



















## Iran, Italy sign agreement for agriculture cooperation

TEHRAN - Iran and Italy signed their second agreement for agricultural cooperation in Rome on Tuesday.

Under the contract the two countries would in the first phase conduct research on olive cultivation and in the following phases would widen the scope of mutual cooperation.

The contract also forecasts making necessary coordination for mutual cooperation through setting up a special council in any country.

Expansion of research, exchange of university students, researchers and information are among other provisions of the contract.

## Iran regrets Indian, Pakistani nuclear tests

TEHRAN - President Mohammad Khatami on Tuesday deplored the nuclear tests launched by India and Pakistan in May 1998.

In a meeting with Pakistani religious official with ministerial status Zafar al-Haq, President Khatami hoped that the two countries would exercise meditation to protect peace and tranquility in the region and bring tension to an end, IRNA reported.

"In the meantime, we recommend Pakistan as the friendly state to observe self-restraint and launch diplomatic initiatives to remove its concerns," the president said.

He said, "we regard to the fact that nuclear arms and weapons of mass destruction are as very detrimental to the region, we are and are against proliferation of those arms."

"We want to have a region free of nuclear arms, but,

the discriminatory behavior towards the states indicated an unhealthy situation at the international relations," the president said.

He said the OIC foreign ministers should also study the aggressions of the Zionist regime on Beit ul-Maqaddas.

President Khatami expressed regret at the terrorist operations in Pakistan and hoped that the Pakistani government would succeed in its campaign against terrorism.

Al-Haq handed over a message from Premier Nawaz Sharif to President Khatami calling on the Islamic nations especially Iran to help Pakistan deal with the economic sanctions.

In his message, Nawaz Sharif called for development of brotherly relations between the two countries.

The plea is the right of an OIC member state. We consider any pressure on the Pakistani nation and government as injustice and are

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## Kuwaiti crown prince to visit Tehran

TEHRAN - Kuwait's Ambassador to Tehran Abdullah Abdulaziz ad-Doweikh on Tuesday said that the Kuwaiti Crown Prince, Sheikh Saad al-Abdullah as-Sabah, would visit Tehran to discuss expansion of Iran-Kuwait ties.

In a meeting with Chairman of the Expediency Council Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, the ambassador added that the Kuwaiti nation and its leadership were highly pleased with the amicable relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran, IRNA reported.

Ad-Doweikh who is wrapping up his mission to Tehran, conveyed the best regards of the Kuwaiti emir and crown prince to Rafsanjani and expressed hope that the two countries' relations would further expand in the future.

Rafsanjani told the ambassador that Iran attaches special importance to its relations with the Persian Gulf states as a means of strengthening peace and security in the region.

The regional countries can reduce their dependence on oil and foreign economies through reliance on the country's many potential, Rafsanjani added.

The former president also highlighted the importance of cooperation amongst oil producing countries to boost oil prices in world markets.

## EU delegation to arrive for talks

TEHRAN - The Troika delegation comprising Austrian, British and German officials will arrive here Friday to start first round of Tehran-EU talks on Saturday, Foreign Ministry Director General for West European Affairs Ali Ahani announced here Tuesday.

He told IRNA that in its three-day visit, the delegation will discuss current relations between the Islamic Republic and the EU with a number of Iranian Foreign Ministry officials.

Representatives of the secretariat of the EU Council of Ministers and the European Commission will also accompany Foreign Ministry of

ficials from Britain, Austria and Germany, he added.

On delay in recent Iran-EU talks, Ahani said that during the preliminary talks which was held in Brussels in May, the two sides agreed to hold the main talks in Tehran at levels higher than directors general.

He said when Britain began its term in office as the EU president, it proposed that the talks be held either at the directors general level in Tehran or at the deputy ministers level in London or Brussels.

But, he added, since both the proposals were against Brussels agreements, Iran rejected them.

Austria, as the new EU president, has agreed to hold the talks in Tehran at deputy ministers level, as was decided in Brussels, he said.

The main topics on the agenda of the talks will be Iran-EU cooperation in cultural areas as well as cooperation between EU and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Ahani said.

The latest developments in Afghanistan, Iraq, Central Asia and Caucasus will be among other major topics to be discussed by the Iranian and EU officials, he added.

He expressed the hope that the talks will result in positive and constructive developments in Iran-EU relations.

Ahani also expressed the hope that Iran-EU talks will lead to a better understanding of Iran's viewpoints and stands and will help solve the existing problems.

## Foreign minister reviews Kosovo crisis with German counterpart

TEHRAN - Iran's Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi in a telephone conversation with his German counterpart Klaus Kinkel on Tuesday expressed concern over critical situation and atrocious acts in Kosovo.

Referring to the negative effects of the Kosovo crisis on peace in Bosnia and Balkan region, Kharrazi underlined the need to further promote international endeavors in order to halt the existing crisis in the former Yugoslavia's province, IRNA reported.

Kharrazi also, referring to the earlier positive and fruitful cooperation between the Islamic countries and the Western contact group during the Bosnian crisis, voiced readiness of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) to cooperate with the Western contact group for the resolution of crisis in Kosovo through peaceful means. The German minister of foreign affairs on his part expressed his concern over expansion of crisis in Kosovo and briefed his Iranian counterpart on the latest measures regarding putting an end to the conflicts.

Kinkel in his talk also welcomed the Iran-Germany cooperation aimed at resolving crisis in the former Yugoslav province. He termed as totally 'incorrect' a baseless news which had quoted the German defence minister as saying the Iranian forces interfere in the Kosovo crisis.

The two foreign ministers in their telephone talks also reviewed Tehran-Bonn bilateral relations and further promotion of cooperation and exchange of views between the officials of the two countries.

## Ambassador:

## Southeast Asia crisis not to affect Tehran-Seoul ties

TEHRAN - Parliament Vice-Speaker Hassan Rowhani here Tuesday expressed the hope that current financial crisis in Southeast Asia will not affect Tehran-Seoul economic relations. In a meeting with South Korean Ambassador to Tehran Shin Jang Bum, the parliament vice-speaker expressed satisfaction over the current trend in bilateral political and economic ties and active participation of South Korean firms in the fields of export and investment in Iran, IRNA reported.

Referring to the forthcoming seventh session of Tehran-Seoul joint economic commission, Rowhani hoped that the commission will help boost bilateral trade ties.

Rowhani further called for the expansion of mutual relations in all domains, including parliamentary cooperation, and hoped that South Korea will take a greater share in Iran's Third Development Plan.

Outlining economic problems in Southeast Asia, Bum said that such problems will not affect Tehran-Seoul economic and trade relations. He voiced readiness of South Korean firms and companies to promote cooperation with Iran.

The South Korean diplomat expressed the hope that the parliament will support agreements already reached between the two countries, protection of investments in particular.

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## Iran, Malaysia willing to expand bilateral cooperation

TEHRAN - Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia-Pacific Affairs Mohsen Aminzadeh conferred in Kuala Lumpur on Tuesday with Malaysian Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi on issues of mutual interests.

The Iranian deputy foreign minister who concluded his visit to Brunei on Monday morning arrived in Malaysia on the same day, IRNA reported from Kuala Lumpur.

In the meeting, Aminzadeh expressed satisfaction with the mutual understanding between the two countries.

Welcoming Iran's viewpoints with regards to solving the issues of the Muslim world and underlining Iran's key role in the

OIC and in the Asian continent, the Malaysian foreign minister said Malaysia is in the same belief that the problems now facing the world of Islam can be settled through joint efforts by Muslim states.

Expressing satisfaction with the current level of cooperation between Iran and Malaysia, he said that the two countries can boost bilateral cooperation.

Pangalos, added the statement, pointed to the Iranian side about the Iranian debts owed to Greek private firms and received the assurance from the Iranian minister that there is a political will to resolve this outstanding economic issue.