

Coronavirus To Impact Chinese Phone Brands, Delay Launches In India

NEW DELHI: Novel Coronavirus can derail Chinese smartphone makers' India plans in 2020 as China lockdown in the long run can severely impact the flow of key components required to assemble smartphones at their manufacturing plants in India.

According to industry experts, if the lockdown continues for over a month or so, it will hamper the time-to-market strategy of nearly all Chinese brands as China provides bulk of various semi-knocked down (SKD) components like memory chips, touch panels/cover glasses along with semiconductors for smartphone assembling lines in India.

Unlike the completely built-up (CBU) units that are final products, SKD requires labour to assemble five-six key components which are imported and China is the main supplier, along with Vietnam and Taiwan.

Most Chinese brands are currently involved with nearly 100 per cent SKD-level production in the country.

"The long-term impact of Coronavirus will impact upcoming smartphone launches as various brands will find it difficult to maintain their time-to-market planning in the wake of delay in SKD arriving in India," Tarun Pathak, Associate Director, Counterpoint Research, told IANS.

"With SKD components stuck at warehouses in China, the whole supply chain will be affected as this is a seamless, effective, time-bound process for any smartphone brand to gain footprint in the highly-competitive Indian market," Pathak added.

Currently, nearly 12 per cent SKD components are being sourced locally while rest of the 88 per cent come from China, Taiwan, Vietnam and Japan - with China being the biggest supplier.

"The entire global supply chain will be affected, pushing the launch dates further if the virus is not controlled fast," Pathak noted.

According to Varun Mishra, Research Analyst at Counterpoint, supply chains have been upset, causing various companies to rethink their strategies and reduce dependence on single markets.

"2020 will likely see efforts to further diversify investments across geographies to mitigate risks. The current coronavirus outbreak in China is the latest issue to threaten supply chains," said Mishra.

Sensing the upcoming troubles, Chinese smartphone makers are currently in a huddle and strategizing Plan B in case the supply chain remains affected for a long time.

A well-established Chinese brand told IANS that at the moment, travel plans are affected and those who have gone to China on business travel, have been asked to remain there till the situation is under control and the threat is minimised.

"There is a complete travel ban. Those who are based here, are in continued discussions with the Chinese counterparts to understand and how to control the supply-chain issue once arises. Right now, things appear to be in place," a company employee told IANS on the condition of anonymity.

India had to import \$13 billion worth of components in 2018. "Not many high-value components are being sourced from India. As a result, local value addition in India was at 17 per cent during 2018."

"This helped the country save \$2.5 billion in forex but increased assembly operations in India led to imports of mobile phone components going up to \$13 billion," said Pathak.

The possibility of original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) to source chips locally is still nearly four to five years away.

"Sourcing of chips locally will happen only once the component ecosystem for low-value components is strengthened and export incentives are brought into force," said Pathak.

Half of the handsets sold in India in 2018 were imported as SKDs while only 34 per cent were imported as CKDs.

However, by the end of 2019, handsets imported as CKDs were forecasted to reach 75 per cent while 25 per cent will be in the form of SKDs.

Mexico City Says So Long To Single-Use Plastic Bags

MEXICO CITY: (Xinhua) Seemingly overnight, Mexico City residents kicked the habit of relying on flimsy supermarket plastic bags to carry their groceries.

A city ordinance banning single-use plastic bags took effect on Jan. 1, instantly turning inhabitants into tote-carrying denizens with a greater awareness of their environmental footprint.

In a city of some 20 million people, the measure, which carries a fine of up to 8,000 U.S. dollars, is bound to have a considerable impact for the better.

"We believe that through this measure, Mexico City is contributing to improving environmental quality and also to an important global strategy," said Andree Lilian Guigue, head of the city's General Directorate of Environmental Impact Assessment and Regulation (Sedema).

starting January 2021, businesses will also stop providing plastic straws and utensils.

However, Mexico City is hardly a pioneer in this area.

Worldwide China "is setting a good example by regulating plastics," said Guigue, adding Mexico City officials plan to contact their Chinese counterparts to "exchange experiences" in the field.

As one of the largest and most heavily populated urban centers in the world, Mexico City generates about 13,000 tons of trash a day, only 4,100 of which is recycled, according to authorities.

Kicking the plastic bag habit is a good place to start cleaning up the environment.

"The measure's acceptance is very important. People seem to be very committed and doing everything they can to ensure the law is abided by," said the official.

zens, which we are told is over 85 percent, and we're very happy," said Guigue.

In addition to the capital city, 16 Mexican states have passed laws banning the distribution of single-use plastic bags.

Local shop owner Laura Diaz Serrano agrees with the new measure, saying that through environmental education, people "can become more environmentally friendly."

Since the initiative was first floated to ban single-use plastics two years ago, Diaz has been encouraging her customers to bring their own tote bags.

"First we gave them away, then we sold them and then people gradually got used to bringing their own bag," she said.

Not everybody is happy about the measure, especially those in the plastics industry. Aldimir Torres, head of the National Plastics

Industry Association (Anipac), said the new law passed without a clear legal framework.

"How is it possible that the fine is higher than the one for carrying a weapon," Torres said.

"We recognize that we have a major environmental problem and we understand the issue," he said, but the move should have called for a longer transition period.

To help the industry adapt, Mexico City authorities have put in place programs to promote technological innovation at companies, with expert advice and credit available to aid in the transition.

The city has also unveiled a program called "Zero Trash: Mexico City's action plan for a circular economy," with which it plans to take advantage of waste generated in the capital through recycling.

New Form Of Northern Lights Discovered By Finnish Hobbyists, Researchers

Helsinki, Jan 30 (Xinhua) Finnish hobbyists have discovered a new form of northern lights, the dunes, together with space researchers, Finnish Meteorological Institute of Helsinki University said on Wednesday.

The new form of northern lights was first discovered in 2018 in photos taken by hobbyists that worked together with the Finnish Meteorological Institute. They named them as "dunes" as they resembled dunes of sand on a beach. Their color is green. Several occurrences of phenomenon were later

found by observation cameras as well.

The dunes are likely to be waves of oxygen atoms at a height of about one hundred kilometers, which will shine a stream of particles from the sun, according to the institute.

In a recent study, the birth of a dune is traced back to a "wave channel" that is created around the mesosphere, a particular layer of the atmosphere and its boundary, the mesopause. The study also proposes that the new form of northern lights will make it possible to investigate up-

per atmosphere conditions in a new way.

Minna Palmroth, professor of the University of Helsinki, on Wednesday described the results of the research on the dunes "as an astounding discovery" as it would represent a previously unobserved mechanism of interaction between the ionosphere and the mesosphere above it.

Palmroth noted in a press release by the University of Helsinki that the area between 80 and 120 km above earth is one of the "least researched areas of the earth" as it is challenging to measuring instruments.

From Front page...

Gunman Shoots Jamia Students,

by television cameras that showed the man in light coloured pants and a dark jacket, walking away on an empty road barricaded by police, turning around and shouting at the protesters in Hindi, "Here, take this freedom."

The gunman went live on Facebook before the brandishing the gun. Police said they were verifying whether it is his real name.

Before the attack, the man also put out messages on Facebook stating "Shaheen Bhag Khel Khatam" (Run Shaheen, the game is over). Another message stated, "Please wrap me in saffron in my last journey with slogans of Jai Shri Ram". His Facebook profile was deleted after screenshots of his posts were circulated widely on social media platforms.

Several students recapped how their peaceful march on Gandhi's death anniversary became violent.

"We were moving towards the Holy Family Hospital where the police had raised barricades. Suddenly, a gun-wielding man came out and opened fire. One bullet hit my friend's hand," Aamna Asif, a student of economics at the university said.

She said her friend, Shadab Farooq, a mass communication student, was trying to calm the attacker but he shot at him injuring his left hand.

Farooq, who belongs to Kashmir, was taken to the AIIMS Trauma Centre.

Ragibh Naushad, an LLB student at the university, said, "The Jamia Coordination Committee organised a march to pay homage to Gandhi ji on his death anniversary. It started at 12 noon from Gate number 7, but police denied the permission and stopped the march near the Holy Family hospital."

"A man named Gopal, came there and started brandishing a weapon and later shot a round. He was also chanting pro-CAA slogans."

The incident led to panic in the area.

Khalid Hassan, a JMI alumnus, said initially many were not sure whether it was a gunshot or a tyre burst.

There was heavy police and media presence when the incident took place.

The students were heading from Jamia to Mahatma Gandhi's memorial Rajghat. The march was stopped at the Holy Family Hospital near the university.

Chinmoy Biswal, DCP (southeast), said the students wanted to take out a march from Jamia to Rajghat but were denied permission.

Live Manifestation Of Spectre

Mahatma Gandhi is today mutilating the soul and the economy of India.

"It is unfortunate that the hatred that killed the Father of the Nation-Mahatma Gandhi, is now prevalent in the power corridors of India," Tewari said.

The senior Congress leader said what happened in Jamia Millia Islamia University a couple of hours ago, is "a live manifestation of this spectre of hate and terror which has been perpetrated across this country by the NDA-BJP government, especially since the end of the winter session of Parliament."

Tewari said by looking at the kind of statements emanating out of the BJP leadership during its campaign for the Delhi assembly elections, it seems that they have even dropped the pretense of any civility.

"The way campaigning for Delhi Assembly is happening and the statements coming from the BJP, they are fuelling this atmosphere of hatred. In a concerted way, responsible people are trying to polarise this country, especially Delhi" he said.

"Such crass and naked communalism being perpetrated from the top most echelons of the BJP and this government cannot but be the most eloquent testimony to the manner in which they seek to reduce social and political discourse in this country to the basest level," he said.

The Congress spokesperson hoped that a proper investigation would be conducted into the incident.

"Now is this a calibrated plan to polarise the entire country because the economy is in deep trouble and this government does not have a clue as to what it really needs to do with the direction of this nation or is it only specifically aimed at the Delhi Assembly polls," he said.

"I think the jury will remain out in that for a couple of days but the fact remains that if somebody can actually in broad day light with hundreds of people watching pull out a gun and with impunity try and go around shooting people, it is a reflection of an atmosphere which has been deliberately vitiated and nobody accept the current NDA-BJP government is responsible for it," he said.

Asked about the election commission banning Union Minister Anurag Thakur and BJP MP Parvesh Verma for their controversial remarks, Tewari said the poll panel act in accordance with whatever it thought was the best course of action but, he added, this was non-coincidental as ministers in the Union government were adopting the "stridency".

"The fact is that they have shed all vestige of even any civility in terms of the attempt to completely and absolutely communalise the Delhi elections. The question which people in Delhi need to ask themselves is that are they going to be misled by this very crass and completely vitiated campaign which tries to appeal to the most wild and basic instincts of a person or would they actually want a more forward looking, progressive, future orientated discourse to take place in this country," The Congress leader asked.

"Thakur and Verma are only symptoms of the problem," he said.

Hm Assures Action

incident of firing in Delhi today and have given directions to take the strictest action. The Central government will not tolerate any such incident, action will be taken seriously and the guilty will not be spared," he said.

A Jamia Millia Islamia student was injured after a man opened fire in Jamia area where anti-CAA protests were being held.

The injured Shadab Farooq, a student of the second semester of MA Mass Communication, sustained injuries in his left hand. He has been referred to the AIIMS Trauma Centre.

Cold Wave Tightens Grip Over Kashmir

from behind the clouds, resulting in some improvement in the maximum temperature though ice cold winds continued. The night temperature in the city settled at minus 0.8 degree, which is about 2 degree above normal.

During this Chilai Kalan, Srinagar received heavy snowfall, breaking about 30 year old record.

The world famous ski resort of Gulmarg, about 55 km from here in north Kashmir, was the coldest place in the valley as the mercury dipped about 4 degree from Wednesday and settled at minus 11 degree.

"Bright sunshine greeted tourists, including foreigners, who are out on ski slopes enjoying different activities," a hotelier said.

The mercury at world famous health resort of Pahalgam, about 100 km from here in south Kashmir, dipped about 8 degree from Wednesday and settled at minus 10.6 degree, which is slightly below normal.

The night temperature at Qazigund, Kupwara in north Kashmir and tourist resort of Kokernag settled at minus 1.3 degree, minus 1.6 degree and minus 3.7 degree, respectively.

Avalanche Kills Man, Injures 3

Z Morh tunnel in the area.

Soon after the incident, the locals and police jointly launched the rescue operation and shifted all the four injured to nearby Public Health Centre Kullana where one of them was declared brought dead.

The slain was identified as Ashok Rao. The injured persons identified as Surjeet Singh, Sukmeet Singh and Suraj Lal Singh are being treated in the hospital. Their condition is said to be critical.

SSP Ganderbal Khalil Poswal has confirmed the incident to local newsgathering agency KNS and said all the injured were being treated at a Hospital.

Pertinently, 5 persons were killed in the snow avalanche on 13 Jan including three of a family.

Pak Reacts To Modi's War Talk

She said that Pakistan had also caught In-

dian Air Force pilot Wing Commander Abhinandan in retaliation and Pakistani aircraft had entered the Indian air space.

Bukhari Led Group To Meet PM, HM

underlined the urgent need for the release of all political prisoners, including former three chief ministers, who are under detention in Jammu and Kashmir and the rest of the country.

Taking serious note of the economic situation, they demanded immediate relief for agriculture, horticulture, handicrafts, tourism, hoteliers and others.

Warring Abdullah Families

Awami National Conference founder Ghulam Mohideen Shah toppled Farooq's government in 1983 and became the Chief Minister with the support of some National Conference and Congress legislators.

The long detention also seems to have brought the two parties closer. The NC and the Awami National Conference would work together for the restoration of Article 370, said Muzaffar Shah. "Both are together for the cause. It's a question of our future generations," he said.

"We are all together in our struggle against revocation of Article 370," he said.

Omar Abdullah's photograph in which he is sporting a long beard that went viral on January 15 sparked a torrent of reactions on social media and from politicians across the country.

According to sources, Omar refused to shave beard as a mark of protest against the abrogation of Article 370. "He won't shave beard till all detainees are released," sources close to Omar said.

"After the photograph people suddenly remembered him. Imagine what his family has gone through all these months," sources said.

Family members are allowed to meet the detained NC leaders for one hour thrice a week. Omar's two sons have met him thrice since detention with latest meeting taking place in the last week of December.

Omar's mother Molly flew to Kashmir in September from England to be with her husband. She has been managing the kitchen and also sends food to Omar at Hari Niwas.

According to family sources, the father-son duo is in high spirits.

Prolonged detention of Farooq and Omar has worried the family which had no inkling that the two would be detained for so long. "If we knew they will be detained for long we wouldn't have been able to endure the pain," said a relative.

Sources say Farooq has taken to religion in detention and often recites the Quran. "His age is also such when one tends to reflect on things," sources said.

Suraya and Safiya were detained in October for violation of section 144 along with a group of women. They were released after they signed a bond and deposited Rs 10,000 each.

"This is the toughest thing we have seen in the life. But you have to be together, you have to be strong. That's what we have done," said a relative of Omar.

Post-August 5, Tourism Arrivals In Kashmir

of the situation emerging after August 5, 2019. Tourism is in a shambles while artisans and weavers are jobless," said Abdul Majeed, vice president of KCCL. "Doing trade without favourable conditions and the internet is unimaginable in the present-day world. In one fell swoop, irreversible damage has been caused to the state's economy. Not a single sector has been spared."

'It could get worse'

Jeelani used to earn Rs 22,000 a month as a hotel manager but two months after the shutdown, his salary had been slashed to less than one-third - Rs 6,000 a month. "How do you run a household with Rs 6,000? And even that will go if tourists don't arrive in the next few weeks," Jeelani told IndiaSpend.

Jeelani sat chatting with idle shikarawallahs, boatmen who ferry tourists on the Dal. The pavement along the boulevard, which otherwise bustles with activity, was empty except for the group. There are around 4,000 boatmen in Srinagar who bank on tourist arrivals for their livelihood, said Bashir Ahmad Sultani, the head of the boatmen's association.

Jeelani has not been able to pay the coaching institute where his daughter Mariya studies since October 2019 and had to plead for time. "The owner of the coaching centre obliged only because he is an acquaintance," he said. "But how long can he wait? I just hope my full salary gets restored which is only possible if tourism resumes." The family mostly buys groceries on credit from neighbourhood shop.

"All of us have been suffering since August 2019 - there is no work at all as you can see," said Sultani, leaning against a pillar at the jetty and warming his hands over the kangri, a firepot, kept under the pheran, a long winter cloak. "The only option is to work as labourers at construction sites. But not much of that work is available either and we wouldn't know how to do it."

The boatmen we met spoke of hard times, of families barely managing to survive. "Some of us cannot even manage two square meals for their families, forget about paying electricity bills or educating our children," said Mohammad Shafi, a boatman.

In peak season, between July and November, shikaras used to earn between Rs 1,500 and Rs 2,000 a day, according to Shafi. "We lost the peak season this year to curfews, strikes and the long internet shutdown," he said. "Our fear is that tourism will be hit even more if there are agitations for the restoration of Article 370 and statehood."

CRPF Trooper Ends Life

to commit suicide. After completing all the legal and medical formalities, arrangements will be made to send the body of the deceased to his native place for last rites.