

# Iran, Iraq Emphasize Broadening Cooperation in ICT Field



Iranian Minister of Communications and Information Technology (ICT) Issa Zarepour, right, and Iraqi Minister of Communications Hiyam al-Yasiri.

TEHRAN – Iranian Minister of Technology (ICT) Issa Zarepour and Iraqi Minister of Communications Hi-

yam al-Yasiri have held talks on the sidelines of the first day of the ICT forum of members of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO).

The two sides discussed ways for the expansion of bilateral relations in the field of ICT.

During the meeting, the two sides weighed plans for the expansion of bilateral relations in the relevant field.

Facilitating the communications services of pilgrims and presenting high-quality services during the Arbaeen season were among the topics discussed between Iranian and Iraqi ICT ministers.

A number of active Iranian private companies working in the field of digital economy attended the forum and submitted a comprehensive report on their latest achievements and capabilities.

## Tehran to Host Biggest Glass Industry Event

TEHRAN – Director of the Iran Glass Association Hussein Zojaji has said that the Iranian capital of Tehran will host the Sixth International Exhibition of Glass, Machinery and Equipment on July 14-17.

According to Zojaji, the latest achievements of the glass industry including new devices, equipment, production lines, and ways of mining and processing raw materials are showcased in this exhibition along with a variety of glasses such as construction glass, facade glass, doors and windows, office glass, bent glass, automobile glass, and bulletproof glasses.

Hundreds of Iranian companies along with representatives from Italy, Germany, Turkey, and Chi-

na are going to participate in the four-day exhibition, Zojaji said.

The aim of this exhibition is to promote this industry and to prepare a roadmap for the development of the country's glass industry by examining the challenges and issues in this sector and by comparing Iran with leading countries in this field.

Acquaintance with the latest products and developments in the glass industry, exchange of information and technical knowledge among participants, acquainting visitors with the latest achievements offered in various sectors of the industry, creating direct communication between producers and consumers, creating investment opportunities, creating employment and

marketing opportunities and promoting exports are also among the most important goals of this exhibition.

Several domestic and foreign investment delegations are also scheduled to visit the exhibition to discuss future collaborations with the participating companies.

Iran produces more than 2.5 million tons of glass annually, of which 1.6 million tons are flat glass, 450,000 tons are bottles and the rest are crystals.

Currently, 450,000 square meters of construction glasses are produced daily in 10 large active glass factories in the country, of which about 40 percent is exported to the countries of the Persian Gulf, Central Asia, and even Europe.

## IRISL Expands Shipping Activity in North Africa

TEHRAN – Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) deputy for marketing Amir Bayat has said that a ship operated IRISL has docked and unloaded at a port in Libya amid Iran's efforts to increase its export activity in Africa.

Bayat said that the Iranian ship that left Libya earlier in the day was the second to dock in the North African country in less than two months.

Bayat said the IRISL currently sends container and dry bulk ships to ports in East Africa every two weeks, adding that Iranian ships also dock at North African ports at least once per month.

He said Iran's shipping activity in Libya is expected to increase with a return of calm to the North African country.

The official said the IRISL is seeking to launch a regional office in Africa amid a surge in exports from Iran to the region.

The announcement came as Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi was in Af-



rica on a three-day tour that took him to Kenya, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

The trip that ended late on Thursday has been viewed as a major step by Iran to boost its trade ties with African countries as Tehran seeks to capture a larger share of the export markets in the region.

Iran has increasingly relied on non-oil trade in recent years amid sanctions imposed by the United States which re-

strict its access to oil revenues.

IRISL's increased shipping activity in Africa comes as figures by the Iranian customs office show that trade with African countries more than doubled in the calendar year to March 20.

Iranian foreign ministry figures also show that Iran signed nearly 50 economic and trade cooperation agreements with African countries in the year to late March.

## Russia's Crude Price Exceeds G7 Price Cap



NEW YORK (CNBC) - Spot prices of Russia's crude oil this week surpassed the \$60-per-barrel threshold of the Group of Seven's oil price cap scheme, as Moscow and Riyadh tighten supplies.

The G7 introduced its oil price cap mechanism on December 5 to retain Russian flows in the market while also limiting revenue for the Kremlin's war coffers.

EU imports of Moscow's crude were banned that same month. Under the G7 scheme, Western shipping and insurance providers can offer services to non-G7 buyers of Russian crude if the crude oil is acquired at a price below \$60 per barrel.

Prices for Russia's main export crude — the heavy-sulfur, "sour" Urals that loads from the Primorsk, Ust-Luga and Novorossiysk ports — this week exceeded that threshold for the first time since the price cap mechanism

was implemented.

Spot assessments from commodities pricing agency Argus show that Urals prices on July 12 reached \$60.18 and \$60.78 per barrel for Primorsk and Novorossiysk-loaded cargoes, respectively. S&P Global Platts meanwhile valued Primorsk cargoes at \$60.32 per barrel on July 11 and Novorossiysk Urals crude at \$60.26 per barrel on July 12.

Several crude oil traders — who spoke to CNBC anonymously because of contractual restrictions — attributed the spot Urals price increase to underlying hikes in global oil prices, as Ice Brent futures with September expiry settled above \$80 per barrel on July 12. The latest Thursday disruptions in Libya have sustained this level.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and the International Energy Agency forecast surging demand in the second half of the year.

On supply, some members of the OPEC+ group — comprising OPEC and its allies — are implementing 1.66 million barrels per day of voluntary production cuts until the end of 2024. Crowning this, Saudi Arabia announced an extra unilateral decline of 1 million barrels per day in July and August, while Russia committed to cut exports by an additional 500,000 barrels per day next month.

"With less supply from OPEC+ during the demand-heavy summer months, we expect larger oil inventory declines to become visible and support oil prices," UBS Strategist Giovanni Staunovo said in a Thursday note.

Urals values also rose as "an ongoing impasse between Turkey and Iraq, blocking some 450,000 b/d of sour Kurdish crude flow via Ceyhan is supporting sour crude values," S&P Global Commodity Insights told CNBC by email.

Lower U.S. inflation has lightened some of the macroeconomic concerns that have been weighing on the crude complex over the year.

"The U.S. Fed may now be able to scale back its program of interest rate hikes, even if they're still likely to proceed with a hike in July. That has already begun to weigh on the U.S. dollar while at the same time allowing a rally in equities. Finally, we had some pretty chunky Chinese commodity import data today for June, not least strong crude imports," Argus Chief Economist David Fyfe said by email.

## Stagnant UK Economy Lagging Behind EU, New Figures Show

BRUSSELS (Euronews) - Britain has seen no economic growth in three months, the country's statistic agency said on Thursday. Other European states are faring better, meanwhile.

Britain's economy has flatlined, as post-Brexit trade and vital sectors continue to perform poorly, new figures reveal.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) said on Thursday the economy has "shown no growth" in three months, with production shrinking the most.

Monthly GDP growth - measuring the total value of goods and services produced in a country - fell by 0.1% in May after a brief rise of 0.2% in April.

Britain's economic recovery since the COVID pandemic has lagged behind most other advanced economies, with only recession-hit Germany faring as badly this year.

In comparison, the EU's economy is expected to grow faster than previously thought this year and next, with member states growing an average of 1.0% in 2023, according to the European Commission.

Britain's figures were better than those expected by economists. But they will likely add pressure to Rishi Sunak's Conservative government, with the Prime Minister including "growing the economy" as one of his five core pledges at the start of the year.

All sectors of the UK economy contracted in May - bar services which showed no growth.

Factory output fell the largest by



0.6%, construction declined by 0.2% and the services sector remained stagnant, with no change on the previous month, according to the ONS.

Inflation has remained stubbornly high, battering British households and some businesses. It stayed at 8.7% in May, despite predictions it would fall.

In a statement sent to Euronews, the Scottish National Party pointed the finger at Britain's exit from the EU.

"The UK's stagnating economy has continued to slip further and further behind that of the EU's, as a direct result of the damaging Brexit," said SNP's Economy spokesperson, Stewart Hosie MP.

"While EU nations have enjoyed a steady bounce-back from the pandemic, the UK's economy has barely moved in four years, with the consequences being passed on to ordinary people."

Brexit's role in the economic fortunes of Britain is disputed, with

some economists emphasizing the role of COVID and the Ukraine war.

A public holiday for the King's coronation contributed to decreased manufacturing and construction output, the Office for National Statistics said.

"GDP fell slightly as manufacturing, energy generation and construction all fell back, with some industries impacted by one fewer working day than normal," ONS Director of Economic Statistics, Darren Morgan, said.

Writing on Twitter, Resolution Foundation economist said the ONS data showed the UK was suffering "weak export performance in key manufacturing sectors".

Exports to the EU fell by 6.8%, compared to a 2.1% drop with the rest of the world, she pointed out.

Strikes in the public sector and industries also hit the economy, according to the ONS report, with "industrial action" on the railways having an adverse effect.

## China Exports Tumble as Global Economy Wobbles

LONDON (Reuters) - China's exports decreased at a faster pace year-on-year in June than in May as Western demand was hit by high inflation and interest rate hikes.

The country's exports to the United States fell by 23.7% to \$42.7 billion in June from a year ago while exports to the European Union dropped 12.9% to \$44 billion, according to the General Administration of Customs. In May, the figures were only down by 18.2% and 7% to the U.S. and EU, respectively, from a year earlier.

Chinese officials blamed the weakening global demand, protectionism and geopolitical risks for the exports slump. But they said they are confident that China's external trade will remain stable in the rest of this year due to the country's efforts to explore emerging markets.

Chinese exporters have felt the

negative impact of the weakening demand from the West on their orders since late 2022. Although China ended all its COVID rules in January this year, many manufacturers started downsizing or closing their businesses from March.

Media reports said several plastic and electronic parts suppliers, based in Dongguan and Shenzhen in Guangdong province, told their staff in March that they faced huge operational difficulties due to insufficient orders, serious losses and customers' arrears. But this is only a tip of the iceberg.

In mid-April, Chinese manufacturers were disappointed to see a decline in the number of buyers from Europe and the U.S. in the Canton Fair, the largest trade show in China. Some exporters said they saw more buyers from Latin America, Africa, Southeast Asia and Russia but these customers may

provide lower margins.

More manufacturers in Dongguan, including a major paper box maker and a 30-year-old textile firm, closed their businesses last month, according to media reports.

A man surnamed Zhu says in a video posted on June 25 that he's been trying to find a factory job in Dongguan but has seen only notices that factory owners seek to rent out their properties. He says he knows that some factories are offering workers only 12-13 yuan (\$1.68-1.82) per hour, which he calls too low for anyone to live on.

Some economists said the West's call to diversify supply chains from China to Southeast Asia only has a small impact on China's overall exports. They said China can ship its raw materials and unfinished products to Southeast Asian countries for processing and then send them to western markets.