

## Trade News

**S. KOREA'S EXPORTS EXPECTED TO SURPASS USD 600 BN IN 2019**

According to the trade ministry, South Korea's exports are expected to exceed USD 600 billion for the first time this year on upbeat sales of memory chips, machinery and petrochemical products.

Total trade volume is set to reach over USD 1.1 trillion by the end of this year, the ministry said. The nation's trade volume accounted for 3.1 percent of total global trade in the first eight months of this year, up from 2.6 percent in 2008.

Overseas sales of semiconductors, general machinery and petrochemical products

all reached record-highs this year, boosting overall growth for Asia's fourth-largest economy.

Exports to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations also expanded to their highest-ever level, led by booming manufacturing in the fast-rising economic bloc.

The government vowed to take proactive measures to enhance competitiveness of the local industry to maintain growth momentum next year, stressing the role of exporters amid lackluster domestic demand and the tight job market.

**S. KOREAN COSMETICS FIRM NATURE REPUBLIC MOVES INTO ITALY**

Nature Republic Co., a South Korean cosmetics firm, has opened four pop-up stores in Italy as it moves to its expanded presence in overseas markets.

Nature Republic said it has signed an agreement with local department chain operator Coin to operate the outlets in Rome, Milan, Torino and Bari.

The Italian cosmetics market reached

EUR 10 billion last year according to the company.

The company said it has been preparing to enter the Italian market for the past two years.

Nature Republic currently has stores in 19 overseas countries, including China and Vietnam.

## Government and Policy

**ICT MINISTRY TO SPEND KRW 14.85 TN IN 2019**

The Ministry of Science and ICT said it will spend KRW 14.85 trillion in 2019, with a focus on developing technology for data and artificial intelligence (AI).

Next year's budget, which was endorsed by the National Assembly, is set to gain 5.1 percent on-year from 2018, also slightly up from the KRW 14.83 trillion proposed by the government, officials said. Of the total, KRW 720 billion will be spent on research and development (R&D) for indigenous AI and data technologies, up 58.9 percent from a year earlier.

The ministry said such new technologies are forecast to generate business opportunities and profits worth KRW 560 trillion by 2030.

The government said it will allocate KRW 1.2 trillion, up 23.5 percent from a year earlier, to up-and-coming researchers who possess good potential to make breakthroughs. Another KRW 1.2 trillion, up 3 percent from a year earlier, will be allocated to securing core technologies, such as in bio and health-related know-how.

**S. KOREA BUILDS 'K-CITY' FOR AUTONOMOUS VEHICLE TESTING**

South Korea has completed work on a "K-City," an unpopulated city for autonomous vehicle testing based on next-generation 5G mobile networks.

The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport has invested KRW 12.5 billion to build the 320,000-square-meter mock urban area at the Korea Transportation Safety Authority in Hwaseong, southwest of Seoul, the ministry said in a statement.

The K-City has five major testing environments -- highway, downtown road, suburban street, parking lot and community facilities

-- for autonomous vehicles, the statement said. In particular, the 5G networks will allow companies, universities and research institutes to test a variety of connected car services in those different environments.

In March, 188 companies, including Hyundai Motor Group, Samsung Electronics Co. and SK Telecom Co., set up a consultation committee for the development of autonomous vehicles, and they are expected to test their vehicles, products and connected technologies.