

NEWS IN BRIEF

IEA: Global oil demand to hit record high

OIL PRICE – Global oil demand will hit new highs and is expected to average 102.2 million barrels per day (bpd) this year, driven by summer air travel, strong Chinese petrochemical activity, and higher oil use in power generation, the International Energy Agency (IEA) said on Friday.

World oil demand is set to grow by 2.2 million bpd this year, with China accounting for more than 70% of growth, the agency said in its closely-watched Oil Market Report (OMR) for August.

US CPI rises 3.2% in July

BLOOMBERG – Consumer prices in the United States showed a faster year-over-year increase in July compared to the previous month's annual gain, according to the latest data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose 3.2% in July over the prior year, a slight acceleration from June's 3% annual increase.

Turkey's inflation will fall permanently: Minister

REUTERS – Turkey aims to lower soaring inflation permanently after a transitional period where prices remain high, Finance Minister Mehmet Simsek said in an interview with the Yeni Safak newspaper.

"Our goal is to bring down inflation permanently after a transitional period," Simsek said. The sustained price pressure, driven by a drop in the lira currency and tax hikes, comes as President Tayyip Erdogan's new Finance Minister Simsek and central bank chief orchestrate a policy U-turn, including interest rate hikes, that are expected to slow domestic demand.

**Iran begins construction of uranium complex in northwest**

Iran began constructing a mining complex in the northwestern region of the country, which the Iranian nuclear chief has touted as a "hub" for producing raw materials needed for nuclear power production. The project was launched in the Jang-e Sar region in Khoy, in the northwestern province of West Azarbaijan on Thursday, following the discovery of radioactive materials and rare-earth elements there, according to IRNA.

Mohammad Eslami, head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), said at the launch ceremony that the

complex can play a "significant role" in accelerating the country's plan for nuclear electricity generation.

"The capacity of this mining complex is so great that undoubtedly it will be a hub for supplying raw materials for nuclear fuel production, and it will play a significant role in supporting the plan to produce 20,000 megawatts of nuclear electricity," he said.

According to reports, uranium, molybdenum, and a number of other rare-earth elements have been discovered in the area. Eslami said the region can also be a huge source of ra-

re-earth elements, which have various industrial applications. Pointing to the use of airborne geophysical surveys in discovering the potential mines, the official said the discovery operations in the region began last year.

The official said the project would be completed within two and a half years, and that the first phase of the project needs around 10 trillion rials (roughly \$20 million) to be completed.

Iran now runs a nuclear power plant in the southern province of Bushehr, which produces 1,000 megawatts per year.

It plans to build more nuclear power plants to boost its nuclear electricity production capacity to 20,000 megawatts, as part of efforts to meet growing electricity demand.

The plan allows the country to free more of its oil and gas resources for export and ease environmental concerns over its massive fossil fuel power plant network.

Meanwhile, legislation adopted by the Iranian Parliament requires the AEOI to increase Iran's nuclear electricity generation capacity to respond to growing demand in the country that has already passed

peaks of 73 GW this summer. In recent years, Iran has made significant strides in its pursuit of a peaceful nuclear energy program, despite facing challenges posed by US sanctions and Western-imposed obstacles.

Iran has maintained a close and cooperative relationship with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). This collaboration underscores Iran's commitment to adhering to international regulations and guidelines governing nuclear activities.

IRNA

Iran expects Pakistan to complete gas pipeline

By Reza
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OPINION

The gas pipeline project for the transfer of Iranian gas to Pakistan could be considered one of the important issues of cooperation between the two countries, which serve the national interests of both sides.

Iran has already invested \$2 billion in the pipeline on its side of the border. The project, launched in 2013, required Pakistan to finish the construction of the pipeline on its territory by the end of 2014, but it has been on hold without explanation.

Sanctions and pressures from the US and other

countries are seen at the bottom of the standstill. Observers believe Pakistan is set to come under further pressure if more meaningful trade ties are forged between Tehran and Islamabad.

However, the changing dynamics in geopolitical relations of the region, where US clout is receding fast and the expanding field for commercial and economic cooperation hold the trump card, raising hopes that the emerging partnership will stand the test of time.

A Pakistani English-language newspaper has called upon the Islamabad government to employ all legal and diplomatic tools in order to complete the multi-billion-dollar gas pipeline.

According to the Kara-

chi-based Dawn newspaper, the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline is important for Pakistan's energy security, stressing that Pakistani authorities should convince Washington of the urgent need to implement the project.

"The lack of a coherent official narrative on the status of the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline has caused some embarrassment for the outgoing administration, while adding to the risks of a diplomatic misunderstanding with our western neighbor," Dawn wrote in its editorial on Friday.

The newspaper went on to point to a statement attributed to Pakistan's Minister of State for Petroleum Musadik Malik placed before the National Assembly, where it was asserted that Pakistan had invoked

the 'force majeure and excusing event' clause in the agreement, effectively meaning that the project had been shelved for fear of attracting American sanctions.

It criticized Malik for acknowledging on Wednesday that the statement was the result of a bureaucratic faux pas within his ministry, and that he had not seen the policy statement submitted to the house on his behalf, while dubbing it "complete disinformation" as the force majeure notice had been given about a decade ago.

The daily underscored the need for an internal probe to determine how such outdated and incorrect information was submitted to parliament on behalf of a minister, emphasizing that information on such



SHANA

sensitive matters needs to be thoroughly vetted before it is put in the public domain.

"It is welcome that the state is still interested in the project, and is trying to convince the US to grant it a waiver in order to complete the scheme.

"If the state plays its cards right, achieving this goal is entirely possible. After all, Turkey and Iraq continue to buy Iranian gas, while China and India also lift massive amounts of Russian crude despite Ameri-

can displeasure," it pointed out.

It emphasized that Pakistani state officials "should employ all legal and diplomatic tools" to ensure the completion of the gas pipeline if they feel the project is "in the national interest". Pakistan will likely face an 18-billion-dollar fine if it terminates the gas pipeline agreement.

For elimination of barriers to develop all-out relations, Islamabad is expected to complete the gas pipeline project.

Why South Africa and Iran need each other

Iran's expansion of relations with South Africa, an emerging power, besides strengthening South-South cooperation, can help reduce Western pressures.

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian is fresh from a visit to Pretoria, where he said, "Great steps have been taken to consolidate relations in various areas" since the establishment of new diplomatic relations between Iran and South

Africa. His visit aimed to pave the way for the official trip of Iran's President Ebrahim Raeisi to Johannesburg on August 24 to attend a summit of the BRICS group of major emerging economies - Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

After the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Iran embarked on renewing relations with the African people based on Islam's prohibition of racism.

The world today is witnessing the creation of a bloc of countries that have experienced high economic growth and turned to new economic powerhouses.

China in Southeast Asia, India in South Asia, Russia in Eastern Europe, Brazil in Latin America and South Africa in the African Continent initially began to play a role in their peripheral regions, but they have gradually sought to engage in ex-

tra-regional collaborations.

They have formed new alliances such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, IBSA Group of India, Brazil and South Africa, and BRICS in order to make their mark in the world order and offer an alternative force to reckon with.

In 2001, Goldman Sachs identified Brazil, Russia, India and China as four emerging markets, with South Africa entering this

league in 2010.

The BRICS economies have been identified as the fastest growing economies of the world and the engines of the global recovery process after the US subprime mortgage crisis.

The alliance is rooted in two main phenomena, the first being the economic growth of these countries, which has allowed them to act in international financial and monetary relations.

The second phenomenon relates to transformation and change in the nature of international politics, where US power is waning and the country is losing its clout.

Since the most important needs of the emerging powers are the supply of raw materials, energy and foreign markets, the regions with the most resources and the largest commercial markets are about to be the scene of new competition.