



















## Iraqi foreign minister briefs Iranian counterpart on Annan's negotiations

TEHRAN - The Iraqi foreign minister in a phone conversation with his Iranian counterpart Kamal Kharrazi Sunday night reported that the peace mission by the U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan is close to a successful conclusion. Stating that Annan's proposed solution has been accepted by Iraq, Mohammad Saeed as-Sahar added that the Security Council would be informed of the secretary general's proposal upon his return to New York, IRNA reported.

U.N. secretary general and Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz signed an agreement on U.N. weapons inspections in Iraq, on Monday.

Rafsanjani meets King Fahd:

## Iran, Saudi Arabia discuss cooperation in oil, regional matters

TEHRAN - Chairman of Iran's Expediency Council Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, in Riyadh Saturday afternoon met with Saudi King Fahd ibn Abd al-Aziz as-Saud.

The Saudi king told Rafsanjani that Iran and Saudi Arabia as two important nations of the world and also of the region must collaborate in every issue of their mutual interest including oil, OPEC, and regional matters, IRNA reported from Riyadh.

He also appreciated the national development programs of Iran and hoped he would visit Iran in a near future. He promised that his country would have a closer cooperation with Iran for maintaining oil prices at reasonable rates in the future.

Rafsanjani, in response, referred to a number of pressing problems of the region, including the situation in Afghanistan and the weapons inspections crisis in Iraq and observed that the Muslim world can rely on its own indigenous resources to solve those problems without the involvement of non-Muslim alien powers.

Rafsanjani said oil is a God-given wealth in the hands of the Muslim nations of the region, and commented that mutual good understanding between petroleum exporting countries would certainly prevent a downturn in oil prices.

Rafsanjani, prior to his scheduled visit to Riyadh,

told the Jeddah-based Arabic daily Okaz, that Iran and Saudi Arabia enjoy important status in the Muslim world and cooperation between the two countries would help solve many problems of the Islamic world.

He said relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Saudi Arabia are very significant, strategic and very helpful for the cause of development in the Muslim world.

Asked about the topics of discussion between him and Saudi officials, Rafsanjani said he would discuss ways of strengthening relations especially in the field of culture, Islam, education, economy, agriculture, industry and manpower as well as the problems plaguing Muslims throughout the world.

He voiced interest in exchange of views with Saudi officials on the Palestinian issue, the peace process and the plight of Afghanistan adding that the issue of oil is of importance to Iran and Saudi Arabia as well as OPEC.

"We may reach an understanding to protect the interest of the Islamic states and the developing countries and to save the worthy property that is put at the disposal of the rich states almost free of charge," he said.

On Iraq, he said the Iraqi issue is highly sensitive and he would discuss the issue as well as the situation in Somalia, Algeria and Kash-

## Iran reiterates readiness to help peace trend in Tajikistan

TEHRAN - Leader of the Tajik opposition union and head of the national reconciliation commission Abdulla Nouri and the union's deputy discussed latest developments in Tajikistan peace trend with Iran's Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi Monday.

Nouri praised Iran's principled stance as well as its special attention to and spiritual support for the Muslim people of Tajikistan.

He termed the recent attempts made by the Iranian foreign minister to speed up the trend of peace in Tajikistan as important and fruitful.

British Airways to establish non-stop London-Tehran flights

TEHRAN - British Airways is planning to establish non-stop London-Tehran flights with start of its new summer schedule on March 29, said the airlines commercial manager for the Middle East and Africa region Bill Dixon. Currently Tehran-London flights have a lay over of an hour to hour and half in Larnaka, Cyprus.

Dixon added, "Iran is a very important market for us and subject to operational changes, we hope to be able to offer a non-stop service in both directions by mid-summer."

The return flights from London to Tehran for operational reasons, have a stop over in Baku, IRNA reported.

Passengers will be able to use the latest Boeing 777 in three classes of first, business and economy on the three weekly flights on the London-Tehran route, concluded Dixon.

## Sobh-e Khanevadeh hits newspaper stands

TEHRAN - The morning daily 'Sobh-e Khanevadeh', a family oriented publication, appeared on newspaper stands Monday.

Managing director of the newspaper, Hossein Ferdowsi, told IRNA that the paper aims to elevate the social knowledge of Iranian families.

"We seek to inform families of their social rights which distinguishes us from most papers in the country which aim to elevate the political knowledge in the society," he said.

The newspaper does not have any political affiliations, he stressed, adding "the paper views positively any positive trend in the society independent of its political orientation."

Khanevadeh (family) Cultural Institute, the publisher of the new daily, started its operations in 1991 with Khanevadeh Magazine.

The monthly 'Javan-e Khanevadeh' is another publication of the institute.

## Sugarcane industrial project to save Dlrs 1 bn annually

TEHRAN - Completion of an ongoing project for development of sugarcane industry would save Iran Dlrs one billion in hard currency.

Managing director of the project Mehdi Mofidi further told IRNA that a sum of Dlrs 450 million plus Rls 1,600 billion has been invested to date to set up the complex for the development of sugarcane industry.

He said that another Dlrs 700 plus billions of rials are needed to complete plants for the production of sugar, paper, animal feed, industrial board, powdered yeast and alcohol.

According to the official, a number of foreign countries have voiced readiness to meet parts of the foreign exchange requirements for paper, powdered yeast and alcohol fac-

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## Iran, Syria to expand academic cooperation

TEHRAN - Iran voiced readiness to expand cultural and scientific cooperation with Syrian universities.

Leader's representative at Martyr Beheshti University Ahmad Bohrani who is heading a 30-member delegation, made the remark in a meeting with Mohammad Ali Houriyeh, the chancellor of Halab University.

Bohrani further praised scientific and cultural developments in Syria.

Expressing satisfaction over Tehran-Damascus friendly relations, Houriyeh also announced willingness to expand relations between Syrian and Iranian universities.

## Scientific centers should promote debate

TEHRAN - Interior Minister Abdullah Nouri in Mashhad on Sunday stated that universities and seminaries are expected to promote research, creativity, debate and exchange of views regarding various scientific issues.

Addressing a group of university students in Mashhad University, Nouri said the city of Mashhad stands out as a major scientific center in the Shi'ite world.

He further called for institutionalization of debates and critical dialog in the society as well as the scientific centers in the country.

Question and answer

sessions in universities attended by officials of the government as well as ulama is a right step in this direction, he added.

Stressing the significance of student organizations in universities, the interior minister stated that independence of such organizations is a necessity to advance the high goals of the revolution.

On the subject of youth engagement in the affairs, Nouri stated "a generation willing to accept and understand the truth should be absorbed and not be repelled. We need to understand the youth problems and have logical answers to their questions."

President:

## Preservation of environment, an obligation for every individual

TEHRAN - President Mohammad Khatami, here on Monday stated "the environment, as stipulated in the constitution, belongs to the present and future generations and it's preservation is an obligation for every individual in the society."

Addressing a national gathering of officials of the country's Environmental Protection Organization (EPO), Khatami called on the organization to promote basic research aimed at better utilization of the natural resources in the country.

It's necessary to re-examine the traditional methods of exploiting the country's natural resources, specially the inappropriate use of the fossil fuels, Khatami stressed, adding "we need to expand the EPO's monitoring role over the private and public sectors."

The president further termed as necessary the cooperation between the government and the public to achieve the objective of an ideal environment.

Referring to uncontrolled development as a source of major disruptions in the environment, the chief executive added "man today feels threatened by an imbalance in the environment against him because continuation of such a trend jeopardizes his survival."

The president expressed dismay at the unchecked exploitation of nature by today's technologically advanced man, adding that human beings should be more discreet in their relations with nature.

Prior to the president's speech, the EPO head Ms. Massoumeh Ebtekar presented a report on the performance of the organization and its future plans.

## Oil, unauthorized fishing, enemies of Caspian Sea sturgeons

Head of the center to supervise fishing and preserve sturgeon of the Russian Agricultural Ministry, Anatoly Alexandrov told IRNA in Moscow that 20,000 persons were arrested in connection with illegal fishing in the Caspian Sea in 1997.

The uninhabited delta area of Volga river, 300 km from Volgograd, is the most important site for unauthorized fishing of sturgeons in Russia due to absence of government control.

While the official figure on caviar production by Russia was said to stand at 1,500 tons last year, some sources believed the real amount to be five to 20 times more given the illegal catches.

Otherwise, he cautioned, sturgeon will become extinct in the Caspian Sea in two or three years' time.

## Iran, Azerbaijan sign contracts to expand judicial cooperation

TEHRAN - Iran and Azerbaijan concluded three contracts for cooperation in the fields of judiciary, extradition of criminals and transfer of convicts.

Reports released from Baku indicate that Deputy Justice Minister for Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Mohammad-Jafar Montazeri and Azeri Justice Minister Sudabeh Hassanawa singed the contract.

Hassanawa underlined the need for all-out expansion of bilateral relations and said that Azerbaijan would try to further expand bilateral relations.

He said that no doubt, such cooperation would be in line with the interests of the Iranian and Azeri nations and governments and would benefit Iranian and Azeri citizens.

The three accords signed in Baku constituted 80 articles and had been prepared by Iranian and Azeri judicial officials.

simov's visit to Tehran.

The Iranian envoy also inspected judicial organizations and prisons of the republic in the course of his stay.

Taqizadeh expressed the hope at the ceremony that judicial problems faced by the two sides would be solved and would result in further deepening of Tehran-Baku ties, IRNA reported from Baku.

Draft of the agreement for extradition of criminals had earlier been signed between the two countries in October during Azeri Deputy Justice Minister Aydin Qas-

imov's visit to Tehran.

The three accords signed in Baku constituted 80 articles and had been prepared by Iranian and Azeri judicial officials.

Taqizadeh said the project is part of the next five-year development plan, expressing the hope that executive operations will be launched in due time.

## Foreign Ministry condemns killings of Iranian engineers

TEHRAN - A communiqué released by the Iranian Foreign Ministry on Sunday, severely condemned the assassination of the two Iranian engineers, Ali Mohammad Habibzadeh and Mortaza Adibzadeh in Karachi, Pakistan.

The statement asked the government of Pakistan to pursue the case immediately to arrest and punish the perpetrators of criminal acts.

The Foreign Ministry stated that consequence of negligence and lack of strict measures against the perpetrators of the previous atrocious acts have been the cause which motivated the criminals to commit further human atrocities.

It stressed that it was high time that these criminals were brought to justice for their terrorist activities.

Announcing that the martyrdom of two Iranian engineers which has deeply shaken both the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Iranian Muslim nation, the statement further emphasized that the safety and well-being of Iranian citizens and those Iranians working in Pakistan is the responsibility and commitment which the government of Pakistan cannot shirk.

Sharing the grief with the bereaved families of the fallen,

The president added that the two nations have also

## Central Asian, Caucasian Muslim leaders call for unity

TEHRAN - Muslim scholars and the leaders of the Central Asian republics and Caucasus invited Muslims to unite in the issues of commonality in the resolution released at the end of the seminar in Bishkek Saturday night.

This was the first seminar to be held after the collapse of the former Soviet Union. A number of Muslim diplomats, including Iranians, attended the conference, IRNA reported from Bishkek.

However, the Muslim scholars and leaders from Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan did not participate in the conference.

The resolution also stressed the need to counter malicious, irreligious and su-

pervious propaganda being spread in the area.

The Iranian representative addressing the audience said that the Islamic Republic of Iran had a three year rotating presidency of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) would concentrate its effort on bringing about unity and solidarity among the Muslim nations.

The president underlined that "Petronas" like "Total" represented a country which believed in freedom of action against the illogical demands of the United States and others, adding that such a resistance was the demonstration of power, strength, and independence of nation like Malaysia.

The Malaysian minister said that the political will of her country is based on further expansion of relations between Iran and Malaysia.

Rafidah Aziz pointed out that the two nations possessed potentialities for the promotion of bilateral trade relations.

## Iran, Bangladesh review cooperation in fisheries

TEHRAN - A senior official of Iran's Fisheries Organization, Ibrahim Maygoly-Nejad in Dhaka, Bangladesh, discussed joint cooperations in fisheries and animal husbandry between the two countries.

Heading a four-member delegation Maygoly-Nejad is in Dhaka to prepare the outlines of a memorandum of understanding in fisheries, the final draft of which is to be signed at the forthcoming session of the Iran-Bangladesh joint economic commission.

The Iranian delegation which includes representatives from public and private sectors are scheduled to stay in Bangladesh for one week and visit the fish and shrimp farms operating in different cities.

The third session of Iran-Bangladesh economic commission will be held from March 1-3 in Dhaka.

The Iranian Minister of Construction Jihad Mohammad Saeedi-Kia heading a delegation will arrive in Dhaka next week.

## Talks on Iran, Jordan tourism cooperation

TEHRAN - Jordan's Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Ajil Bilaji, met in Amman with a delegation representing Iranian tour agents and discussed with them organizing tours from Iran to religious shrines in Jordan.

The Iranian delegation on its part asserted the importance of enhancing tourism cooperation between Jordan and Iran, IRNA reported from Athens.

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