

Tehran, Beijing discuss industrial cooperation

TEHRAN - Minister of Mines and Metals Ishaq Jahangiri said here on Sunday that Tehran attaches importance to its relations with Beijing. In a meeting with Chinese Ambassador to Tehran Shi Ji Wang, Jahangiri called for speeding up of the development of Khatun copper plant now under construction in cooperation with the Chinese company, NFC.

He also said that Iran is willing to sign another agreement with Chinese companies to develop Songoon copper mine. Wang said Iran and China are developing states which should cooperate in carrying out different industrial projects especially those concerning mining and metals.

Iran ready to help resolve Karabakh conflict

TEHRAN - Iran's First Vice-President, Hassan Habibi, here on Sunday said that Iran and the Azerbaijan Republic, on the strength of common culture, history and religion, can expand their cooperation in the region.

Receiving the visiting Azeri Deputy Premier in charge of Economic Affairs, Abed Sharifov, Habibi pointed to the amicable relations between Iran and Azerbaijan, adding that the friendly ties are indicative of the two countries' resolve to broaden their bilateral relations in all fields, IRNA reported.

Referring to peaceful co-existence as the centerpiece of Iran's foreign policy, the vice-president announced Iran's readiness to help resolve the Karabakh conflict.

"Tehran attaches special importance to regional cooperation based on mutual interest amongst the nations," stated Habibi.

He stressed the importance of further activating the two countries' joint economic commission, adding that Tehran-Baku ties can help boost the cooperation among the Caspian Sea littoral states.

The Azeri official termed the current state of relations between Iran and Azerbaijan as satisfactory, adding that Baku intends to "boost its relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran to the highest possible level."

Assessing his negotiations with the Iranian officials as "positive", the Azeri deputy premier expressed hope that

Tehran, Muscat keen on expanding relations

TEHRAN - Iranian Ambassador to Muscat Siavosh Zargar Yaqobi on Sunday delivered President Mohammad Khatami's message of friendship to Omani Sultan Qaboos bin Said.

The message pointed to the amicable relations between Iran and Oman, adding that the brotherly ties can serve as an example for other countries of the region.

Sultan Qaboos, expressing satisfaction over the current state of relations between Iran and Oman, stressed his country's resolve to continue the upward trend of relations between the two countries.

Meanwhile, the new Omani Ambassador to Iran presented a copy of his credentials to Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi here Sunday where he said Oman is ready to strengthen and expand relations with its neighbouring states on both sides of the Persian Gulf.

Abdullah bin Saleh Al-Asfari also relayed to Kharrazi the warm greeting of Omani Foreign Minister Yousef bin Abdullah bin Alawi.

Kharrazi described bilateral relations as "exemplary" and pointed to the deep historical, religious and cultural ties between the two countries, calling for expansion of mutual relations.

Iranian participation in Jeddah trade fair, a huge success

TEHRAN - Exhibit of Iranian commodities in Jeddah trade fair has been received with enormous enthusiasm leading to the speculation that Iranian firms will receive major contracts before the fair ends. The exhibit of light goods in the Saudi administrative capital was kicked off October 7 with participation of Egypt, Morocco, Bahrain, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, South Africa and some Western countries as well as Iran.

The Saudi press including Al-Hayat, Okaz, Al-Sharq al-Awsat, Ar-Riyadh and Al-Madina, giving wide coverage of the fair, have conducted interviews with the Iranian ambassador to Riyadh, head of Iran's Chamber of Commerce, Ali-Naqi Khamoushi, and his Saudi counterpart. Al-Hayat quoted Khamoushi as saying that establishment of "Islamic common market" should be the ultimate goal of all Muslim states.

Iranian investors count on joint cooperation with the Saudi business people to help them through difficult times, the daily quoted Khamoushi.

Saudi Arabia can be a bridge to Africa for some 250-350 thousand industrial firms in Iran, on the other hand Iran can be a bridge to Central Asian republics for the Saudis, added the Iranian official. Experts believe that Iranian participation in the fair, its first in 18 years, in addition to introducing Iranian products in the Arab peninsula, has paved the way for expansion of cooperation between the two countries' business people.

Iran-Saudi trade presently exceeds Dhs. 40 million.

Some 26 major Iranian firms, offering products such as refrigerators, televisions, handicrafts, foodstuff, sanitary equipment and construction materials, were participating in the Jeddah trade fair which ended October 13.

Convention of Asia-Pacific first ladies opened in Malaysia

TEHRAN - The convention of the first ladies of Asia-Pacific region opened in Kuala Lumpur Monday morning with the participation of Mrs. Zohreh Sadeqi, wife of President Mohammad Khatami of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The session which was opened with a speech by Mrs. Siti Hasma, wife of Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, is to explore ways for the progress of women in the Asia-Pacific region, especially the rural women. The convention was held on the eve of the international rural women's day, October 15.

Mrs. Sadeqi is heading an Iranian delegation as vice chairwoman of the regional committee for progress of rural women in Asia-Pacific region.

Speaking at the gathering, Mrs. Siti Hasma said the participants, as representatives of their societies, should strive for the progress of women and try to eradicate poverty among rural women.

Meanwhile, an exhibition of handicrafts produced by Iranian rural women has been set up on the sidelines of the convention. A two-day meeting at expert level was held prior to the opening of the session which will end its work on Thursday.

He said 4,725 certificates were issued for the said amount of exports.

TEHRAN - Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh here Monday discussed oil export to the Autonomous Republic of Nakhichevan with the visiting Azerbaijani Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs Abed Aharifov.

The officials of both countries expressed hope that relations between the two brotherly and friendly nations will grow further.

Officials from the National Iranian Gas Company and National Iranian Oil Company international affairs departments as well as the head of Azerbaijan's oil products company were also present in the meeting.

Defence minister:

U.S., major source of tension in Persian Gulf

BUSHEHR - Defense Minister Rear Admiral Ali Shamkhani, Monday stated "termination of tensions in the Persian Gulf is possible only through departure of the U.S. and other foreign warships from the region."

He termed the Victory 8 maneuver as a "dynamic move" for preservation of stability and security in the Persian Gulf through utilization of the regional countries' own potentials and capabilities.

Aboard the command ship "Tumb", Shamkhani told IRNA "the American warships are the sole source of threats in the region. The regional countries should cooperate towards a new security arrangement in the strategic Persian Gulf."

Terming Iranian defensive capabilities as a potential cornerstone for any joint security arrangement in the region, Shamkhani added "the Islamic Republic's defense doctrine is geared towards elimination of the

sources of tension external to the region. We never consider our Muslim brothers in the Arab states as a threat to the Islamic Iran."

The minister further dis-

missed the U.S. announced concerns regarding Victory 8 as part of the U.S. propaganda campaign to justify its illegitimate presence in the region.

Condemning the arrival of Nimitz nuclear warship to the Persian Gulf, Shamkhani added "the Victory 8 joint naval maneuver is within the scope of the previously announced annual exercises by the Islamic Republic of Iran's armed forces."

He predicted "beyond any doubts, the protest by the Muslim nations of the region against the U.S. warships' polluting presence would take new dimensions in the future." In another development, head of the operations of Victory 8 joint maneuvers headquarters said that the marine parade of naval vessels of the army and the Islamic Revolu-

tion Guards Corps was successfully conducted in the Persian Gulf waters.

Lieutenant Colonel Mohammad Taqi Fani also told IRNA that during the parade 120 warships, cruisers, destroyers, torpedo boats, speed boats, logistic warships as well as Tareq and Yunus submarines paraded before the commandship 'Tumb'.

Meanwhile, 40 various types of fighter-bombers of the Air Force and helicopters of the Army Air Support demonstrated their combat power in defending the territorial integrity of the coun-

try.

Defence minister and a number of senior military commanders inspected the parade. The third stage of Victory 8 maneuver ended last night following which the fourth stage (tactical stage) was launched.

Victory 8 joint maneuvers are currently underway in an area covering 50,000 sq km in north of the Persian Gulf region.

Views exchanged on Iran-Qatar bilateral ties, legal issues

TEHRAN - Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs and current president of Afro-Asia Advisory Legal Committee Mohammad Javad Zarif conferred with Qatari Acting Minister of Justice Ahmad Muhammad Ali Assabiyi in Abu Dhabi Sunday.

According to reports from Qatari, the two sides exchanged views on bilateral relations in addition to specifically discussing the legal and judicial issues.

The report said that the Ambassador of Islamic Republic of Iran, Mahmoud Movahedi and the secretary general of Afro-Asia Advisory Legal Committee, Chang Chig Yuwan were present at this meeting.

The possibility of coop-

eration between Qatar and the legal advisory committee was explored. Ali Assabiyi is also the minister of electricity and water.

In a separate meeting,

Zarif met with Ahmad bin Abdulla al-Mahmoud, Qatari state minister for foreign affairs. The two sides exchanged views on the forth-

Over 2,000 tons of goods loaded, unloaded at Bandar Anzali SEZ

BANDAR ANZALI, Gilan - Since the start of operation of port of Anzali Special Economic Zone (SEZ) some 2,125 tons of goods have been loaded and unloaded, said the Director General of provincial Port and Shipping Department, Hassan Najafi. He added goods included synthetic fibers, motor bikes, household articles, machineries and chemical compounds.

Najafi said that with expansion of Bandar Anzali SEZ in the near future, commodity owners and traders will be able to take full advantage of the port's facilities and store cargo with no limitation. He added that unfortunately Anzali SEZ has not been properly promoted among the businessmen.

The SEZ includes two areas, one with a tract of 140 hectares which houses the headquarters for the provincial Ports and Shipping Department.

Bandar Anzali SEZ started operation four months ago.

Tae kwon do team runner up in Intl. competition

TEHRAN - The tae kwon do team of Iran's Armed Forces finished second in the fourth international tae kwon do tournament of armed forces held in the Italian city of Riccione.

The Iranian team, winner of two gold, one silver and five bronze medals, was runner up to the powerful South Korean team which was crowned champion amongst 14 participating teams. In the first weight division, Kazem Mehri won the bronze medal, while the Korean and Russian athletes finished first and second respectively.

In the second weight division, Saeed Tavakoli was runner up to the Korean fighter who won the gold medal. Saudi Arabia finished third. In the third weight division, Mehdi Bibak beat his Saudi opponent to bag the gold medal. The athlete from Lesotho won the bronze medal.

In the fourth division, Vahid Abdulahi bagged the bronze medal. Korean and Italian athletes won the gold and silver medals respectively. In the fifth division, Iran's Ali Tajir beat his Korean opponent to win the gold medal. Russia finished third.

In the sixth division, Reza Ashouri finished third. The Korean and Italian participants won the gold and silver medals respectively.

In the seventh division, Farhad Aslani earned the bronze medal while his rivals from Germany and Lesotho bagged the gold and silver medals respectively.

In the eighth weight division, Mohsen Enafcheh finished third after Korean and German athletes who earned the gold and silver medals respectively.

The german team finished third overall in the tournament.



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Iran's Dena mountain major mountaineering attraction



YASOUJ, Kohkiluyeh-Boyerahmad Some 900 Iranian and foreign mountaineers have climbed Dena peaks in western Iran during the current Iranian calendar year (started March 21), announced the official in charge of the provincial Mountaineering Organization, Gholamreza Haq-Bin, here Sunday.

Haq-Bin further added that an eight-member Dutch team as well as four family groups were among the many mountaineers who climbed the snow covered peaks in the Zagos mountain range.

Dena, located north of city of Yasouj, includes some 45 peaks which are over 4,000-meter high.

Asseman expands fleet

TEHRAN - Four new passenger planes will be added to Asseman airline company's fleet next year, said Asseman Managing Director Ali Abedzadeh Saturday.

He told reporters that purchase of 16 small and large passenger planes has been envisaged in the Second 5-Year Development Plan (1995-1999). Two planes each with a capacity of 70 passengers have been purchased from France at Dhs. 32 million each, he said.

Contracts have been signed on purchase of two Airbuses, each with a capacity of 260 passengers at Dhs. 40 million. They will be handed over to Iran next year.

Abedzadeh said that Asseman has established flights to 41 domestic destinations and seven foreign countries. The purchases will help the company expand its international flights.