

PRESS CUTTINGS

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Gold jewellery export value likely to stay flat at US\$6bil

Gold firms up
above US\$1,500

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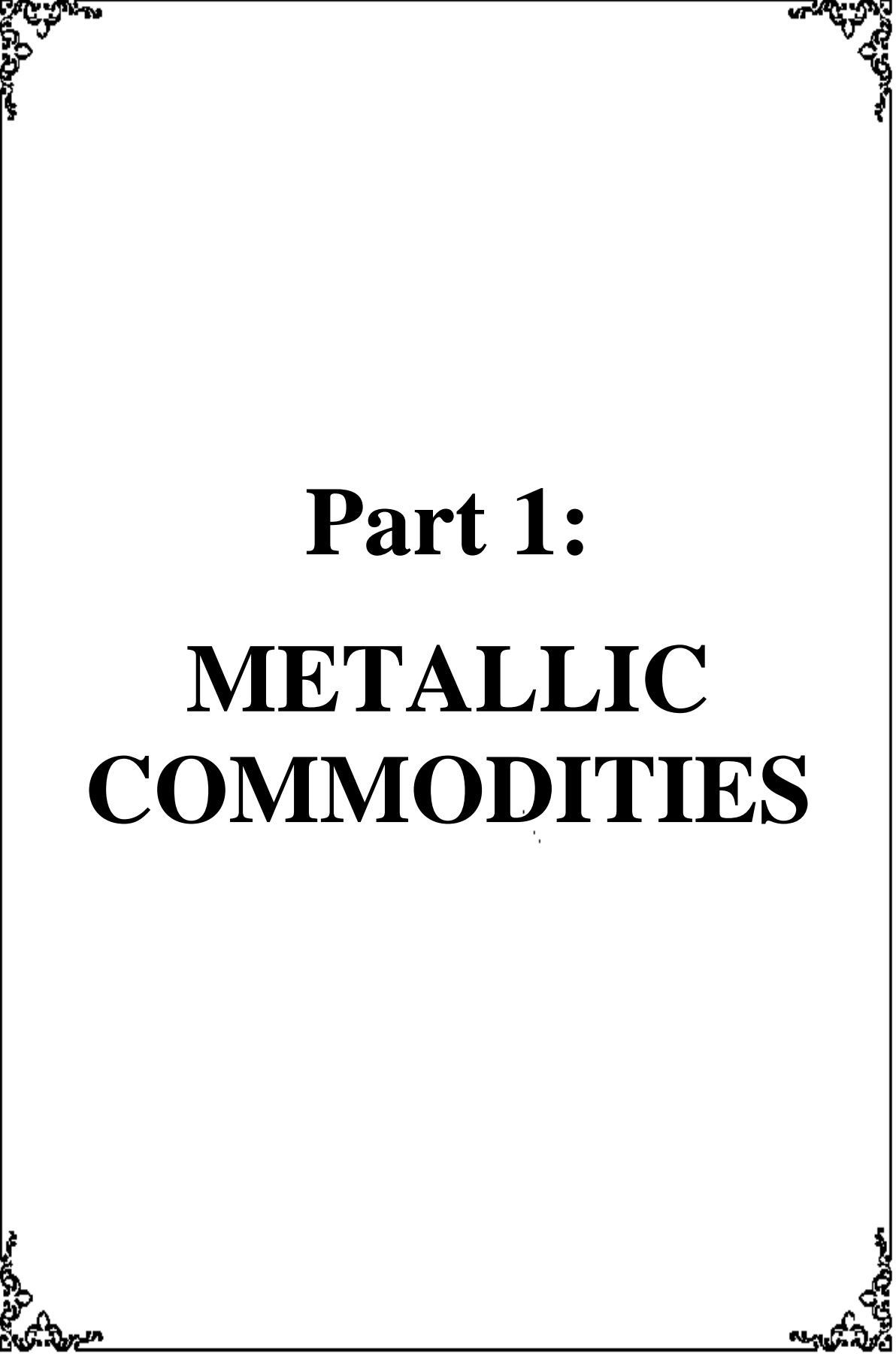
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Part 1:

**METALLIC
COMMODITIES**

Source : StarBiz
Date : 4 December 2019 (Wednesday)

Gold prices trade in narrow range despite Trump's tariffs

BENGALURU: Gold prices were trading in a narrow range on Tuesday as investors stayed on the sidelines, even as US President Donald Trump's move to slap tariffs on Brazil and Argentina stoked fresh global trade tensions.

Spot gold was unchanged at US\$1,462.58 per ounce by 0803 GMT. US gold futures fell 0.1% to US\$1,468.20. Trump on Monday announced tariffs on US steel and aluminium imports from Brazil and Argentina "effective immediately," opening new fronts in his trade war.

"Prices haven't risen because investment demand for gold is not there," said Jigar Trivedi, a commodities analyst at Mumbai-based Anand Rathi Shares & Stock Brokers.

"In SPDR gold exchange-traded funds (ETF), flows have reduced, investor demand has faltered and that's why prices have not reacted to the trade uncertainties." Holdings of the world's largest gold-backed ETF, SPDR Gold

Trust, fell 0.7% to 889.16 tonnes on Monday, their lowest since Sept. 19.

Speculators also cut their bullish positions in COMEX gold in the week to Nov 26, data showed on Monday.

"People are expecting the US-China trade war to de-escalate, plus the US Federal Reserve has signalled that there will be no further rate cuts unless there is a U-turn in the economy, so sentiment will be bearish (in gold)," Trivedi said.

The Fed has cut interest rates three times this year and is due to meet on Dec. 10-11 for its next policy meeting. Trump on Monday said US legislation backing protesters in Hong Kong did not make trade negotiations with China easier, but added he believes Beijing still wants a deal.

Gold has risen about 14% so far this year, mainly due to the 17-month-old trade dispute.

"After strong Chinese manufacturing data,

market is a bit down on gold, and slowly gold prices should move in a downward direction," said Vandana Bharti, assistant vice-president of commodity research at SMC Comtrade.

China's factory activity unexpectedly expanded at the quickest pace in almost three years in November, a private business survey showed on Monday.

On the technical front, "the metal continues to hold range bound heading into year-end, seemingly well supported around US\$1,450, however lacking any meaningful demand to break top-side resistance through US\$1,465 - US\$1,470 and US\$1,480 the key level above this," MKS PAMP said in a note. Elsewhere, palladium was flat at US\$1,852.21 per ounce, after scaling an all-time peak in the previous session at US\$1,861.71. Silver rose 0.1% to US\$16.92, while platinum was unchanged at US\$897.97. — Reuters.

Source : Starbiz
Date : 9 December 2019 (Monday)

Gold jewellery export value likely to stay flat at US\$6bil

By DAVID TAN
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GEORGE TOWN: Despite gold price dropping to US\$1,456 from US\$1,550 in August, the value of Malaysian gold jewellery export is likely to stay flat at US\$6bil this year.

Penang Goldsmith Association (PGA) adviser Joeson Khor said that since the price of gold had dropped drastically within a short period, most customers would adopt a "wait and see" attitude before buying.

"They are waiting to see whether gold prices would drop further. When gold prices shoot up too fast as in June, they hesitated to buy.

"For example, wholesalers in Dubai will have to pay more for gold bars to be used in exchange for Malaysian-made gold jewellery.

"Usually they would start buying again when the price of gold stabilises," Khor said.

According to Malaysia External Trade Development Corp statistics,



Price pressure: Customers are adopting a 'wait and see' attitude before buying gold, according to Khor.

from January to September, the value of Malaysian gold jewellery export hit RM4.69bil, up from RM4.44bil registered for the same period of 2018.

The top buyers of Malaysian gold jewellery are the United Arab

Emirates, Singapore, Hong Kong, Thailand, and Japan.

During the nine-month period, Malaysia imported RM1.82bil worth of gold jewellery compared with RM1.35bil in the same period of 2018, according to Malaysia

External Trade Development Corp statistics.

"The price of gold started to drop in early November because there were some positive signs indicating that the United States and China may close an interim trade deal.

"Another reason for the drop was because JP Morgan Securities and Citigroup Inc have eased their gold hedge positioning.

"Also, the US feds won't be cutting in bank rates in the near future, which would make the cost of holding gold in the long term expensive.

"When the price of gold hit US\$1,550 in late October, it hit the resistance level, which means that there is pressure on those who have been holding gold to sell and take the profit.

"And finally, we are also seeing a lot of money going back to equities," Khor added.

About 80% of Malaysian gold jewellery exports come from Penang-based manufacturers and exporters.

Khor said more than 60% of the 650 PGA members were small and medium-sized companies with an annual turnover of less than RM25mil.

According to a World Gold Council's recent report, the demand for gold jewelry dropped 16% year-on-year (y-o-y) in the third quarter to 460.9 tonnes.

"Consumers were deterred from making fresh purchases during the quarter as the price rally - which began in June - gathered momentum.

"The quarterly average gold price in Q3 was US\$1472.47 - 21% (or US\$259.3/oz) higher y-o-y.

"This price pressure was exacerbated by concerns over the health of the global economy, which encouraged many consumers to moderate buying plans.

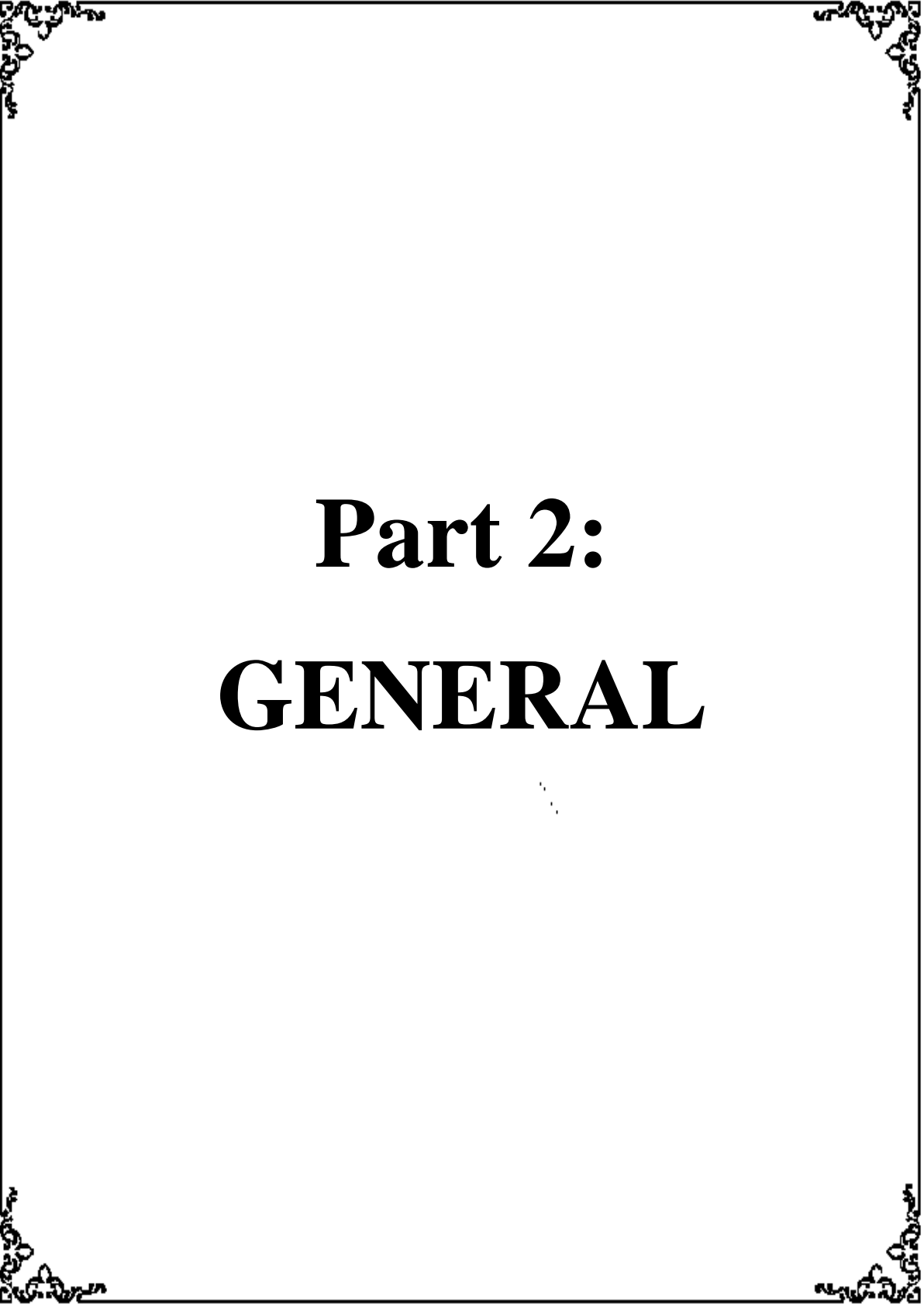
"Bright spots were few and far between, with most markets seeing significant year-on-year declines, particularly in Asia and the Middle East," the report added.

Source : StarBiz
Date : 27 December 2019 (Friday)

Gold firms up above US\$1,500

SINGAPORE: Gold firmed up a foothold above US\$1,500 an ounce as investors positioned for 2020, with post-Christmas gains coming even as equities inched higher and US-China trade concerns eased. Silver rose along with platinum and palladium in what's been a banner year for precious metals.

Bullion advanced for a fourth day, the best run since October, and headed for the highest close in more than seven weeks. The climb comes amid a focus on whether the Federal Reserve's rate-cutting pause will hold next year following three reductions in 2019. — Bloomberg



Part 2:

GENERAL

Lithium from e-waste can contaminate water supply

LITHIUM from batteries that power smartphones, tablets and electric cars may contaminate tap water, a Korean study suggests.

Drinking water can contain a little lithium because the mineral occurs naturally in the Earth's crust and in soil and bodies of water. But even with the rapid rise of consumer electronics powered by lithium batteries in recent years, research to date hasn't offered a clear picture of how much production and disposal of these products might increase lithium levels in drinking water, the study team notes in *Nature Communications*.

For the current study, researchers tested water from the Han river where it runs through Seoul as well as upstream, before it reaches the metropolitan area.

Upstream, lithium levels were low and similar to what's found naturally in many rivers, the study found. But where the Han river ran through Seoul, lithium levels in the water were up to six

times higher than upstream.

"This new study suggests that an increase of urbanisation and modernisation will result in an increase of the (lithium) levels in waters in the future," said senior study author Nathalie Vigier of the Sorbonne University in Paris.

"Quantifying precisely the exact contribution from high tech materials remains an open question, as well as predicting how this contribution will evolve in the next 20 years," Vigier said by email.

The results suggest that lithium levels in water may be associated with population density, and that waste-water treatment plants aren't currently effective at removing it from drinking water, the study team concludes.

Researchers also tested the water to determine the potential sources of lithium contamination.

They found that lithium entering the Han river appears to come from lithium-ion batteries that power gadgets like smartphones and tablets. Pharmaceutical waste



Lithium batteries can be recycled, but most are not. — Reuters

(lithium is prescribed for certain psychiatric disorders) and food waste (lithium enters certain produce from soil and water) also appeared to contribute to lithium levels in the Han river.

Contamination from lithium ion batteries might come from waste waters released at industrial sites,

incineration systems, illegal landfills or storage of old batteries, Vigier said.

The study wasn't designed to determine how lithium got in the water supply or to prove whether increasing lithium levels in drinking water has an impact on health.

"The study does not demonstrate

that lithium-batteries are the source of the lithium in the river water," said Brett Robinson, a professor of environmental chemistry at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand who wasn't involved in the study.

"In addition to batteries, lithium is used in greases, ceramics and mood-stabilising drugs," Robinson said by email. "Lithium from greases may enter river water through storm water and lithium from mood-stabilising drugs may enter through treated sewage (the treatment does not remove lithium)."

Lithium may also leach into the environment from electronic waste in landfills, Robinson said.

"In poor countries, where informal recycling of electronic waste occurs, it is likely that large amounts of (lithium) are entering the environment," Robinson said.

The batteries can be recycled, but most are not, he added. "As with other recycling issues, lithium battery recycling is a social and political challenge." — Reuters

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