

Iran-Russia payment clearing mechanism starts work

Chairman of Russian-Iranian Business Council Vladimir Obydenov announced on Saturday that a payment clearing mechanism between his country and Iran has been launched.

The clearing mechanism with national currencies are used by the two countries' employers, Obydenov told IRNA.

Elaborating on the work of the mechanism, the official said that an Iranian buyer purchases Russian products via the rial and a Russian buyer purchases Iranian products through the ruble.

Until now, the two sides have exchanged \$10 million by using this mechanism, Obydenov added.



IRNA

The Russian official described such a mechanism as very important during the time of sanctions imposed by the United States.

Furthermore, he said Iranian businesspersons' unawareness of the existence of the mechanism is the main obstacle to its development.

Obydenov announced that despite the problems, Moscow-Tehran trade has increased significantly as Iran's exports to Russia have surpassed \$1 billion this Iranian year for the first time.

Although the current level of Russia-Iran economic exchanges are not equal to the level of their political relations, the two countries' ties are continuous and stable, he added.

Bitcoin falls by a fifth, cryptos see \$1b worth liquidated

Bitcoin shed a fifth of its value on Saturday as a combination of profit-taking and macro-economic concerns triggered nearly a billion dollars worth of selling across cryptocurrencies.

Bitcoin was 12% down at 0920 GMT at \$47,495. It fell as low as \$41,967.5 during the session, taking total losses for the day to 22%, Reuters reported.

The broad selloff in cryptocurrencies also saw ether, the coin linked to the ethereum blockchain network, plunge more than 10%.



REUTERS

Based on cryptocurrency data platform Coingecko, the market capitalisation of the 11,392 coins it tracks dropped nearly 15% to \$2.34 trillion. That value had briefly crossed \$3 trillion last month, when bitcoin hit a record \$69,000.

The plunge follows a volatile week for financial markets. Global equities and benchmark U.S. bond yields tumbled on Friday after data showed U.S. job growth slowed in November and the Omicron variant of the coronavirus kept investors on edge.

Justin d'Anethan, Hong Kong-based head of exchange sales at cryptocurrency exchange EQONEX, said he had been watching the increase in leverage ratios across the cryptocurrency markets as well how large holders had been moving their coins from wallets to exchanges. The latter is usually a sign of intent to sell.

"Whales in the crypto space seem to have transferred coins to trading venue, taken advantage of a bullish bias and leverage from retail traders, to then push prices down," he said.

The selloff also comes ahead of testimony by executives from eight major cryptocurrency firms, including Coinbase Global CFO Alesia Haas and FTX Trading CEO Sam Bankman-Fried, before the U.S. House Financial Services Committee on Dec. 8.

The hearing marks the first time major players in the crypto markets will testify before U.S. lawmakers, as policymakers grapple with the implications of cryptocurrencies and how to best regulate them.

Last week, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) rejected a second spot-bitcoin exchange-traded fund proposal from WisdomTree.

Data from another platform Coinglass showed nearly \$1 billion worth of cryptocurrencies had been liquidated over the past 24 hours, with the bulk being on digital exchange Bitfinex.

"If anything, this is the opportunity to buy the dip for many investors who might have previously felt like they missed the boat. We can see tether bought at a premium, suggesting people are getting cash ready, within the crypto space, to do just that," D'Anethan said, referring to the biggest stablecoin in the cryptocurrency world.

A plunge in bitcoin funding rates – the cost of holding bitcoin via perpetual futures which peaked at 0.06% in October – also showed traders had turned bearish.

The funding rate on cryptocurrency trading platform BitMEX fell to a negative 0.18% from levels of 0.01% for most of November.

US renews sanctions waiver for Iraq to import Iranian energy



SHANA

The United States granted Iraq a 120-day extension to a sanctions waiver allowing the Arab country to import energy from neighboring Iran.

Speaking on Saturday, a spokesman for the US State Department said the new measure allows Iraq to import Iranian gas and electricity without facing penalties, Press TV reported.

The administration of former US president Donald Trump blacklisted Iran's energy industry in late 2018 following its unilateral withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

It also put pressure on Iraq to make itself less dependent on Iran's gas and electricity, but Iraqi leaders say the demand is a bar set too high given the country's state of infrastructure which is still badly battered decades after the US invasion and sanctions and economic decline.

The US has been enlisting its companies and allies such as Saudi Arabia to replace Iran as Iraq's source of energy.

Iraq buys gas and electricity from Iran to supply about a third of its power sector.

It currently owes more than \$6 billion in arrears and is unable to pay back its debts due to illegal US sanctions against Iran.

Western and Iraqi sources recently told AFP that Washington has given the green light to Iraqi officials to release \$2 billion in debts for gas imports to Iran through a Swiss bank account.

IME weekly trade exceeds \$458m

The Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) announced that over 1.85 million tons of commodities, valued at over \$458 million, were traded in its domestic trading and export halls in the week closing on December 3.

A total of 1.51 million tons of various products, worth about \$248 million, were traded on IME's domestic and export metal and mineral trading hall, ime.co.ir reported on Saturday.

Among the traded products were 218,941 tons of steel, 4,120 tons of copper, 8,450 tons of aluminum ingots, 21 tons of precious metals concentrate, over one million tons of cement and 4kg of gold bars.

In addition, 331,729 tons of various commodities, valued at about \$204 million, were traded on IME's domestic and

export oil and petrochemical trading halls.

Other traded items were 106,950 tons of bitumen, 84,711 tons of polymer products, 31,383 tons of chemical products, 5,449 tons of base oil and 6,580 tons of sulfur.

The IME was set up in 2007 in accordance with Article 95 of the Law of the Securities Market of the Islamic Republic of Iran following the merger of agricultural and metal stock exchanges of Tehran.

It currently offers various services, including serving as the first market providing access to the initial offering of the listed commodities in the IME, price discovery and price-making for Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) trade, secondary markets and end-users and providing a venue for government sales and purchases as well as a trading platform.



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Iran plans to add 10,000MW to power grid capacity



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A report by the Iranian Ministry of Energy shows that the country has planned to add 10,000 megawatts (MW) of power production to its electricity grid capacity.

This ministry has carried out extensive activities in the water and electricity industry and succeeded in recording a good performance in the first 100 days of the 13th government, IRNA reported on Saturday.

The nominal capacity of electricity generation at Iranian power plants tops 85,500MW.

The ministry also plans to construct 500MW of renewable power plants by next summer, according to Mostafa Rajabi Mashhadi, the ministry's spokesman for the electricity industry.

He put the current capacity of the

country's renewable power plants at 900MW, saying that such power plants account for a small share of the country's total power generation capacity.

Over the past decade, a constant rise in temperature and a significant decrease in rainfall across Iran have put the country in a difficult situation regarding electricity supply during peak consumption periods.

In this regard, the Energy Ministry has been following new programs to meet the country's power demand during peak periods and to prevent outages.

Constructing new power plants for major industries are among the programs being pursued seriously by the ministry in collaboration with other related government entities.

Iran's six-month handwoven carpet output hits 1.7m square meters

Head of Iran National Carpet Center, Farahnaz Rafe', said on Saturday that 1.7 million square meters of handwoven carpets were produced in Iran during the six months to September 22.

Talking to IRNA, she noted that the figure indicates a growth of 10 percent compared to the corresponding figure for last year, which was 1.54 million square meters.

Rafe' said: "This growth in production was achieved while domestic carpet weavers continue to face problems such as the coronavirus, shortage of raw materials and an increase in the

price of some domestic raw materials and the continuation of sanctions."

She pointed out that since the beginning of the current Iranian year (March 21), the implementation of 47 entrepreneurship projects by this center with a budget of \$10 million has been on the agenda in the field of carpet weaving.

Handwoven carpets have the highest share of Iran's handicraft exports and are quite popular in international markets.

Persian carpets are the symbol of Iran's art, culture, history and civilization.



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