Opec watching Iran, Russia, unlikely to cut output in June



Pump jacks and wells are seen in an oil field.

REUTERS, Dubai/London

Opec is very unlikely to cut output at its next meeting in June, even if prices remain extremely low, according to Opec sources and delegates, as it will be too early to say how fast Iranian output is rising.

The sources, which include officials from the Middle East, say Opec countries such as Saudi Arabia also want to test Russia's commitment to freezing output before taking any further steps to stablise prices.

More than 18 months after oil prices began a steep slide due to excess supply, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Venezuela and non-Opec Russia agreed last month to freeze output at January levels in the first global oil pact in 15 years.

Saudi Arabian Oil Minister Ali al-Naimi said last week a supply cut was not on the cards although adding that the production freeze was only the first step to balance the market after prices fell to their lowest since 2003.

"Maybe by the end of the year (a cut could be possible) when it is really clear that Iran is actually producing the volumes they are talking about. But not in June," a source from one of Opec's Middle Eastern producers said.

January was peak or near-peak production for Russia and Saudi Arabia, the world's two top oil exporters, but Iran - Opec's No.3 producer - is the key supply uncertainty for 2016 as it is raising output after the lifting of Western sanctions in January, adding barrels to the already saturated market.

Over the past month, Iran has issued conflicting statements saying it could add up to 1.5 million barrels per day over the next year which would confound market skepticism that its fields were damaged by years of sanctions.

Meanwhile, its February exports have disappointed as European buyers were cautious to immediately boost trade amid remaining dollar clearance and ship insurance problems.

"No-one at Opec knows what's going on with Iranian might need a push.

fields. So the Saudis want to see what happens in reality," a source in one of the Opec delegations who is familiar with production freeze negotiations, said.

Non-Opec Oman and some Opec sources have floated an idea of Iran being exempt from output freezes - as was Iraq in the past when the country was subject of international sanctions - but so far Tehran has not been offered any special terms, according to Opec sources.

Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Zanganeh said last week the production freeze was "laughable" while Iranian sources say

the country would be prepared to discuss a production pact once its output reached the pre-sanctions level.

Analysts believe output and exports could rise by a maximum of 0.7 million bpd to around 3.5 million bpd in the next months but it will take time to understand where real figures stand.

Iran, for instance, has already told Opec it was pumping as much as 3.4 million bpd in January - a much higher number than estimated by Opec watchers.

By June, when Opec holds it next meeting, the picture of Iranian exports will still not be clear, several Opec sources said, adding that they might only have reliable numbers for April. The sources also said it will be too early to say in June if the world's record oil stocks have finally become to

Saudi Arabia and Russia have not said the output freeze would be void if Iran refuses to join in, leaving room for a potential compromise.

Russia's Energy Minister Alexander Novak plans to travel to Iran, Moscow's close ally, in March for more talks on the production freeze, which he said could last for as long as a year.

If Russia respects the output freeze, it would be a major departure from its former policies. The only time Russia agreed to cooperate with Opec was in 2001 but it never delivered on its pledge and raised exports instead.

That was a big disappointment for Naimi, who orchestrated the 2001 deal, and is still wary of agreeing anything at risk of being cheated by Russia or fellow Opec members.

"Even if they say that they will cut production they will not do it. There is no sense in wasting our time seeking production cuts," he said last week.

But in the opinion of Opec watchers the output freeze deal signals a change of tone for Saudi Arabia, from a view that the market would rebalance itself to one where it

Citigroup sells China Guangfa stake for \$3b

AFP, New York

US bank Citigroup announced Monday it would sell its 20 percent stake in China Guangfa Bank to China Life Insurance Company as it focuses on its own franchise in China.

Citigroup sold the stake to China Life for \$3 billion, said a person close to the matter, confirming a figure in The Wall Street Journal. A Citigroup statement did not disclose the terms of the transaction.

The move marks a shift from Citigroup's strategy in 2006, when it successfully fended off a rival bid from France's Societe Generale and bought the China Guangfa stake for \$620 million.

Citigroup continues to view China as "one of our highest priority markets around the world," said Francisco Aristeguieta, chief executive of Citi Asia Pacific, in the statement.

Citigroup locally incorporated in China in 2007 and now operates in 13 cities in the country.

"This transaction is consistent with the simplification of Citi and allows us to focus our resources in China on growing our core franchise further," Aristeguieta said.



Nazeem A Choudhury, head of consumer banking at Eastern Bank, and Saidul Amin, director of AFC Health, exchange documents of a corporate healthcare agreement in Dhaka. EBL customers will get premium services and consultancies from AFC Health as well as discounts on various medical services.

Cyprus tourism records best year since 2001 December at an average 136.74 euros a

Bailed-out Cyprus recorded a 4.4 percent hike in key tourism revenue in 2015, the sector's best earnings since 2001, official data showed Monday.

Total tourism income on the Mediterranean holiday island reached 2.11 billion euros (\$2.29 billion) last year from 2.02 billion euros in 2014.

Cyprus saw a decade-high surge of 2.65 million tourist arrivals in 2015 -- a jump of 8.9 percent on the previous year.

On the back of a cheaper euro, visitors from Britain -- the island's biggest market -- spiked more than 19 percent.

alone increased 20 percent from 43.7 million euros in 2014 to 52.6 million.

at 31.14 euros. In 2014, Cyprus tourism generated 2.02 billion euros, a 2.8-percent drop from 2013's 2.08 billion euros. It was the first

day, while the Swedes were the most frugal

dip in receipts since 2009. Following a 10-billion-euro international rescue package to save a crumbling economy and insolvent banks in March 2013, Cyprus returned to growth in 2015 after nearly four years of harsh recession.

The number of holidaymakers to Cyprus hit a record high of 2.69 million in 2001, spending a record 2.17 billion euros.

Income from tourism accounts for Revenues for the month of December around 12 percent of the EU state's GDP and is credited for ensuring that Nicosia did not suffer a double-digit recession Lebanese were the biggest spenders in post-bailout as initially feared.

SM Abu Mohsin, chairman of NCC Bank, hands over a cheque for Tk 15 lakh to Annisul Huq, mayor of Dhaka North City Corporation, at a programme in the capital on Sunday. The fund will support the city corporation's initiative to install surveillance cameras in Gulshan, Banani, Niketan and Baridhara.

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AM Nurul Islam, vice chairman of Bank Asia, opens the bank's 105th branch in Kazipara of Mirpur in Dhaka. Rumee A Hossain, chairman of executive committee; Mohammed Lakiotullah, chairman of audit committee; M Irfan Syed, a director, and Md Mehmood Husain, managing director, were also present.

German unemployment at record low

AFP, Frankfurt

German unemployment remained at current historic lows in February despite a massive influx of refugees, as the recovery in Europe's biggest economy remains on track, data showed on Tuesday.

measures the jobless total against the working population as a whole -stood at 6.2 percent in February, to develop positively."

unchanged from January. In numerical terms, the number of people registered as unemployed in Germany declined by a seasonallyadjusted 10,000 to 2.723 million, the Federal Labour Office said in a statement. That was in line with analysts'

expectations. now stands at the lowest level since West and East Germany reunited in 1990 after the fall of the Berlin Wall

the previous year. In raw, or unadjusted, terms, the jobless total also decreased, falling by 9,250 to 2.91 million. The unemploy-

ment rate eased fractionally to 6.6 percent in February from 6.7 percent in January, the office said. "The German economy was char-

2015," the office said. While the most recent economic analyst Timo Klein. indicators suggested that outlook is

acterised by a moderate uptrend in

The unemployment rate -- which starting to cloud over, "this is not a sign of a serious downturn," it continued. "The labour market is continuing

> welcomed the data, which she said "provided a good basis for meeting the challenges ahead."

Analysts were also cheered by the renewed drop in the jobless total.

"It seems that the relatively mild said. winter weather has supported the At current levels, unemployment labour market," said ING DiBa economist Carsten Brzeski.

> "Interestingly, there does not seem to any noticeable impact from the refugee crisis on the labour market, yet."

"All in all, the German labour market will remain an important growth driver this year and beyond,"

Brzeski said, but warned of big challenges ahead.

"Overall, labour market conditions remain healthier in Germany than in most other countries in Europe," said IHS Global Insight

He said that the massive increase in the refugee influx in recent months could push up the jobless numbers in the months to come "due to a combination of the sheer numbers of refu-Labour Minister Andrea Nahles gees and the need to raise their qualification levels first."

> But given the administrative lags involved, the data "will only reflect this factor in a significant manner from roughly mid-2016 onwards," he

"Overall, underlying German economic growth will remain robust during 2016 despite lingering eurozone stability concerns, various geopolitical crises with associated risks of enhanced terrorist activity, and economic problems in many emerging market countries," Klein predicted.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার সড়ক পরিবহন ও সেতু মন্ত্রণালয় সড়ক পরিবহন ও মহাসড়ক বিভাগ প্রশাসন শাখা www.rthd.gov.bd

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মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ

সংগ্রহকারী সন্তার নাম

সংগ্রহকারী সন্তার কোড

উনাুক্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

🎖 সড়ক পরিবহন ও মহাসড়ক বিভাগ, সড়ক পরিবহন ও সেতু মন্ত্রণালয়।

ঃ সড়ক পরিবহন ও মহাসড়ক বিভাগ, সড়ক পরিবহন ও সেতু মন্ত্রণালয়।

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	ক) দরপত্র বিক্রয় ও গ্রহণের স্থান		8	কক্ষ নং-৮০৯ (৯ম তলা), ভবন নং-৭, সড়ক পরিবহন ও মহাসড়ক বিভাগ, সড়ক পরিবহন ও সেতু মন্ত্রণালয় বাংলাদেশ সচিবালয়, ঢাকা।			
	খ) দরপত্র খোলার স্থান		8	কক্ষ নং-৮২২ (৯ম তলা), ভবন নং-৭, সড়ক পরিবহন ও মহাসড়ক বিভাগ, সড়ক পরিবহন ও সেতু মন্ত্রণালয় বাংলাদেশ সচিবালয়, ঢাকা।			
۵۵.	দরদাতার যোগ্যতা		8	গংশ্লিষ্ট কাজে অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পন্ন প্রকৃত ব্যবসায়ী, সরবরাহকারী এবং আগ্রহী দরদাতাদের যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক প্রদর্থ হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেল, টিআইএন সহ হালনাগাদ আয়কর পরিশোধ সনদ, ভ্যাট নিবন্ধন সনদ, হালনাগাদ ব্যাংক সলভেলী সনদ, অভিজ্ঞতা সনদ ইত্যাদি থাকতে হবে।			
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২০.	ওয়েব সাইট । দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি বহুল প্রচারের জন্য সড়ক পরিবহন ও মহাসড়ক বিভাগের ওয়েবসাইটে (www.rtho				টে (www.rthd.gov.bo		
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দরপত্র সিডিউল ক্রয়ের সময় সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রতিষ্ঠানের সকল কাগজপত্রের মূল কপি প্রদর্শন করতে হবে। দরপত্র খোলার নির্দিষ্ট তারিখে কোন কারণে দরপত্র খোলা সম্ভব না হলে তা পরবর্তী কার্যদিবসে নির্ধারিত সময়ে খোলা হবে।

দরপত্র সিডিউল ও দরপত্র জামানতের মূল্য যে কোন তফসীল ব্যাংকে ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার আকারে যুগাসচিব (প্রশাসন), সড়ক পরিবহন ও মহাসড়ক বিভাগ,

সড়ক পরিবহন ও সেতু মন্ত্রণালয়, ঢাকার অনুকুলে প্রদান করতে হবে। কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে মালামালের পরিমান কম/বেশী করা, যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

> (মোহাঃ লিয়াকঠ অলী খান) সহকারী সচিব ফোনঃ ৯৫৮৪১২৮

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