

NEWS IN BRIEF

Meta fined
record \$1.3b

● GETTY IMAGES

CNBC – Meta has been fined a record 1.2 billion euros (\$1.3 billion) by European privacy regulators over the transfer of EU user data to the U.S. The decision links back to a case brought by Austrian privacy campaigner Max Schrems who argued that the framework for transferring EU citizen data to America did not protect Europeans from U.S. surveillance.

German
energy
regulator to
study power
grid returns

REUTERS – Germany's federal network regulator plans to study the permitted returns on infrastructure for power networks through to 2029 to take account of inflation and expansion plans by grid operators to accommodate renewable energies. Klaus Mueller, president of the regulatory agency, the Bundesnetzagentur, said at a conference in Essen on Monday that the study would consider inflation and interest rates and be carried out in consultation with operators.

Asia markets
mostly rise

● BLOOMBERG

AFP – Asia-Pacific markets mostly rose on Monday as stocks in Tokyo extended its rally. Hong Kong's Hang Seng index rose 1.23%, leading gains in the region as the Hang Seng Tech index jumped 2.17%.

In mainland China, the Shanghai Composite closed 0.39% up at 3,296.47 and the Shenzhen Component was 0.32% higher and ended at 11,127.04 as the People's Bank of China left its 1-year and 5-year loan prime rates unchanged. South Korea's Kospi rose 0.76% to end the day at 2,557.08 as chip stocks such as SK Hynix and Samsung Electronics saw gains.

Raeisi promulgates
Iran-EAEU free trade zone pact

● IRNA

Economy Desk

Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi promulgated the document for extension of the interim agreement on the establishment of a free trade zone between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). In his executive order to the Ministry of Industry, Mines and Trade, Raeisi promulgated the "Additional document (protocol) on the extension of the interim agreement on the establishment of a free trade zone between Iran and the EAEU and the member states," which was ratified by Parliament on May 2, and approved by the Guardian Council on May 10, according to IRNA. Iran and the EAEU reached

an interim Free Trade Agreement back in 2018, based on which more than 860 agricultural commodities were subject to preferential tariffs.

The agreement doubled Iran's exports to the EAEU, from roughly \$2.5 billion in 2015, to \$5 billion in 2021, giving the country's non-oil exports a boost amid U.S. sanctions.

Formed in 2015, the EAEU tries to facilitate exports within its member states as well as other countries. Tehran views Eurasia as a gateway to global trade and a chance to counteract U.S. sanctions, which try to cut it off from world markets.

Iran now envisages a whopping \$15 billion annual trade with the bloc in five years.

De-dollarization main focus of upcoming ACU meeting: *CBI* governor

De-dollarization will be the main focus of the upcoming Asian Clearing Union (ACU) meeting, according to the governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI). "The main topics of the meeting are the strengthening of barter, and bilateral and multilateral monetary agreements," Mohammadreza Farzin said, according to IRNA.

He explained that the 51st meeting of the ACU will be held in Tehran on May 23-25.

"The governors of the central banks of nine member states of this union have been invited. Of course, we have also invited some observer members," he added.

Farzin reiterated that the main goal of the meeting is to

strengthen barter transactions among member states, enable them to trade using their national and local currencies, and to follow up on bilateral and multilateral monetary agreements. Iran has announced its decision to move away from the U.S. dollar and has acted on the decision in cooperation with other independent countries.

Earlier this month, Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi ordered the CBI to pave the ground for conducting foreign trade transactions using Iran's national currency, the rial.

Addressing an open session of Parliament on May 9, Farzin asserted that the forthcoming ACU meeting will accelerate the global trend of de-dollarization.

China-Iran trade
tops \$5b in
January-April period

● IRNA

The Chinese customs office announced that trade between China and Iran exceeded \$5 billion in January-April. The latest statistics published by the Chinese customs office show that trade with Iran underwent a 4% increase in the first four months of the current year compared with the same period last year, to reach \$5.23 billion, IRNA reported. The figures showed that China's imports from Iran in January-April decreased by 39% in comparison with the same period last year, reaching \$1.52 billion. However, China's exports to Iran increased by 46% in the first four months of 2023, reaching \$3.71 billion, according to the data. According to statistics, China imported \$386 million worth of goods from Iran in April, down 30% from last year, while exports rose by 30%, to \$797 million over the same period.

Steam unit of Iran's
combined cycle power
plant opened

The steam unit of Khorramabad Combined Cycle Power Plant in western Iran came into operation. The power plant enjoys the capacity of producing 160 MW of electricity, according to IRNA.

The steam unit provides job opportunities for 525 people, directly and indirectly.

Iran's Energy Ministry has announced that the power generation capacity in the country has risen by seven gigawatts (GW) since August 2021, when Iran's current administrative government took office.

In a statement, the ministry said that, since August 2021, Iran had launched nearly 5.2 GW of new thermal power plants, including combined cycle systems, which are more efficient than the normal gas-fired power plants.

It added that power generation at existing power plants, including thermal and renewables, had increased by 1.4 GW over the same period through a series of efficiency projects carried out by domestic firms.

The statement said small electricity stations launched in various areas across Iran since August 2021 had added another 0.268 GW to the country's power production capacity.

One GW of electricity is enough to respond to power demand in a city of over a million people.

Latest government estimates show Iran's total power generation capacity has exceeded 90 GW, of which more than 60 GW is fully operational.

The state-run Tavanir Electricity Company said earlier this week that it expects demand for electricity to reach as much as 73 GW in peak consumption hours this summer, up more than 10% compared to figures reported last year.

Central Bank of Russia
governor due in Iran
for bilateral talks

● IRNA

The governor of the Central Bank of Russia will arrive in Iran today to hold meetings with officials of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) to follow up on the agreements inked between the two countries.

Elvira Nabiullina will also take part in the Asian Clearing Union (ACU) meeting in Tehran, IRNA reported.

The governor of the Central Bank of Russia will negotiate with Iranian banking officials on monetary and banking agreements and also issues of mutual interests.

The Russian Federation will participate in the summit as an observer member.

ACU is a payment arrangement whereby the participants settle payments for intra-regional transactions among the participating central banks on a net multilateral basis.