

## Business

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by escalating trade tensions**13** Gulf Bank congratulates winner  
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its Business Banking Customers

The Amazon logo at the entrance area of the Amazon logistics center in Lauwin-Planque, northern France. US retail giant Amazon has moved past hi-tech titans Apple and Google to become the world's most valuable brand, a key survey showed.—AFP

# Amazon dethrones Google as top global brand

## Survey shows US retail giant's brand value surges by 52% to \$315 billion

**LONDON:** US retail giant Amazon has moved past hi-tech titans Apple and Google to become the world's most valuable brand, a key survey showed yesterday. The brand value of Amazon surged by 52 percent to \$315 billion, global market research agency Kantar said in its 2019 100 Top BrandZ report.

Amazon jumped from third to first place to eclipse Google—which slid from first to third place with Apple holding on to the second spot. The Seattle-based retail behemoth, founded by Jeff Bezos in his garage in 1994, topped the table thanks to key acquisitions, superior customer services and a disruptive business model, Kantar said in a statement. "Amazon's smart acquisitions, that have led to new revenue streams, excellent customer service provision and its ability to stay ahead of its competitors by offering a diverse ecosystem of products and services, have allowed Amazon to continuously accelerate its brand value growth," said Kantar. The agency, which is owned by British advertising group WPP, added that Amazon showed "little sign" of any slowdown in its growth. The top ten companies were once again dominated by US firms,

with Apple on \$309.5 billion, Google on \$309 billion and Microsoft on \$251 billion. Payments specialist Visa had the fifth biggest value at almost \$178 billion, while social networking group Facebook was the sixth largest at nearly \$159 billion. For the first time, Alibaba beat Tencent to become the most valuable Chinese brand. E-commerce leader Alibaba was the seventh biggest at \$131.2 billion, up two places on the previous year. Internet giant Tencent fell three spots to stand at number eight with a value of \$130.9 billion. In a sign of Asia's growing impor-

ance, 23 of the top 100 brands were Asian—including 15 from China. The leading brands have embraced "disruptive" business models to beat traditional rivals in the technology, finance and retail sectors.

"Amazon's phenomenal brand value growth of almost \$108 billion in the last year demonstrates how brands are now less anchored to individual categories and regions," said Doreen Wang, Kantar's global head of BrandZ. "The boundaries are blurring as technology fluency allow brands, such as Amazon, Google and Alibaba, to offer a range of services across multiple

consumer touchpoints. "Using their consumer experience and expertise, these brands are crossing over into the business services sector, creating new opportunities for brand growth.

"Disruptive ecosystem models are flourishing in regions such as Asia, where consumers are more technology-enabled and where brands are integrating themselves into every aspect of people's daily lives." Brand value on the key survey is calculated on the basis of the companies' financial performance and their standing among consumers across the globe.—AFP

## China says will respond if US escalates trade tensions

**BEIJING:** China will respond firmly if the United States insists on escalating trade tensions, the foreign ministry said yesterday after US President Donald Trump said further tariffs were ready to kick in if no deal was reached at a G20 summit this month. Trump has repeatedly said he is getting ready to meet Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Osaka summit at the end of June, but China has not confirmed it. China did not confirm a planned face-to-face meeting between President Xi Jinping and his American counterpart Donald Trump, after the US leader threatened new tariffs against Beijing amid an escalating trade war, Trump said a meeting with Xi has been "scheduled" during the G20 summit in Japan later this month, and that he expected the Chinese leader to attend.

"We have noticed that the US has repeatedly publicly expressed its expectation that the Chinese and US heads of state will meet during the G20 summit," foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told a regular briefing. "If there is any news in this regard, we will release it in due time."

A Trump-Xi meeting would mark a turning point in the bruising trade dispute between the world's two biggest economies, which has spooked markets worldwide and sparked worries about the global economy.

Trump said last week he would decide after the meeting of the leaders of the world's largest economies whether to carry out a threat to impose tariffs on at least \$300 billion in Chinese goods. On Monday, Trump said he was ready to impose another round of punitive tariffs on Chinese imports if he cannot make progress in trade talks with Xi in Osaka. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang again would not be drawn on confirming a Xi-Trump meeting at G20, saying information would be released once it was available to the ministry.

"China does not want to fight a trade war, but we are not afraid of fighting a trade war," he said, adding China's door was open to talks based on equality. "If the United States only wants to escalate trade frictions, we



MIAMI BEACH, Florida: The Bremen Express cargo ship prepares to dock at PortMiami, which saw China as its top trading country in 2018, as trade tension continues between the US and China.—AFP

will resolutely respond and fight to the end."

US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross yesterday downplayed this month's summit in Japan, saying it would not be "a place where anyone makes a definitive deal." "At the G20, at most it will be ... some sort of agreement on a path forward, but certainly it's not going to be a definite agreement," Ross told CNBC in a television interview.

Tensions between Washington and Beijing rose sharply in May after the Trump administration accused China of having reneged on promises to make structural economic changes during months of trade talks. The United States is seeking sweeping changes, including an end to forced technology transfers and theft of US trade secrets. It also wants curbs on subsidies for Chinese state-owned enterprises and better access for US firms in Chinese markets.

On May 10, Trump raised tariffs on \$200 billion of Chinese goods up to 25 percent and took steps to levy duties on an additional \$300 billion in Chinese imports. Beijing retaliated with tariff hikes on a revised list of \$60 billion in US goods. The US government has also angered China by putting Huawei Technologies Co Ltd on a blacklist that effectively bans US companies from doing business with the Chinese firm, the world's biggest telecoms equipment maker. Investors worry China will retaliate by putting US companies on a blacklist or banning exports to the United States of rare earth metals, which are used in products such as memory chips, rechargeable batteries and cell phones.—Agencies

## Trump renews Mexico tariff threat amid row

**MEXICO CITY:** US President Donald Trump renewed his threat Monday to impose tariffs on Mexico as controversy erupted over what exactly is in the countries' new migration deal, which the Mexican government admitted would be reviewed in 45 days. Trump reignited the pressure three days after granting a reprieve from tariffs that he had threatened to apply from this week to force the major US trading partner to boost measures against illegal immigrants trying to enter the United States.

In a series of statements and tweets, Trump alluded to still-secret provisions in the deal that he said would need approval by the Mexican Congress. "If for any reason the approval is not forthcoming, Tariffs will be reinstated!" he tweeted.

Faced with a surge of Central American immigrants fleeing poverty and gang violence, Trump had already declared a national emergency in an effort to build his promised border wall with Mexico, and had also more than once threatened to shut the frontier before mooting the tariffs.

The president did not go into details Monday, but Mexico said it had agreed to discuss one of Trump's top demands, a so-called "safe third-country agreement"—in which migrants entering Mexican territory must apply for asylum there rather than the US—if the flow of undocumented Central Americans continues. Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard, who led the Mexican negotiating team in Washington last week, said he had rebuffed the US demand for such a measure, but agreed to revisit the matter in 45 days.

"In the meeting with the vice president of the United States, they were insistent on the safe third-country issue," Ebrard told a press conference. "We told them—I think it was the most important achievement of the negotiations—let's set a time period to see if what Mexico is proposing will work, and if not, we'll sit down and see what additional measures" are needed, he said. Told by reporters at the White House that Mexico has not confirmed its legislature will vote on the unspecified further measures, Trump answered: "I don't think they'll be denying it very long."

Under the deal, Mexico agreed to bolster security on its southern border and expand its policy of taking back asylum-seekers as the United States processes their claims. Trump angrily rebuffed criticism over a New York Times report that said the main terms of the deal were not new, and had in fact



SAN DIEGO: Trucks wait in line to exit the inspection facility and enter the United States at the Olay Mesa port of entry at the US-Mexico border in San Diego, California.—AFP

been agreed on months before his tariff threat. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo sidestepped controversy, instead praising Mexico and highlighting what he said was an example of "diplomacy at its finest."

"It's the biggest effort to date that the Mexicans have committed. It's something that we pressed for," he said. "We will work closely with them to make sure that that is a successful effort."

### Controversial deal

Trump's tariffs were to start at five percent Monday and rise incrementally to 25 percent by October. Economists had warned the pain of those threatened levies and Mexican retaliatory measures would have been acute for both countries, with potentially global spillover.

Markets were relieved over the deal struck Friday. But what is known of the agreement has drawn criticism from human rights groups who condemn what they call a Draconian crackdown on migration and the criminalization of immigrants. And as the contours of the deal continued to come to light, it appeared to grant Mexico only a temporary reprieve—with confusion surrounding key elements.

Ebrard said Friday that the promised deployment of 6,000 officers from Mexico's newly created National Guard to the southern border would begin Monday.

However, he appeared to backtrack Monday, saying the deployment would happen "as quickly as possible." There was no sign of a new deployment in Tapachula, the entry point for the migrant caravans that have crossed Mexico in recent months, AFP correspondents said. Local officials said the federal government had indicated the new deployment could take around a week. In the meantime, it has sent 400 federal police reinforcements to the border, they said.—AFP