

China to exempt some Nexperia chips from export ban

Netherlands invoked a Cold War-era law to take control of Nexperia

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- Berlin welcomed Beijing's move as a "positive sign"
- Nexperia produces relatively simple technologies such as diodes, voltage regulators and transistors

AFP | Beijing, China

China said yesterday it will exempt some Nexperia chips from an export ban that was imposed over a row with Dutch officials and has alarmed European businesses. Anxiety over chip shortages began when the Netherlands invoked a Cold War-era law in late September to effectively take control of Nexperia, whose parent company Wingtech is backed by the Chinese government. China, in response, banned



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any re-exports of Nexperia chips to Europe and accused the United States of meddling in Dutch legal procedures to remove Nexperia's Chinese CEO. Beijing blamed what it said on Saturday was "the Dutch government's improper intervention in the internal affairs of enterprises" for leading to "the current chaos in the global

supply chain". "We will comprehensively consider the actual situation of enterprises and grant exemptions to exports that meet the criteria," a Chinese commerce ministry spokesperson said in a statement, without offering specifics. The resumption of some Nexperia shipments was part of a

trade deal agreed by Chinese President Xi Jinping and his US counterpart Donald Trump after talks in South Korea on Thursday, the Wall Street Journal reported, citing unidentified sources. Chinese and European Union officials were also to discuss Nexperia while meeting in Brussels, EU spokesman Olof Gill had

said. Those talks on Friday were "a welcome opportunity for both sides to update on... the introduction and implementation of export controls", Gill said in a statement on Saturday. The discussions covered "controls on rare earth elements introduced or proposed by China, as well as an update on controls and developments on the EU side", he said. The statement did not mention Nexperia specifically. Separately, Berlin welcomed Beijing's move as a "positive sign" on Saturday. "The latest reports from China are positive initial signs of an easing of tensions," an economy ministry spokesman told AFP. He stressed that "a final assessment" of the implications of Beijing's announcement was not yet possible. **Automaker anxiety** Nexperia produces relatively simple technologies such as diodes, voltage regulators and transistors that are nonetheless crucial as vehicles increasingly rely on electronics. Its chips are mainly found in cars but also in a wide range of industrial components, as well

as consumer and mobile electronics such as refrigerators. The company makes them in Europe before sending them to China for finishing and then re-exporting them back to European clients. European carmakers and parts suppliers had warned of shortages of chips supplied by Nexperia that would force stoppages at production lines in Europe. The chipmaker supplies 49 percent of the electronic components used in the European automotive industry, according to German financial daily Handelsblatt. The European auto lobby ACEA warned last month that production would be seriously hit. Nexperia's chips, while widely used, are not "unique" in terms of technology and therefore "easily substitutable", French parts maker Opmobilist said. However, suppliers must get the new products approved by automakers, which takes time. Beijing suggested on Saturday that some shipments would resume. Companies experiencing difficulties could contact the commerce ministry or local authorities, the Chinese spokesperson said.

Food stamps, the bulwark against hunger for over 40 mn Americans

Washington, United States

The ongoing budget deadlock in the United States is threatening food security of around 42 million Americans who receive food stamps at the start of each month to help get by. The US Department of Agriculture had said that no money could be paid out on Saturday due to the shutdown. But on Friday, a federal judge helped ease some of the uncertainty at the last minute by ordering the government to use emergency funds to ensure the continuity of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which has helped low-income Americans for more



Volunteers at the Lutheran Settlement House pack bags of groceries to distribute to the local community for their daily food pantry in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

than 60 years. The idea that SNAP assistance could be paused is "truly unprecedented," Meredith Niles, a professor specializing in food policy at the University of Vermont, told AFP.

"This has never happened in more than 50 years of the program, despite numerous other government shutdowns," she said. Here's how SNAP works, and what its absence could mean for those affected. **How does it work?** While food stamps date back to the 1930s during the Great Depression, the SNAP program was created in 1964 and expanded nationwide in 1974, according

to Niles from the University of Vermont. Today, around one-in-eight Americans receive SNAP benefits each month based on income, according to the Department of Agriculture. This costs the federal budget nearly \$100 billion. Beneficiaries have a payment card, similar to a debit card, which they can use in supermarkets, grocery stores, and some farmers' markets. The cards are usually reloaded automatically on the first day of the month. To qualify for SNAP, along with being low-income, recipients must meet certain requirements

-- which can vary from working at least 30 hours a week to being medically deemed unable to work due to disability. "It is an important program for many Americans," Niles said, adding that recipients receive an average of around \$6 per person day. Every day items like fruit, vegetables, canned goods, chips, and pasta are covered by SNAP, while alcohol and pre-prepared meals are not. From January 2026, around ten states also plan to exclude the purchase of soft drinks using SNAP vouchers.

ASU signs cooperation agreement with W.I.S.E to launch four new PhD programmes

Manama

Applied Science University (ASU) has taken a significant step towards strengthening its academic and research presence regionally and internationally by signing a cooperation agreement with the World Islamic Sciences and Education University (W.I.S.E) in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The partnership will see the launch of four Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) programmes in Business Administration, Accounting, Public Law, and Private Law. The agreement aims to deepen academic collaboration between the two institutions, promote advanced scientific research, and foster the exchange of academic expertise. Through this strategic initia-



tive, both universities seek to prepare highly qualified graduates equipped to contribute to sustainable development and meet evolving labour-market demands. The signing ceremony was attended by His Excellency Rami Saleh Wreikat Al-Adwan, Ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the Kingdom of Bahrain and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, and Professor Waheeb Al Khaja, Chairman of the Board of Trustees at ASU. The agreement was signed by Professor Hatem Masri, President of ASU, and Professor Jaafar Al-Fanatseh, President of W.I.S.E, marking a new chapter of academic partnership between the two prominent universities.

Professor Waheeb Al Khaja highlighted that the agreement aligns with ASU's strategic direction to expand academic ex-

cellence and develop partnerships with leading universities in the region. He stated, "ASU continues to position itself as a hub for distinguished scholars and students, committed to advancing educational quality and research in accordance with international standards." He added that investing in graduate studies and scientific research is central to nurturing future leaders and innovators who will contribute to regional growth and knowledge development. Professor Hatem Masri reaffirmed ASU's commitment to expanding its postgraduate offerings in response to emerging academic and industry needs. He noted, "This partnership reflects the strength of ASU's academic leadership and reinforces

our mission to provide a world-class learning environment that blends theoretical knowledge with practical experience, supporting the aspirations of ambitious scholars." Professor Jaafar Al-Fanatseh praised ASU's achievements and reputation, emphasising that this collaboration sets a model for fruitful academic partnership that fosters innovation, research, and knowledge exchange between the two countries. The newly signed agreement will open valuable opportunities for researchers and postgraduate students, enhance scientific output, and contribute to strengthening the role of both institutions as leading centres of learning and research in the Arab region.