

Iran, Oman call for promotion of bilateral relations

TEHRAN - Iran's ambassador in Oman, Siavash Zargar Yaqoubi in a meeting Monday evening in Muscat with Omani Air Force Commander, Brigadier General Mohammad bin Mahfuz al-Arazi, reviewed ways of promoting bilateral relations.

Military cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and regional countries was among other issues discussed by the two officials.

Leader:

Islamic teachings carry messages needed by today's world

TEHRAN -- The Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei here on Monday warned against the U.S. attempts to dominate the world intellectually and culturally.

Ayatollah Khamenei, speaking to the officials in charge of Iranian culture houses abroad, said the spiritual messages needed by present and future generations of the world are hidden in the endless ocean of Islamic teachings. The transmission of these new messages is possible solely through reliance on knowledge and piety, he added, IRNA reported.

The Leader said that next decades belonged to the world of information, communications and sovereignty of logical thoughts.

"Gone is the time for application of military and political methods or economic sanctions aimed at dominating the world," Ayatollah Khamenei said.

"Cultural and intellectual development are the criteria of superiority in the world and the global arrogance is trying to realize the same objective," Ayatollah Khamenei noted.

Touching on the crises inside the American community, the Leader said the American community is plagued with an acute cultural identity crisis.

"For this reason, the foundations of ethics is being destroyed in the American community and American officials in order to overcome such a dangerous internal disintegration have embarked on formulating and exporting ideologies, but of course of no avail," the Leader of the Islamic Revolution pointed out.

Ayatollah Khamenei said "in the American community, even nationalism is something superficial, but by formulating ideologies to counter the realities American officials want to justify their aggressive presence in various parts of the world."

Despite such efforts, said the Ayatollah, the world is searching for a more convincing ideology and a more tranquilizing thought. "To this end, the spiritual messages of Islam are a valuable asset that is on high demand everywhere and thus makes the Islamic system and Islamic ideology superior," the Leader said.

Ayatollah Khamenei cited

U.N. calls for cooperation with Iran in conservation of resources

RAMSAR, Mazandaran - The United Nations has called for Iran's cooperation for training children and teenagers in conservation of natural resources, director general for public contribution of Iran's Forests and Pastures Organization, Masoud Sharifian, said here on Monday.

He added that a contract on cultural cooperation particularly for printing of 18 titles of books on conservation of natural resources in English and Persian languages is to be signed in the coming days.

The U.N. has no financial restraints for these kinds of cooperation and it is expected that the said books would be put on display at an exhibition of children's books organized by the UNICEF, he said.

Since Iran ranks 45th among the 56 countries of the world having forests, the U.N. wants to help the country develop these natural resources through education of children and young adults.

Iran becoming region's biggest food buyer

TEHRAN - Iran's food imports have soared this year due to a combination of domestic production reaching a plateau, rapid population growth and last winter's dry weather, according to the Middle East Economic Digest.

It suggested that agricultural purchases for 1997 could reach Dls. 5 billion, including about Dls. 1.3 bn for wheat, Dls. 1 bn for vegetable oils, Dls. 625 million for sugar, over Dls. 500m for rice and about Dls. 500m for animal food.

The weekly, quoted by IRNA, reported efforts to boost domestic production of cereals, meat and horticultural products "achieved excellent results for the decade ending in 1994," but suggested it was now stuck on a plateau while demand soared from the country's population growth.

It also said that the drought last winter caused 1997's wheat yield to fall by about 10 percent from an average of about 11m tons during the previous three years and that future production increases appear more difficult after doubling in the past decade.

Combined deliveries from Iran's three major agricultural suppliers, Canada, Australia and the European Union, were attributed with accounting for about half of the country's needs last year with transhipment ports in Dubai and UAE banks playing an important part.

New suppliers were said to include Ukraine, whose barley and corn shipments were expected to rise following last winter's dry weather, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation. Livestock products from Romania and Bulgaria in exchange for oil were also said to be up.

MEED suggested that the increased agricultural imports from 1995 represented a "more realistic policy" emerging after the early efforts to make the country virtually self-sufficient in food.

Iran expresses dismay over outbreak of violence in Muslim world

TEHRAN - Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman, Mahmoud Mohammadi Monday elaborated on the country's stance on the recent developments in Algeria, Tajikistan, occupied Palestine and Pakistan-Indiastate of affairs.

Mohammadi condemned the recent massacre of the civilians in Algeria and called on the international community to deal with the "unprecedented crimes" perpetrated against innocent civilians in the North African country, IRNA reported.

The Foreign Ministry official also called the recent

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Karate included in Islamic countries women solidarity games

SEMNAN - Karate for the first time is included in the Islamic countries women solidarity games, said the head of the Iranian women karate association, Jinoos Shariat-panahi here Tuesday.

She added that following the approval of the Iranian female karatekas can participate in this competition which are to start December 11, in Tehran.

Women karatekas did not play in the first round of the Islamic countries women solidarity games.

Namazi:

Real interest rates will help control inflation

TEHRAN - Offering real interest rates by banks would help control the inflation, said Iran's Minister of Economy, Hussein Namazi in the opening ceremonies of the eighth conference on Islamic banking here Monday.

He pointed to the coordination amongst the economic, social and cultural sectors as a necessity for implementation of Islamic banking system in the country, IRNA said.

This coordination largely depends on modernization of

the banking system, he added.

Also attending the conference was the Governor of Iran's Central Bank, Mohsen Nourbakhsh, who presented statistics on bank deposits and liquidity in the country.

Bank deposits of the public sector had a 34.5 percent growth during the last Iranian calendar year (ended March 20), boosting the total deposits to Rls. 96,000 billion, stated Nourbakhsh.

The demand and time deposits last year were 37 and

63 percent of total bank deposits respectively, registering a favorable change from the 40 and 60 percent figures two years before.

The cash assets constituted 12 percent of total liquidity last year, down one percent compared with the previous year's figure.

Another speaker at the conference, Ayatollah Mousavi Bojnordi, stressed the importance of offering real interest rates by the banks as a means of preserving the depositors' purchasing power.

Mohajerani: Knowledge of local culture, a must for overseas cultural work

TEHRAN - Culture and Islamic Guidance Minister Ataollah Mohajerani said here Monday that to propagate Islamic culture in non-Muslim communities is to have a solid background of the cultures of the people of the country in which that enterprise is to be undertaken.

The minister, addressing a group of foreign-based cultural workers of Iran said in the conduct of their mission, those envoys of Iran could not rely merely on their knowledge of Islam but that they would have to be equipped also with a number of correct publicity tools such as knowledge of the local language and literature of the people of their point of assignment.

He said a cultural worker may, at times, feel that he is doing justice to the Islamic culture as the result of what he is doing in a foreign country whereas, he commented, in point of fact he may be doing injustice to that same Islamic culture.

Mohajerani observed that in the future he would personally screen the qualification of all cultural workers to be assigned abroad, and expressed hope that those envoys of Iran would help to give the Islamic culture the international recognition that it truly deserves.

In another development, Mohajerani stressed that the activities of the Cultural Heritage Organization needed to have a growth befitting Iran's ancient civilization.

Speaking at the presentation ceremony of Mohammad Beheshti as the new head of the Cultural Heritage Organization, Mohajerani added, "we are inheritors of a culture and civilization which are unique in terms of scope, depth and variety and should be approached with special attention to our Iranian-Islamic identity."

He further spoke of plans for future cooperation between the Cultural Heritage Organization and the country's tourism organizations.

Prospects of Iranian oil route grows

TEHRAN - The prospect of exporting oil from Caspian Sea countries across Iran has grown over the past few weeks following recognition that the route is the most viable and will not be subjected to U.S. Sanctions threats.

The latest boost, according to Petroleum Argus Monday, comes from a proposal by China's state-owned producer CNPC, which is holding advanced talks on Khazakstan's Uzen field after winning the Atyubinsk production association, IRNA said in a report from London.

To secure the deals, CNPC suggested two export options, an Iranian route or a new pipeline through China, which "would be extremely expensive and fail to reach main consuming areas," it said.

Sources were quoted saying in contrast that the initial proposal for Iran would cost only Dls 2 billion, involving a link from Uzen to Tehran's refinery and that much of the route would follow gas pipeline cutting costs.

In response, the Iranian official welcomed the suggestions of the deputy foreign minister of Cuba commenting that the two countries would do better to explore prospects for mutual trade in other areas in addition to oil and sugar. He observed, however, that stumbling blocks on the way of fuller trade relations between the two countries would have to be removed in the first place.

Petroleum Argus reported local sources saying that CNPC was trying to enlist the support of India's ONGC, which wants to develop production from Atyubinsk and Pavlodar regions and that other possible users included Indonesia's Central Asia petroleum.

enging foreign firms arranging swap deals, including American multinationals.

In an article for the Financial Times Monday, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Strobe Talbott, said that the great powers should avoid a replay of last century's meddling in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

The big states that border the eight regional nations have much to gain from peace and much to lose from conflict, he said. U.S. policy was "actively to discourage" the competition of outside powers to the disadvantage of people living there, he claimed.

Interior minister:

People's participation guarantees security

TEHRAN - At the presentation ceremony of the new law enforcement security deputy, Interior Minister Abdollah Nouri said here Monday that people's active participation was essential for guaranteeing the basis of general security of the nation.

Nouri further deduced that the nature of security issues were so complicated that political, social, cultural and economic issues were bound to affect it. He added that one's attention to the collective concept for the creation of an efficient security system was inadequate. He pointed out that a more specialized approach was needed to guarantee maximum security.

He further said an all-out training program was one of the ways of promoting people's participation in the security issues, adding that if people realized that they could play a part in the security matters, then they would actively participate.

He finally said that the government was determined to upgrade the national security system within the framework of the laws of the country and that any violators who endanger the safety and peaceful life of people, will severely be dealt with.

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