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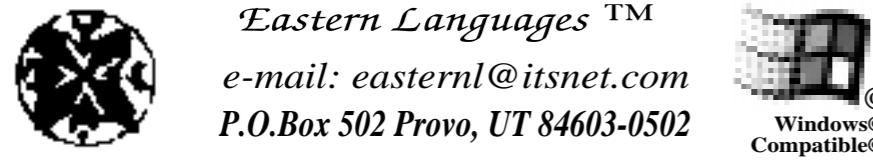


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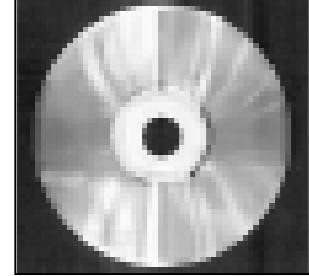
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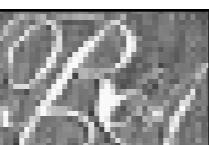
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## Ireland keen on expansion of ties with Iran

TEHRAN - The new Irish Ambassador to Tehran, Thomas Lyons, stressed his country's determination to expand its ties with Iran. The ambassador made the remark in a meeting with the Iranian Minister of Construction Jihad, Mohammad Saeedi-Kia.

Lyons further called for exploration of new avenues for cooperation between the two countries.

Saeedi-Kia expressed Iran's desire to expand its cooperation with Ireland in the fields of fisheries and veterinary sciences.

President Khatami:

## Nations should enjoy same rights

TEHRAN - President Mohammad Khatami, here on Tuesday called on the West to view democracy and human rights not as prerogatives of just certain nations but rather things belonging to all human beings irrespective of their nationality.

Receiving the Italian Parliament Speaker Luciano Violante, Khatami spoke of a world civil society in which all nations enjoy the same rights regardless of their wealth or technological advances, IRNA reported.

President Khatami referred to the bitter experiences of the past century including the two world wars and the colonialism, adding "we ned to identify the causes of violence so we can enter a new century in which peace and understanding would prevail over war and violence."

He further called on the countries of the North to help with the progress of the South, adding that a lasting world peace would be possible only if all nations receive a fair share of wealth and scientific advances.

Turning to the deeply rooted ties between Iran and Italy, the chief executive stated that the two countries stand out throughout the history for their ancient civilizations.

He further thanked Italy for its just stance in the international arena.

Information minister:

## All should support consolidation of national unity

TEHRAN - Information Minister Hojatoleslam Qorbani Dorri Najafabadi called on all people and factions to pay due attention to consolidation of national solidarity and values of the Islamic Republic.

Speaking at a session of the administrative council of

Qom Province, he stressed that constructive criticism in the society, within the framework of criteria of the Islamic Republic, should be in a manner as to deprive enemy manipulation, IRNA reported.

He stated that efforts to strengthen security and tran-

quility necessitate further promotion of cooperation both by the public and major institutions in the society from qualitative and quantitative points of view.

The information ministry, relying on the support of 60 million-strong revolutionary and wise people, is making outstanding efforts to fulfil its responsibilities.

Hojatoleslam Dorri Najafabadi underscored the need for further attention to the issues of the youth, adding that all should endeavor to provide suitable grounds, especially in cultural field, to make them optimistic about Islamic and revolutionary principles and values.

Underlining the significance of security in the Islamic Republic, he said that economic growth and progress in the country without doubt requires security and stability. He stressed that the Islamic Republic enjoys the necessary security.

He said Iran and Italy are required to create an atmosphere for relationship among the thinkers of the two countries and the news agencies should play a part in this respect.

He said Iran-Italy cultural cooperation would include archaeology, restoration of historical monuments, cinema and tourism.

Biancheri stressing the need for cooperation between Iran and ANSA said cooperation between the two news agencies would serve to develop multi-faceted relations between Iran and Italy.

Biancheri said in the contemporary era the relations among the nations are not limited to the diplomatic bodies. The universities, the press, the news agencies and cultural centers have decisive role in cooperation among the nations.

## Minister calls for promotion of Iran-Italy relations

TEHRAN - Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Attaullah Mohajerani in a meeting with the officials of the Italian news agency (ANSA) on Tuesday called for promotion of Iran-Italy relations.

ANSA President Boris Biancheri and managing-director Alfredo Roma are currently visiting Tehran at the invitation of Managing-Director of the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) Fereydoun Verdinejad.

Mohajerani underlined the important function of the news agencies in upgrading relations between the states and said Iran, Italy, Greece and Egypt are the main founders of human civilization and the news agencies are expected to bring about an appropriate atmosphere for holding dialog among the civilizations.

## Iranian tea delegation invited to India

TEHRAN - India has invited Iran's State Tea Organization (STO) to send a delegation to the country as a part of its new drive to promote tea export.

An information to this effect was given to IRNA by the Chairman of the Tea Board of India, S.S. Ahuja.

The new chairman of the STO had consented to lead the Iranian delegation to India which was expected in June this year," said Ahuja.

He added that India would with the Iranian delegation sort out the problems affecting its tea exports to Iran.

"We have on our agenda some specific proposals pertaining to the export of tea to Iran. Let us see that how best we work out together to increase bilateral trade," he

said.

"We have always valued the Iranian market," said Ahuja informing that Iran has been marked out as one of the main target countries (Russia, Pakistan, Central Asian countries and Iraq being the other one) of India's new tea export promotion drive.

Ahuja said that the issue of exporting tea to Central Asian countries via the Iranian land route will also figure in the discussion during the coming Iranian delegation.

Meanwhile, the director in the Commerce Ministry of India, Bharat Bhushan, told IRNA that enhancing India's tea exports to the Iranian market also figured in a recent "in-house presentation" for pursuing an aggressive market strategy to regain India's share of the world tea trade.

The presentation was made by the Tea Board of India and the additional secretary in charge of plantations in the Ministry of Commerce, Rathi Vinay Jha, before the new Commerce Minister, Ram Krishna Hegde.

Rising domestic consumption and high production cost are stated to be the main reasons behind India's diminishing tea exports.

India is the world's biggest tea producer, accounting for 30 percent of the world total. However, its share in the world trade is only 18 percent as against Sri Lanka's share of 24 percent.

India produced 810.61 million kg of tea in 1997, up from 780.03 million kg in 1996. Of this, India could export only 195.90 million kg.

# ETTELA'AT

INTERNATIONAL

The Only International Persian Daily Newspaper

ISSN: 1353 - 8829 NO. 947, THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 1998

## Iran's trade exhibition opens in Muscat

TEHRAN - Iran's fifth trade exhibition opened in Muscat, Oman, Tuesday. The exhibition is for developing trade exchanges between Iran and other Persian Gulf states. It occupies an area of 250 square meters and has 20 stalls which of products of Iranian manufacturers are displayed.

Among the Iranian commodities at the exhibition are handicrafts, wooden furniture, clothing, blankets, plastic and melamine pots and dishes, decorative dried flowers, ornaments and food stuffs.

The exhibition will be open to visitors for nine days.

Mohajerani:

## Keeping public abreast of developments is a natural right

TEHRAN - Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Attaullah Mohajerani said that there are ambiguities over financial issues at the ministry's cinematic, press and cultural departments as well as at Farabi Cinema Foundation and the Institute for Visual Media.

He, however, said, "I will keep silent until I receive full report on the issue," IRNA reported quoting the daily Iran.

The minister made the remarks in reply to a question on rumors about embezzlements in the ministry during the previous administration.

As an example he referred to the case of a book exhibition and said last year applicants deposited over Rls 15

billion in the exhibition's account. But, he said, at the time of transferring the money to the Central Bank of Iran it was noticed that some Rls 12 billion was missing.

Stressing the fact that keeping the public abreast of the events is the natural right of the people, Mohajerani said that his ministry has asked the Auditing Organization to investigate the financial status of the said departments.

On channeling the budget allocated to programs to campaign against cultural inroad to an economic foundation and receiving its interests, the minister made no reply but said that all the issues are under investigation.

## Tehran mayor's case dominates Majlis debates

TEHRAN - The issue of the detention of Tehran Mayor, Gholam-Hussein Karbaschi, dominated the debates in the open session of the Iranian parliament (Majlis) on Tuesday.

The Tehran deputy Faezeh Hashemi, a staunch supporter of Karbaschi, expressed dismay at the handling of the municipality case by the judiciary, calling it "a clear case of deviation from judicial norms."

To support her statement,

## Iran, U.N. sign protocol on anti-drug campaign

TEHRAN - Visiting Executive Director of the United Nations Drug Control Program (UNDCP) Pino Arlacchi met with head of Welfare Organization Gholam-Reza Ansari to sign a mutual protocol on campaign against drug trafficking.

In the meeting, the two sides exchanged views on ways to confront drug trafficking, addiction and drug addicts, IRNA reported.

Following the meeting Arlacchi told reporters that Iran is world's model state for drug control.

He said no country in the world is known to have successfully ventured into such enterprising measures for drug control as Iran. He added the Islamic Republic has closed as long as 2,500 kilometers of its borders to traffickers which, he said, is similar in other parts of the world.

The U.N. official said the neighboring Afghanistan has controlled 96 percent of the total lands under poppy cultivation but that because there is no sovereign government in that country drug fight in Afghanistan has been a total failure.

Meanwhile, Iran's deputy minister of the interior for security affairs Gholam-Hossein Bolandian said in the same interview with reporters that the Iranian government looks forward to international circles and to industrialized nations to help Iran fight the international drug Mafia that, he said, have a total annual business of about Dls 500 billion in drug trafficking.

## Foreign investments to be guaranteed in Sirjan SEZ

TEHRAN - The Kerman Development Organization (KDO) will guarantee independent or joint Iranian-foreign investments in the Sirjan Special Economic Zone (SEZ), if a ratified agreement is provided to the SEZ management.

The guarantee covers initial investment, machinery, raw material and manufactured products as well as any return of investment with Iranian legal and corporate bodies to construct new industrial units in Sirjan SEZ, according to KDO public relations office. The measure is in line with policies practiced by the government on protection of legal rights of foreign capital and creating an atmosphere conducive to foreign investments in the country.

The KDO is also prepared, given the agreements between Iranian nationals and foreign investors, to guarantee and facilitate the free movement of raw material, machinery and

any return on the investment. The report stipulates that foreign investors that enter into agreement with Iranian legal and corporate bodies to construct new industrial units in Sirjan SEZ, can present the ratified contract or inked agreement to the KDO management and secure the organization's guarantee for their investments.

On its part, the Sirjan SEZ management is duty bound to look after foreign investors' capital on his behalf and in case of any disagreement or violation, to prevent exit of the investor's products and machinery until and unless the claim is resolved.

## FAO ready to help Iran improve agricultural yield

TEHRAN - Envoy of Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Ahmed Jamal Ahmed told Construction Jihad Minister of Iran Mohammad Saeedi-Kia here Tuesday that FAO is willing to boost Iran's agricultural output and minimize wastes.

He said Iran has successfully improved its domestic agricultural, dairy and proteinic foods production, and added that FAO is ready to help Iran improve its quality control of foods.

The Iranian minister said in response that his ministry aims to improve national food security and ensure steady development also with the idea of ridng the Iranian nation from the yoke of a single-product economy based on oil.

The Iranian official observed that the Islamic Republic is currently self-sufficient poultry farming.

He was quoted by IRNA as saying, traditionally Iranians buy gifts for relatives and friends when they are on

further quoted.

Hojatoleslam Mohseni Ejeie, the new head of the special judicial complex, will supervise over the investigations over accusations levelled against Tehran Municipality.

Hojatoleslam Ejeie has been previously in charge of one of the branches of the Islamic Revolutionary Tribunal of Tehran and was head of branch 40 of Tehran Public Court, added the report.

He has already reviewed major embezzlement cases including the 1230-billion-rial embezzlement at Tehran's Bank Saderat. He was appointed to the new post on March 30 this year and investigation over the embezzlement case in Tehran municipality is the first since his appointment.

He dismissed the allegation by some that the move against Larbaschi would weaken the government and the president adding "if the mayor is exonerated from the charges, he would continue at his post even more strenuously than before."

"However, if he is found guilty of the embezzlement charges, it is not better that a person who has lost his credibility be left out of an ensemble of true and trustworthy servants?" Hosseini asked.

Karbaschi was interrogated at Evin Prison, in northern Tehran, for six hours Monday by Nemeiri, the judge of branch 26 of the special judicial complex who is in charge of investigating violations of government employees, reported the daily Iran Tuesday quoting a reliable source.

A number of personnel of the Information Ministry were also present during the interrogation, the source was

A judiciary official said it was decided that from now on the judge of the court in charge of the municipality file will personally question Karbaschi at Evin Prison, Iran added.

In another development, Interior Minister Abdollah Nouri, currently performing Hajj in Saudi Arabia, expressed grave concern over the detention of Tehran Mayor.

The minister praised the services of the mayor and said that the nation is aware of his remarkable services in the cabinets of Hussein Mousavi, Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and the present administration.

"Damaging the prestige of a personality such as Karbaschi entails consequences, responsibility of which will fall with those behind it,

whether they want it or not. Depriving the country from a competent manager such as Karbaschi weakens the municipality managers in particular and the state managers in general. Further aggravating the difficulties of an administration which at the outset faces enormous problems, denigrating services of the construction administration (Rafsanjani's administration) are but few of the consequence of the attitude towards Karbaschi."

The minister further added that consequences of the judiciary's move will not only be limited to the executive branch of the government but will also reach the judiciary giving weight to assumptions on political motivations behind the municipality files, disrespecting laws, depriving the offenders from their basic rights and continuing the unpleasant behaviors of the May 23rd presidential elections.

The minister said the treatment given to Tehran mayor, his arrest without prior knowledge of the interior minister and the president, campaign to discredit him and his aids by certain media, preventing visits in prison, makes an ordinary citizen to question the extent to which he is protected by law.

"As a respect for the president, I personally kept silent over the issue and think that the present conditions of the country require tranquility more than anything else..however, I cannot conceal my concern over the process of judicial investigation of the municipality file and refrain from expressing my doubts over the competency of those who are in charge of the case," he pointed out.

Nouri concluded by saying that investigating the case of an institution with immense responsibility, demands competency and a qualification that not very many possess.

Customs general director:

## Customs laws must be reformed in consistent with culture

TEHRAN - General Director of the Customs Department Mehdi Karbassian said that Iran's customs laws in dealing with home-coming Iranians must be reformed in accordance with the indigenous culture of the people. He added that the regulations are enforced also in dealing with non-Iranian tourists which, he observed, has adverse impact also on Iran's tourism industry.

Karbassian added that all Iranian pilgrims now in Mecca have been given copies of leaflets that give them tips on

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