped by a record 31.1% in the previous quarter and capital investment in the current quarter fell by 5.8%.
Japan urges ‘affordable’ Africa investment

Two years after a major African summit hosted by Japan, a new conference has been held in Tokyo.

Japan’s Prime Minister Shinzo Abe last year hosted leaders of 50 African nations and international organisations.

This year, the Japanese government has invited representatives from more than 40 African nations and international organisations.

A joint statement wrapping up the three-day African development summit said: “We believe that infrastructure, that guarantees affordability with respect to life-style costs, is a fundamental issue of economic transformation.”

The meeting of leaders and representatives from more than 50 African nations and international organisations has taken place in the shadow of China, which has invested massively in Africa un-der the shadow of China, which has

In a televised news conference in Beijing on Friday, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said: “I believe that a new path would be open for the future cooperation between China and the African countries.”

“China and Africa should focus on the establishment of a new path to development, a new path to cooperation, a new path to development,” he added.

Wang added: “As China and Africa move closer together, we should seize the opportunity to enhance our cooperation and establish a new path to development.”

Chinese President Xi Jinping said: “We should make every effort to build a new path to development, a new path to cooperation, a new path to development.”

At the conference, China has pledged $30 billion in new development funding, in addition to the $50 billion already promised.

Africans hailed the initiative as a significant step forward.

“We are very grateful to China for its continued support,” said a representative from the African Union.

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Rounded hopes for trade talks keep most Europe markets in the black

Rounded hopes for trade talks kept stock markets mostly in the black yesterday after China said it would not retaliate against the latest US tariffs, setting up a positive lead to a volatile week. In London, the FTSE 100 closed up 0.16% at 7,398.88 at the end of the day while the STOXX Europe 600 closed up 0.15% at 335.48 and the Euro Stoxx 50 closed up 0.45% to 2,741.60 points yesterday.

Financial markets continue to be buoyed by optimism continues to flow through the ranks of investors following comments from the Chinese Communist Ministry on Thursday, said sleeve, market analyst at Standard Chartered.

Key European equity markets were higher at the close, but Milan fell after Italy’s anti-establishment Five Star government coalition deal with the centre-left government. Fritz von der Heydt, credit analyst at ING, said.

The Dow Jones rose outside the London Stock Exchange building in Paternoster Square, London. The FTSE 100 closed up 0.16% to 7,398.88 points yesterday.

Renewed hopes for trade talks keep most Europe markets in the black
Russia is ‘one of the safer choices’ in emerging markets

Russia’s rouble-debt yields haven’t budged much in the past couple of months, a sign to some investors that the bonds and local currency are an under-appreciated haven in the trade-war turmoil.

Bloomberg

Russia’s rouble-debt yields haven’t done nothing in the past eight weeks, while global interest rates have taken off, said Iain Neyland, who helps manage $200 billion in assets at BlackRock Inc. and is a sign that Russia’s local-currency yields have dropped. Russia is one of the safer choices in emerging markets, according to Neyland, who oversees a $19 billion Emerging Markets Fund. “It’s been a very upward rally in global risk appetite and a very downward rally in global economic outlook. That creates a very stark contrast in Russia,” he said.

According to Neyland, the high yields on Russia’s local bonds shows investors have failed to discover their appeal as a safe bet. Slowing inflation coupled with a softer rate-cutting path than its emerging-market peers will continue to prop up the ruble’s carry-trade appeal, said Michael Bolliger, head of emerging-market asset allocation for UBS Wealth Management. Hungary and Poland’s local-currency yields have dropped 77 and 48 basis points in the last two months, respectively, to under 2%. Russia’s have fallen just 21 basis points and are above 7%.

Consumer-price growth is set to slow to 3% at the end of next year, down from a previously projected 3.8%, according to a report released by Russia’s Economy Ministry. Russia is exposed to a global slowdown through the price of oil, but “in the sense that it’s less integrated into the global manufacturing cycle, Russia is less vulnerable to the trade war,” said UBS’s Bolliger. He sees the rouble strengthening almost 6% over the coming three months.

Reflecting how appealing Russian yields have become, investors bid for more than 11 times the 10 billion roubles ($150 million) of floating-rate rouble debt on offer at an auction on Wednesday. Earlier sales of fixed-rate debt also sold out.

At the same time, risks remain. While a new round of US sanctions imposed on Russia at the beginning of August was milder than expected, the penalties still linger “in the background,” according to Neyland. The recent crackdown on protests in Moscow is also a “geopolitical risk,” he said.

Melvin Toth

Melvin Toth of the New Economic Forum argues that Russian foreign policy has been moving away from the West.

Gulf Times
Saturday, August 31, 2019

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Renewed hopes for trade talks boost most Asia courses

After a volatile session, both the equity benchmark indices reached record highs on Thursday. The Sensex closed at 52,025.24, a gain of 803.06 points or 1.54%, while the Nifty ended at 14,950.90, also a gain of 275.10 points or 1.86%. Both the indices closed above the psychological level of 52,000 and 14,900 respectively.

Prospects of positive communication between US-China and the Sino-Japan trade tension remain high. The US equity indices were trading near their all-time high after the G20 summit in Japan. However, the US equity indices failed to make an impression on the global market. While Indian equities gained 1.57%, the S&P 500 index rose 0.4%.

Bloomberg, Reuters

China's yuan on course for worst month since 1994

China's yuan is on course for its worst month in nearly three decades as accelerating US-China trade tensions weigh on the world's second-biggest economy.

FX Swap

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FX Swap
BofA chases $10bn private capital pool driving M&A

The bank of America (BofA) is building up to take advantage of a range of shifts in the market. According to some of its top bankers on a new Global Private Capital Council. The moves come as the bank aims to attract new clients from the deep-pocketed investors, such as sovereign wealth funds and private equity and to become a powerful dealmaker – providing a new way for companies to utilize their own capital and secure new sources of long-term debt.

Bloomberg

Ultra-long bonds under ‘serious consideration,’ says Mnuchin

The Trump administration is giving serious consideration to reviving something Wall Street may not have seen in over 60 years: ultra-long-term bonds. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said that offering bonds with maturities of 50 to 100 years is under “very close examination” and that the Treasury department is conducting an intensive review.

The decision to rekindle the idea of ultra-long-term bonds, which haven’t been issued in the US in over 60 years, has sent bond-watching investors into overdrive. The move, which could allow the government to borrow in US dollars to invest in foreign currencies, and the term was little known until now. Investors are bracing for the possibility of a new ultra-long-term debt market, which could offer a route to diversifying risks and potentially be a boon for investors looking to hedge against currency risk.

Bloomberg

BofA’s Top Bankers Meet As M&A Tide Swells

Bloomberg

Mnuchin denied that the US Treasury was planning to issue ultra-long-term bonds, but said the government was considering the idea. The move could be part of a broader effort by the US government to borrow more in dollars to fund its activities overseas.

A number of investors have been calling for ultra-long-term bonds in recent weeks, including private equity firms and sovereign wealth funds. The idea of borrowing in US dollars to invest in foreign currencies has been gaining traction as investors look for ways to hedge against currency risk.

Bloomberg

Mnuchin’s ultra-long debt plan to face stiff opposition from Fed

The idea of issuing ultra-long-term bonds has been met with opposition from some corners, including the Federal Reserve. The Fed has been a key driver of recent bond market trends, and its actions could have a significant impact on the success of any such plan.

Bloomberg

Hedge fund manager Campbell tasman advises to consider ultra-long-term bonds

Hedge fund manager Campbell tasman, who has been a vocal advocate for ultra-long-term bonds, said the idea of borrowing in US dollars to invest in foreign currencies is a good one. The move could provide a new source of funding for the US government and help to diversify its debt portfolio.

Campbell tasman advises to consider ultra-long-term bonds

What are the returns like?

It’s not clear what the returns on such bonds would look like, as they have never been issued on a significant scale before. However, some investors believe that they could offer a way to hedge against currency risk and potentially be a boon for investors looking to diversify their portfolios.

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Donald Trump, who campaigned on a trade war with Beijing, said yesterday that China has “lost its mind” and “the US is not going to put up with it.”

While the US-China trade war rages on, Trump took to Twitter to slam “unfair” trade policies, accusing China of “exploiting” the US and its workers. “We will win!” he tweeted. “As soon as China and others stop their unfair trade practices, the US will start winning again!”

The US has imposed tariffs on $34bn worth of Chinese goods, with the US-China trade war set to ramp up next month. Trump has threatened to impose tariffs on $200bn worth of Chinese imports, while China has vowed to retaliate.

The US has accused China of unfair trade practices, including stealing intellectual property, forcing foreign companies to hand over technology and requiring foreign businesses to partner with local Chinese firms. The US has also accused China of cutting the value of the yuan to gain an unfair trade advantage.

China has denied the allegations and has said it will retaliate if the US imposes new tariffs. China has also accused the US of imposing “unjust” tariffs on Chinese goods.

Trump has said China needs to make “serious changes” to its trade practices, including by lowering its currency and reducing its trade surplus with the US.

China has said it will not “tolerate” any external interference and has said it will retaliate if the US imposes new tariffs.

The US-China trade war is expected to continue for some time, with both sides vowing to impose further tariffs. The US has also threatened to impose tariffs on $200bn worth of Chinese imports, while China has vowed to retaliate.

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