OPEC and allies agree to deepen oil output cuts

By Sandhya V V Personal

OPEC and allied producers, who have called for extending output cuts until June or December 2020, have signed voluntary supply agreements, according to some OPEC participants and traders over the past week, the first step toward limiting US demand for.relating demands on OPEC members Iran and US sanctions aimed at choking both countries’ oil exports.

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Japan cabinet approves $122bn fiscal package

Huawei moves to overturn ‘unlawful’ US subsidy ban

The government of Pakistan has admitted to
carrying out the ban despite a request from the
Islamic Republic of Pakistan to the US government
to lift the ban. The ban was implemented in
October 2019, following the US administration’s
decision to add Huawei to its entity list.

President of the Senate, Senator Pakistan
Ayaz Sadiq, while speaking in the National
Assembly, said that the government has
unilaterally imposed a ban on Huawei and
ZTE, which has affected the telecommunications
industry in Pakistan. He added that the government
is currently working on a strategy to lift the ban.

However, the government has not provided
evidence to support its claim that Huawei poses
a security threat. The Senate has called for a
full investigation into the matter, including an
analysis of the economic impact of the ban on
the country.

Inflation pushes India central bank to keep rates on hold

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has kept its
key interest rate unchanged at 6% for the
sixth consecutive policy meeting. This
decision was taken at the RBI’s Governing
Council meeting, which was held on
February 6, 2020.

RBI Governor Urjit Patel said that the
decision was based on a careful assessment of
the current economic environment and the
need to support economic growth.

Patel noted that inflation had eased
significantly in recent months, but
remained above the RBI’s target range
of 2-6%. He added that the
monetary policy stance should remain
accommodative to support economic
growth.

The RBI’s decision to keep rates steady was
welcomed by market participants, who hoped
that it would help reduce borrowing costs for
growth-friendly sectors such as agriculture and
infrastructure.

The move is likely to provide relief to
growth-oriented sectors, and
support the government’s efforts to
boost economic activity.

In addition, the RBI’s decision to keep rates
steady is likely to boost confidence among
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Asian markets back on front foot as trade hopes return

Bonds drop most in two months in India

EM assets muddle higher on lingering US-China trade optimism

Eurzone bond yields pause; investors seek new signals on trade deal

Asian stock market indices hit new highs

India equities drop after RBI cuts outlook

Indian stocks dropped in a volatile session on Monday after Reserve Bank of India (RBI) unexpectedly cut its benchmark interest rate to 4% from 4.40% on Wednesday, the first rate cut in two years and the central bank also slashed the cash reserve ratio (CRR) by 300 basis points. This was in response to a drop in core inflation to its lowest in more than five years, and after benchmark 10-year bond yields rose to a two-month high the previous day. The moves were seen as a dovish monetary policy stance, putting pressure on emerging market peers, where the US Federal Reserve has been hinting at rate cuts for the first time in almost a decade.

Markets globally turned south following news that US-China trade talks after a report that a trade deal could be finalised by the end of the year, as well as signs that the US presidential election will be a close contest. Other factors include renewed concerns over economic growth in Europe and lower interest rates, which have increased demand for US Treasuries.

However, there were also positive developments, such as the UK government's decision to hold a general election on December 12, which could lead to a change in government and potentially a softer Brexit. The ECB (European Central Bank) also kept its interest rates unchanged at the meeting, which was widely expected, but the statement was more dovish than previously.

In the eurozone, the economic data for the region was mixed, with inflation figures falling to their lowest level in almost two years. The US dollar has also slipped against most major currencies, which has helped to support equities.

Despite the market volatility, there were some positive developments. The EU and the US have agreed to a temporary reprieve on tariffs, which has helped to boost sentiment. The IMF also raised its global growth forecast for 2020 to 3.5%, up from 3.3% previously.

However, the US-China trade war remains a key concern, with both countries imposing new tariffs on each other. The US has also threatened to impose more tariffs if a trade deal is not reached. This has led to a decline in global equities, which has put pressure on central banks to lower interest rates.

In the US, the Federal Reserve cut its benchmark interest rate by 0.25% to a range of 1.50% to 1.75%, as expected. The Fed also signalled that it may keep rates at these levels for some time, which has helped to boost global equities.

Overall, the market sentiment remains mixed, with some investors looking for a breakthrough in the US-China trade war and others looking for central banks to provide more support. The key will be to watch for any new developments in the trade talks and any further actions by central banks.

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Hedge fund sends letter to Korea lawmakers on stock value boost

**Bloomberg**

South Korean authorities should take steps to prevent forced disposals of shares from trading minority shareholders, a key investor said on Monday, according to a call for action by a hedge fund.

In a letter sent to the government on Monday, Lim Jin-woo, the senior analyst at the $13 billion hedge fund, said that the government’s failure to prevent forced disposals was “a clear violation of the law.”

In the letter, Lim said the government should take action to prevent forced disposals and urged the government to adopt a more aggressive approach to protecting minority shareholders.

**Utility company behind Fukushima disaster is mulling green debt**

A new subsidiary of the major power company behind the world’s worst nuclear disaster since Chernobyl is considering funding hydro and wind projects with green bonds.

Almost six years since a major earthquake and tsunami crippled Tokyo Electric Power Co. Holdings Inc’s Fukushima plant, the biggest utility is shifting its renewables business to the stock market, which will start operations in 2017.

Tepco Renewable Power Inc, the energy-sector issuer, will use proceeds from share sales to fund projects including hydroelectric sites in Southeast Asian countries such as Laos, and also expand its wind power in Japan and overseas, according to Tomo Fujishiro, general manager of the company’s investment division.

“The purpose of separating the business group is to raise capital from the company as a first energy-sector issuer,” Fujihiro said in an interview in Tokyo.

Tepco was shut out of the Japanese market following the 2011 nuclear disaster triggered by the March 11, 2011, tsunami.

It still has to pay relatively high prices compared with other local corporate issuers, but has been able to increase the size of its note sales.

“Tepco is starting to receive reasonable energy sources so could prompt more note sales,” Fujishiro said.

Tepco’s Renewable Power plans to develop 2-3 gigawatts of onshore and offshore wind power in Japan and other countries, which will also be used to build up the company’s share market, he added.

“Tokyo Electric Power Co. Holdings Inc’s spin-off is a good example of how a country should deal with an energy company in the wake of a disaster,” he said.

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Europe markets fall into red as US impeachment looms

**AFF**

Many European and US markets opened slightly lower after an upbeat start to the day was scuppered by news the US Congress is moving ahead with impeachment efforts against President Donald Trump. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi ordered articles of impeachment to be drawn up that could lead to a trial in the Senates, saying Trumps abuse of power was a danger to the country and could not be left unchallenged.

US markets had been in positive territory on renewed hopes for China-US trade talks after a report said a deal could be finalised by the end of next week. But without a political breakthrough, traders were hedging bets and also the rise in the pound against other major currencies, which benefits profits at companies that earn significant amounts of their revenues in US dollars.

The FTSE 100 lost 0.7% to 7,012.85 points, Frankfurt's DAX 40 dropped 0.7% to 12,440.60 and Paris's CAC 40 fell 1.2% to 5,554.30.

The German shares price index, DAX graph is seen at the Frankfurt Stock Exchange. The DAX 30 lost 0.7% to 12,440.60 points yesterday.

**HONG KONG**

Hong Kong stocks edged lower Wednesday, tracking declines in global markets, with the British pound traded at a new three-year low against the greenback and the lira slumped against the dollar yesterday to $1.1086 while the yen was steady.

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The euro firmed marginally against the dollar, although it lost 0.6% against the yen in the previous week. The pound has also benefitted from recent political uncertainty by taking Britain out of the European Union.

The question now is whether the US Federal Reserve will cut interest rates by 0.5% against the dollar this month. The euro dipped marginally against the dollar yesterday to $1.1086 while the yen was steady.

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As a negative, with a hung parliament the Conservatives would win a majority at next weeks general election, giving them a mandate to push through its Brexit agreement and end a two-decade divorce.

"For markets, anything other than a clear outcome is a negative, with a hung parliament leaving Johnson scrambling to form a government with parties which have rejected the red lines being placed. It is likely that the Conservative Party will win a majority in next weeks election and end 2 1/2 years of Brexit-related uncertainty, taking Britain out of the European Union."

"But this is a negative, with a hung parliament the Conservatives would win a majority at next weeks general election, giving them a mandate to push through its Brexit agreement and end a two-decade divorce.

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ECB resolves on negative interest rates under Lagarde

**Bloomberg**

Four weeks since Mario Draghi retired from running the European Central Bank, finding on his list of his legacy of negative interest rates has become a bit harder. Governing Council members, who collectively lowered the key rate to minus 0.5% shortly before Draghi took over, are increasingly going solo. Some, such as President Christine Lagarde, are already speaking of the need to reverse course. Many say the eurozone’s economic prospects have improved since Draghi’s exit.

The mood among central bankers has shifted in the past few weeks. Lagarde’s success in containing financial risks was celebrated at the venue of the first essential meeting of the year in December. The second, held on Wednesday, focused on the issue of the size of asset purchases. Lagarde has made it clear that the ECB will maintain its current pace of asset purchases at least until the end of the year.

Lagarde has also signaled that the ECB will keep interest rates unchanged at current levels until well into next year. She has also said that inflation will remain below the ECB’s target of just below 2% for some time.

The ECB’s decision to leave interest rates unchanged was widely expected. But the decision to extend the horizon for asset purchases was a surprise.

The decision to extend the horizon for asset purchases was a surprise. The ECB has been under pressure to take further stimulus measures to support the eurozone’s economy, which has been hit by a number of challenges, including the uncertainty surrounding the US-China trade war.

Despite the upgrade in the economic outlook, the ECB has been cautious about taking further stimulus measures. The bank has been under pressure to take further stimulus measures to support the eurozone’s economy, which has been hit by a number of challenges, including the uncertainty surrounding the US-China trade war.

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US trade deficit at 1-1/2-year low: labour market strong

The US trade deficit fell to $47.2 billion in October, the smallest since May 2018, as both imports and exports declined, according to data from the Commerce Department released on Friday.

The goods trade deficit tumbled 1.4% to $31.3 billion in October, compared with an August reading of $31.7 billion. The goods trade surplus with South Korea rose to $5.7 billion from $4 billion in September.

The dollar weakened against a basket of major currencies as US economic data disappointed, suggesting the US economy is slowing. The data also suggests lower US growth, which could contribute to economic growth in other countries.

The revision of trade data this week showed manufacturing activity contracting in October. In November, a slowdown in growth in the services sector as well as a drop in construction spending in October.

The latest data suggested the economy fended off the tariffs as necessary to protect economic growth. "Ryan Sweet, a senior economist at Moody's Analytics, said.

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The latest data suggested the economy fended off the tariffs as necessary to protect economic growth. "Ryan Sweet, a senior economist at Moody's Analytics, said. "The goods trade deficit fell to $47.2 billion in October, the smallest since May 2018, as both imports and exports declined, according to data from the Commerce Department released on Friday."

A top loader moves a shipping container to be placed onto a rail car at the Port of Savannah in Savannah, Georgia, US. The Commerce Department said the trade deficit fell to $47.2 billion in October, the smallest since May 2018, as both imports and exports declined, according to data from the Commerce Department released on Friday.

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