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Bahrain hopes to develop amicable relations with Iran

TEHRAN - Bahrain's Emir Sheikh Isa bin Sulman al-Khalifa on Saturday was quoted as saying "we hope to expand amicable relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran."

In an interview with the Lebanese daily 'Al-Hayat', he said that the Islamic Republic of Iran is a Muslim neighboring country which plays a key role in the region.

Expansion of relations with Iran can help boost stability and security in this sensitive part of the world, he said.

"Our policy is based on having amicable relations, mutual respect and non-interference in other's internal affairs as well as having mutual cooperation with them," the emir concluded.

Leader:

New Middle East accord a humiliating agreement

TEHRAN - The Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said here Friday that the Mar'at Agreement between the head of the Palestinian Authority and the Zionist regime is a humiliating agreement to the prejudice of Palestinians, the Arabs and the Muslim world, IRNA reported.

Ayatollah Khamenei who was addressing thou-

sands of worshippers as leader of the 1,000th Friday congregational prayers here since the victory of the Islamic Revolution said in his second sermon that the broadcast and print media in Iran must dwell on the details of the agreement for the information of the people of Iran so that they would know its true implications.

He said the Americans

had worked hard to bring about the agreement between the Palestinian Authority and the Zionist regime to make good on the current immorality scandal that had plagued the U.S. president. He said additionally the American diplomacy for the Middle East, too, had proved ineffective which justified every effort on their part to strike an agreement between Arafat and the Zionist regime as a foreign policy success for them.

He said the agreement committed the Palestinian Authority to arrest and prosecute every struggling Palestinian and report it to a Zionist court on a bi-weekly basis a task which, he said, had hitherto been the duty and the preoccupation of the Zionists.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution said since its creation by the Americans and the Britons in 1948, the Zionist regime had felt insecurity on the occupied lands, and commented that the accord now commits Yasser Arafat to maintain guarantee security for the occupiers of the Palestinian lands, the report added.

Ayatollah Khamenei said the Zionist regime is out to offer only a one-way deal with the people of Palestine, that is, to allow them to live in their home country only on condition of being servants of and subservient to the Zionist regime.

He hoped that the people of Palestine and the Muslim world would get back the genuine dignity and the status they deserve.

Cairo paper:

Normalization of Iran-Egypt ties imminent

TEHRAN - An Egyptian diplomatic source has told Cairo newspaper "Al-Shaab" that the normalization of ties between Cairo and Tehran was "only a matter of time" adding that the climate in bilateral ties "is good."

The source pointed out that the last meeting between Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi and his Egyptian counterpart Amr Moussa on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly in New York on 23 August contributed to resolving differences in some issues and in achieving similarity of views in other issues, IRNA reported from Athens.

The Egyptian source said upgrading of diplomatic relations and exchange of visits of high-ranking officials from the two Muslim countries was "a formal step," adding that the two sides were not being hasty in normalizing their relations before taking certain steps which will rule out any "tremor in the future."

The bi-weekly Arab paper noted that Cairo last month appointed a new head at Egypt's interests bureau in Tehran with the rank of an ambassador and with the task of a charge d'affaires.

The paper said that both the United States and Israel have voiced concern over the rapprochement between Egypt and the Islamic Republic.

Al-Shaab said bilateral ties, especially in the economy and trade sectors, were constantly improving.

Kharrazi and Moussa have agreed to hold a joint meeting with the Turkish Foreign Minister Ismail Cem on the sidelines of the meeting of eight Islamic countries in Dhaka, capital of Bangladesh, in November to discuss issues of mutual interest.

An Egyptian economic delegation is expected to visit Tehran mid-November to discuss investments in joint projects.

Meanwhile, the head of Lebanon's Supreme Shi'ite Council Mahdi Shamseddin disclosed that he was mediating between Egypt and Iran.

In an interview with Egyptian weekly 'Al-Ahram al-Arabi', Shamseddin said he was very much interested in improvement of ties between Cairo and Tehran and was exerting efforts in this direction.

"God has helped me in achieving significant steps in this regard...and I hope that some difficulties will be removed," he told the weekly published Saturday.

Asked if he carried any messages between Cairo and Tehran during his recent visit to Cairo, Shamseddin replied, "we do not speak on these issues and I am carrying out my duty. The Egyptian and Iranian leadership are aware and responsible and I am carrying out my duty on the Arab and Islamic level."

Iranian language, literature in China

TEHRAN - An Iranian researcher believes that the variety of works in Persian language available in China is a good manifestation of widespread activities of Iranians residing in China in the field of literature over centuries.

Ms. Maryam Daftari,

senior researcher and expert in China affairs of the Iranian Foreign Ministry, raised the point in an article to an international gathering on the history and culture of Hui Muslim minority which was held in Ningxia Hui recently.

Some 200 scholars and

researchers from Iran, U.S., Australia, Egypt, Sudan, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Israel, Taiwan, Hong Kong and 13 Chinese provinces attended the gathering.

Historical relations and similarities of the two Iranian and Chinese civilizations

as its affiliated international monetary institutes.

The assistance should be coordinated to solidify infrastructure of the ECO member states, he said.

There are broad opportunities for cooperation in trade, investment, energy, environment, industry and agriculture, which still need to be broadened further, the envoy added.

He referred to outside pressures to alter the form of economic relations among regional countries and their trade ties with other countries, as the major problem in the way of regional prosperity and sustainable development.

The pressures have hindered establishment of possible and rational ways to export oil and raw material and will undoubtedly give way to expensive alternatives with negative environmental impacts, he said.

These policies leave negative impact on regional cooperation and hamper efforts by regional countries to join the global economy.

Referring to the dangers posed by production and smuggling of narcotics in the region, he called for cooperation of U.N. Drug Control Program with ECO in this respect.

formation in this field with Iran, IRNA reported.

Fallah voiced Iran's readiness to cooperate with relevant Kuwaiti officials in the campaign against drug smuggling.

Meanwhile, Iran's Ambassador to Kuwait Ali Janati told director general in charge of international organizations at the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry Abdulhamid al-Avazi in Kuwait City on Saturday that Iran lauds Kuwait for giving a negative vote to a human rights resolution passed by the U.N. against Iran.

Al-Avazi, stressing the importance of Iran's role in the region, said that increase in exchange of visits between Iranian and Kuwaiti officials would guarantee strengthening of relations and expansion of cooperation between the two countries at international fora, especially the United

Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

In another meeting, Janati told Kuwaiti Information Minister Yusuf al-Samit that Kuwaiti press which are rich in content are a sign of Kuwaiti officials' will to promote national culture and values.

The two sides also exchanged views on mutual cooperation in the fields of culture, arts, tourism and press.

Asked on Iran's current stance towards Taliban,

Iran interested in developing relations with East Asian nations

TEHRAN - Iranian First Vice-President Hassan Habibi said on Saturday Iran is interested in developing relations with the East Asian nations.

In a meeting with South Korean Minister of State for Foreign Trade Han Duc Su, Habibi said Tehran-Seoul economic cooperation has made progress in recent years with which the two countries are satisfied, IRNA reported.

Habibi called for promotion of bilateral cooperation in cultural, scientific and academic fields and exchange of visits by the two countries officials.

He said Iran is keen on active presence of South Korean private sector in Iran.

Duc Su said the Iranian economy is strategic with effective role in the region.

He said South Korea is willing to cooperate with Iran on shipbuilding, motor-car industry, electronic devices and textile industry.

Later on Saturday, South Korean minister of state for foreign trade said that South Korea is willing to actively take part in Iran's five-year economic development plans.

In a meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi, Duc Su said setting up relationship between the two countries businessmen and officials would serve to develop bilateral cooperation.

He said Seoul is interested in partnership in joint venture projects in Iran.

Kharrazi welcomed development of Tehran-Seoul trade relations and voiced Iran's readiness to work in this respect.

Kharrazi and Duc Su signed two agreements on joint investment and activation of Iran-South Korea air link.

Meanwhile, Iran and South Korea Saturday signed a letter of understanding to improve their trade ex-

changes especially in the area of the small and mid-size industries.

The letter was signed by Secretary General of Iran's Chamber of Commerce Gohari, and Chairman of Iran-Korea economic cooperation committee Han Duc Su.

The Iranian official said that food industries, chemicals, and non-ferrous metals as well as free trade zones in

Iran are trade advantages that the Islamic Republic can offer South Korea.

He said the value of annual trade exchanges between Iran and South Korea is about two billion dollars of which Dlr 1.4 billion is the value of Iran's exports to South Korea and Dlr 180 million of that is the value of non-oil products such as agro-products, textiles, and minerals.

He made it clear that Taliban's behavior is not at all acceptable and Iran would not at all allow the Taliban to misuse the patience and prudence of Iranian officials or delay fulfilling the responsibility entrusted to the militia group.

"We recommend Taliban to immediately meet the demands of the international community," Kharrazi concluded.

He stressed that Iran has always been of the opinion that war in Afghanistan should come to a halt and the belligerent sides should put aside their differences through dialogue.

Asked on Iran's current stance towards Taliban,

Iran, Turkmenistan sign accord to cooperate in movie business

TEHRAN - Iran and Turkmenistan signed a seven-article protocol that allows them to collaborate in the area of film and movie business.

The protocol allows Turkmenistan to dub Iranian films and distribute them in Central Asia.

According to the protocol the translation of the dialogs of Iranian movies will be undertaken by Turkmenistan and the technical aspects of the dubbing services will be done in Iran.

Iran and Turkmenistan have also agreed to study prospects for making films together and offer their proposals in that area during the upcoming Fajr Film Festival in Tehran, in February 1999.

Iran welcomes durable cease-fire in Afghanistan

TEHRAN - Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi told IRNA here on Saturday that Iran welcomes real and permanent cease-fire in Afghanistan, which could give way to comprehensive talks between belligerent sides.

Kharrazi, referring to news suggesting Taliban's possible agreement to establishment of cease-fire in Afghanistan, said that Iranian officials expect to see a broad-based government representing all ethnic groups come to power in the wake of negotiations between Afghan groups.

He stressed that Iran has always been of the opinion that war in Afghanistan should come to a halt and the belligerent sides should put aside their differences through dialogue.

Asked on Iran's current stance towards Taliban,

Kharrazi said "we have some demands which have been made known explicitly."

The Iranian minister continued that Taliban's all-out cooperation in responding to the demands of the international community, speedy identification and punishment of the murderers of Iranian diplomats and an IRNA correspondent in Mazar-i-Sharif and release of the remaining Iranian nationals in Taliban's captivity are among the said

demands.

He made it clear that Taliban's behavior is not at all acceptable and Iran would not at all allow the Taliban to misuse the patience and prudence of Iranian officials or delay fulfilling the responsibility entrusted to the militia group.

"We recommend Taliban to immediately meet the demands of the international community," Kharrazi concluded.

Tajikistan seeks to expand ties with Iran

TEHRAN - Foreign Minister of Iran Kamal Kharrazi and his Tajik counterpart Talbak Nazarov here Saturday reviewed Iran-Tajikistan relations and the situation in neighboring Afghanistan.

Kharrazi and Nazarov expressed their mutual pleasure with the establishment of regular flights between Mashhad and Dushanbe and voiced their interest for further broadening relations between the two countries, IRNA reported.

They also agreed that the only solution to bloodshed in Afghanistan is negotiations for the creation of a government with the involvement of all warring groups in that country.

The Tajik foreign minister arrived in Tehran Saturday afternoon at the head of a political delegation, and was greeted at Tehran's Mehrabad International Airport by his Iranian counterpart.

Speaking to reporters at the airport, Nazarov said that while Iran-Tajikistan relations presently stand at a satisfactory level, Tajikistan seeks to expand its ties even further with the Islamic Republic.

On the issue of peace in Tajikistan, Nazarov said that while peace has arrived in the country, it needs to be further strengthened.

Also fielding reporters questions was Kharrazi who said that the amicable relations between Iran and Tajikistan stems from the common culture and language as well as "deep spiritual and psychological bonds" between the two nations.

Stressing Iranian support for the Tajik peace process, Kharrazi cited the "political maturity" of the Tajik nation as the reason for progress of the peace process in the country.

Welcoming the visit of the Tajik delegation, Kharrazi announced Iran's readiness to help with the economic development of Tajikistan.

During his visit to Tehran, the Tajik foreign minister is scheduled to hold talks with Kharrazi as well as President Mohammad Khatami.

Three Iranian entries at London film festival

TEHRAN - This year's London film festival, opening November 5, includes three Iranian features at of what it says is the "best and most diverse selection of world cinema available to audiences."

During the 15-day program, Abolfazl Jalili's Rags-e-Khak (dance of dust), which won the Silver Leopard at the Locarno film festival, is being screened twice. The award-winning film was also shown at Toronto and received its UK premier at August's Edinburgh festival, IRNA reported from

London. Mohsen Makhmalbaf's Sokout (the silence), also at the Toronto, has one showing, while Sib (the apple), the debut film of his daughter Samira, has two, one of which has already sold out.

In its promotion, the London film festival said that Sib, shot in a rundown quarter of Tehran, was "one of the true discoveries of this year's Cannes festival."

Films at the London festival, in its 42nd year, are being shown from a total of 42 countries.

Iran stresses necessity of U.N. cooperation with OIC, ECO

TEHRAN - Iran's representative to the U.N., Hadi Nejad-Husseinian, called for effective cooperation of the U.N. with the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO).

Nejad-Husseinian made the remark at the General Assembly meeting on Thursday which discussed U.N.-OIC, U.N.-ECO cooperation, IRNA reported from New York. He said that OIC members consider as essential effective, constructive and meaningful contribution of Muslim states to administration of international affairs to preserve world peace and security.

He said that the Islamic countries are determined to offer effective assistance to promote international peace and security as well as sustainable development. To this end in various OIC meetings areas for collective efforts have been discussed and identified. The Iranian envoy pointed out that the decisions and resolutions of the 8th OIC summit in Tehran last December and the 25th OIC ministerial meeting in Doha include many issues which are shared by the U.N.

Furthermore, Islamic countries have voiced full

support for cooperation to protect environment, to counter terrorism and narcotics smuggling and to respect international laws in general and the U.N. Charter in particular.

Turning to the possibility of U.N.-OIC cooperation in various fields including human rights and children's rights, he said this calls for exploring new avenues for forging understanding and strengthening cooperation.

Nejad-Husseinian pointed out that Iran, as the current OIC chairman, is committed to coordinate efforts of Muslim states to consolidate U.N.-OIC cooperation.

Meanwhile, Nejad-Husseinian told a U.N. General Assembly meeting on U.N.-ECO cooperation Thursday that Iran believes the U.N. should play an effective role in strengthening ECO and uplifting it to the status of an efficient regional organization. He said that although various U.N. agencies are cooperating with ECO at present, there are more requests from the region to upgrade the level of cooperation.

Nejad-Husseinian pointed out that restructuring of ECO requires assistance of U.N. specialized agencies, organizations, programs as well

Iran, Armenia to cooperate in surface transportation

TEHRAN - Iran and Armenia signed an agreement on expansion of bilateral cooperation in the area of surface transportation.

The agreement was signed by Iranian deputy at Ministry of Road and Transportation Masoud Khansari and his Armenian counterpart.

According to the agreement, Iran and Armenia will cooperate in construction of a

highway which once completed will join Iran, Armenia and Georgia to Europe.

Increase in the number of transportation companies, construction of terminals for Iranian lorries in Armenia and Iran's participation in road

building projects in Armenia were among other points envisaged in the agreement.

The two countries also voiced readiness for establishment of transportation company with participation of Georgia and Russia.

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