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US Stocks Mixed as Inflation, Earnings Loom

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U.S. stock futures traded unevenly early Tuesday as investors weighed fresh inflation data and prepared for major corporate earnings that could set the tone for markets in the weeks ahead.

Futures tied to the Dow Jones Industrial Average slipped by 0.05%, reflecting cautious sentiment about whether consumer prices are accelerating due to trade policies enacted under President Donald Trump. Economists expect annual inflation to climb 2.7% for June, compared to May's 2.4%, while the so-called core rate, which excludes volatile food and

energy costs, is forecast to rise to 3%. These readings could stoke further concerns that tariffs imposed on imports will gradually filter through to households, challenging the Federal Reserve's ability to keep inflation under control without disrupting growth.

Seema Shah, chief global strategist at Principal Asset Management, noted that "inflation pressures have remained muted so far, but tariffs will eventually feed through, pushing prints higher and creating some discomfort for the Fed." The Federal Reserve is set to hold its next policy meeting at the end of the month, but few analysts expect any change to interest rates, given the central bank's preference for caution over hasty action.

Meanwhile, Standard & Poor's 500 futures added 0.37%, and futures tied to the tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite climbed 0.59%, as traders looked ahead to the start of earnings season. Major banks, including JPMorgan Chase, Citigroup, and Wells Fargo, will release quarterly results before the opening bell. Expectations for earnings have steadily declined since the administration's tariff plans began to weigh on business sentiment and forecasts, with analysts now predicting the weakest season for profits since mid-2023.

On the corporate front, The Trade Desk will officially join the Standard & Poor's 500 index on July 18, a move that reflects its rising influence in the advertising technology sector. In the semiconductor space, NVIDIA Corporation announced it plans to resume sales of its H20 Graphics Processing Unit after securing assurances from the United States government that export licenses will be approved.

Overall, investors remain on edge as they watch for signs that policy decisions out of Washington, D.C., may be adding to inflation and threatening to erode corporate profits that have underpinned market gains over the past year.