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## Bahrain seeks expansion of ties with Iran

TEHRAN - Iran and Bahrain explored fresh avenues for the expansion of bilateral ties in various fields and discussed regional and international issues and matters of mutual interest.

The new Iranian Ambassador to Bahrain Mohammad Jalal Firouz-Nia exchanged views met with Bahraini ministers of cabinet affairs and information, state, justice and Islamic affairs in Manama on Monday.

Referring to the historical and cultural bonds shared by the two countries, the officials of the two Muslim and brotherly nations stressed the need for promotion of ties.

The Bahraini ministers also stressed the role of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the region and called for an opening of new chapter in bilateral relations.

# ETTELA'AT

INTERNATIONAL

The Only International Persian Daily Newspaper

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## Tanker collides jetty, crude oil leaks into sea

BANDAR ABBAS, Hormuzgan - Director General of the provincial Environmental Protection Department Behzad Saeedpur said here on Monday that leakage of 100 tons of crude oil from a tanker has polluted waters off this southern port city.

Saeedpur told IRNA the leakage occurred after the tanker collided with a jetty. He said the tanker was carrying about 60,000 tons of crude oil when it hit the jetty while trying to berth.

He added that efforts were underway to collect oil slicks from surface of waters and prevent them from spreading to the basins of power plants and oil refineries. Saeedpur said the case has been referred to a court for investigation.

# Japan calls for expansion of ties with Iran

TEHRAN - Speaker of Japan's House of Representatives Soichiro Ito in a meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi in Tokyo on Monday called for further expansion and deepening of relations between Tehran and Tokyo.

Ito said that Japan is very happy with Iran's growing relations with its neighbors and European countries. IRNA reported from Tokyo.

Iran and Japan have amicable relations, said the Japanese parliamentarian, adding that recent exchange of visits by Iranian and Japanese parliamentarians were highly fruitful, paving the way for further exchanges of political delegations.

Kharrazi said in reply that Iran and Japan enjoyed age old relations and understanding. Iran is now seriously pursuing the policy of dialogue amongst nations as promoted by President Mohammad Khatami.

Iran's foreign policy is based on having friendly cooperation with Japan and without a doubt Iranian and Japanese parliaments have played a highly important role in expanding bilateral relations.

Iran has a society with a rich culture and shares enormous grounds for cooperation with such countries as Japan, which have been successful in maintaining their cultural identity, said the Iranian minister.

The Iranian government's policy is based on easing tension in the region and improving relations with other countries, said Kharrazi, adding

that many achievements have been made in this respect over the past one year.

Iran is also actively contributing to economic development of the region, especially that of Central Asia and the Caucasus.

Kharrazi arrived in Tokyo on Monday on an official four-day visit and during his stay in Japan he is to meet and confer with the Japanese prime minister, foreign minister and a number of political personalities.

Meanwhile, Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura said in Tokyo on Monday that Japan would offer insurance service (Miti) to the economic projects due to be carried out jointly by Iran and Japan.

In the first round of talks with Kharrazi, Komura said the Miti insurance service would cover a variety of economic projects and bilateral trade.

He said Iran and Japan have made good progress in economic cooperation especially in the field of agriculture and environment protection and they are required to boost political relations.

Komura said Japan is enthusiastically following up the policy of the current government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and supports the proposal of President Mohammad Khatami to designate the year 2001 as the year of dialogue amongst civilizations.

Japan is willing to hold dialogue with the Islamic Republic of Iran, Komura said.

Kharrazi who is on a four-day visit to Tokyo at the invitation of his Japanese counterpart said Iran and Japan have ancient cultures and civilizations and they are required to deepen bilateral cooperation.

He said Tehran-Tokyo relations have long-standing background and the two countries should cooperate to build up comprehensive political, economic and cultural relations.

Kharrazi said the Islamic Republic of Iran made fundamental progress in terms of diplomatic relations with the other states last year and the United Nations General Assembly approved unanimously the proposal of the Iranian president on dialogue amongst civilizations.

Kharrazi said Iran welcomes holding dialogue with Japan.

The Iranian foreign minister said Tehran-Tokyo regional and international cooperation is of high importance and the two countries would be reliable economic partners for each other.

He called for political resolve to strengthen economic and cultural cooperation.

Kharrazi invited the Japanese foreign minister to visit the Islamic Republic of Iran next year. Komura visited Tehran last April.

Kharrazi and Komura also discussed ways of promoting tourism and cultural heritage as well as preparations made by Iran to host more Japanese tourists in Iran.

# Iran, Jordan to promote cooperation

TEHRAN - In the third session of Iran-Jordan joint economic, industrial and cultural cooperation commission, the two countries underlined the need to expand air transport cooperation, set up trade fairs and increase banking cooperation, it was announced on Monday.

According to a report released by the public relations office of the Industries Ministry, the two countries officials have also agreed to sign a memorandum of understanding on enforcement of preferential tariffs for Iranian and Jordanian made goods and services, IRNA reported. It was agreed in the commission that a Jordanian delegation visit Iran in a bid to study the repayment of Jordan's debts to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The two sides also agreed to form a trans-

portation technical committee to study expansion of trade cooperation mainly for transit of goods and passengers between the two countries.

The two countries also agreed to establish two joint companies namely Idromina for marketing and engineering services and Idroexpo for trade and tour-

ism. Mutual cooperation in industry, agriculture, education and pharmaceutical was also on the agenda of the meeting, and it was agreed that in the next session to be held in Tehran, the two countries make further efforts for guaranteeing mutual investments and avoidance of double taxation.

**Speaker:**

## Muslims must preserve collective interests

TEHRAN - Speaker of the Islamic Consultative Assembly (majlis) Ali Akbar Nateq Nouri said here Monday that the world of Islam is target of all-out enemy attacks and called on the Islamic countries to work for the interests of Islam and Muslims throughout the globe.

Making the remark in a meeting with Tunisian Ambassador to Tehran Said Nasser Ramadan, the speaker expressed satisfaction over the current level of Tehran-Tunis relations, IRNA reported.

Calling for further expansion of the two countries cooperation, the majlis speaker said the ambassadors of the two countries can play a key role in promotion of bilateral relations.

The Tunisian ambassador voiced his country's interests in bolstering ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran in all fields, politics and economics in particular.

He praised Iran's stands with regards to the latest developments in the Islamic world as well as the announcement of the year 2001 as the year of dialogue amongst civilizations.

He also underlined the need for exchange of visits between political and economic officials of the two countries.

## 900 oil wells drilled by NIDC

AHVAZ- Managing Director of National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC) Haydar Bahmani said here Monday that since its foundation in 1979, the company had drilled as many as 900 oil wells and maintained another 480 in Iran.

The company official who was speaking on the occasion of the anniversary of the establishment of the company told IRNA the company had purchased 12 horizontal drilling equipment at about Dlr 12 million and imported them into Iran.

The import of horizontal drilling equipment will save Iran a substantial investment in terms of foreign currencies.

He said that the company had also recently drilled a 4,500-meter deep oil well in neighboring Turkmenistan, and that drilling of a second well was under way in the same country.

The National Iranian Drilling Company has 46 drilling rigs, 42 of them being used on land, two of them on the seabed and another two of them now being built.

**Rahnavaard:**

## Councils, focal point of political development

TEHRAN - President Khatami's political advisor Ms. Zahra Rahnavaard said that city and village councils are the focal point of participation and political development in an institutionalized and freedom-seeking system.

Pointing to women's participation in the councils elections, Rahnavaard said that Iranian women played a dynamic role in the course of the Islamic Revolution, the Iraqi imposed war (1980-88) and the presidential elections on May 23.

Therefore, she added, women are expected to play the same role, even stronger and more expanded, in the formation of councils, either as voters or candidates.

She said those who are opposed to the councils are in fact siding with dictatorship and domineering trends.

Commenting on equality between men and women, Rahnavaard said she believed they were equal in terms of their intellectual potentials and executive abilities.

However, she regretted that such an equality was neglected in decision-makings, adding that if women played a more active role in policy-makings and at managerial

levels, the world would have been more developed and life more pleasant with less violence.

She stressed that women should enjoy their real, Islamic status within the family, adding that legal discriminations against them must be removed in the society.

Rahnavaard concluded by saying that people should be organized within councils to the extent that all individuals would realize and practically feel they are playing a part in the political, economic and cultural fate of the country.

In another development, Interior Minister Abdolvahed Mousavi Lari appointed his deputy in charge of social and security affairs, Mostafa Tajzadeh, as head of city councils elections headquarters.

Some 200,000 representatives are expected to be elected by people from across the country during the city councils elections slated for Friday February 26.

Registration of candidates will start on Wednesday and last until January 3.

The elections will be held in 730 cities and towns and in most 4,000 villages each with a population of over 100 people.

## Dialog amongst civilizations best means to achieve global peace

TEHRAN - Greek Charge d'Affaires to Tehran Ioannis Vrailas welcomed Iranian President Mohammad Khatami's proposal on designating 2001 as the year of dialog among civilizations and underlined its significance as the best means to realize peace, security and human development in the third millennium.

Speaking to IRNA Monday, Vrailas said in fact Greece and Italy were

among the first member states of the U.N. to co-sponsor the relevant resolution at the General Assembly which was tabled by Iran.

The Greek diplomat said the 20th century has been characterized by many achievements, as well as by wasted opportunities and tragic events like the many wars that inflicted tremendous suffering on humanity.

"In today's world of globalization and increasing de-

pendence among nations, dialog aimed to promote tolerance and mutual understanding and to reduce tensions becomes a necessity and the best means to achieve global peace, security and development."

However, he added, the most important obstacle in the way of a constructive dialog among civilizations "is the lack of tolerance, mutual understanding and respect for diversity of mankind," said the Greek diplomat.

## Huge sums go up in smokes in Iran everyday

TEHRAN - Iranians spend Rls 20 billion on cigarettes everyday, according to an article in the Monday issue of Persian daily 'Jomhuri Eslami'. The number of smokers in the country stands at 12 million or about a fifth of the total population, the daily added.

Jomhuri Eslami further quoted the deputy head of Iran's anti-smoking cam-

paign society as saying that the actual daily cost of smoking in the country is more in the order of Rls 80 billion, if one includes the amount spent on health disorders as a result of smoking, IRNA reported. Iranian smokers spend Rls three billion on matches just for lighting their cigarettes, Abdul-Hamid Omidvar added.

According to statistics for

the year 1374 (ended March 20, 1996), the government's revenues from cigarettes stood at Rls 283.9 billion, while smokers directly or indirectly cost the government Rls 293 billion. This indicates, Omidvar continued, that the government is actually subsidizing smoking in the country.

Dividing the national wealth spent on smoking by the total population indicates that a family of five loses Rls 5,000 on smoking even if none of its members smokes, Omidvar was quoted as saying by Jomhuri Eslami.

## India to source leather from Iran

TEHRAN - India is exploring the possibility of identifying Iran as the main market to export leather raw material.

"Iran can become India's main supplier of hides and skins," said the chairman of India's Council for Leather Exports (CLE), M. Rafique Ahmad, to IRNA in New Delhi Monday.

An 11-member delegation visited Iran on November 14-16 this year for this purpose, he added.

The delegation attended a buyer-seller meeting in Tehran and also visited Tabriz charm shahr.

"The visit was highly successful. We are working out at various possibilities, based on our interaction with Iranian exporters during the visit," said Ahmad who headed the delegation.

Ahmad said that hides and skins are cheaper in Iran compared to Brazil and Australia, the main exporters of leather raw material to India.

"Iran's proximity to India, compared to Brazil or Australia, will also make imports of hides and skins from Iran cost effective," said Ahmad.

India is one of the world's main leather goods exporters.

The CLE delegation also visited Turkey, Greece, Israel and Lebanon to identify them as India's new market for leather exports.

According to the CLE sources, the delegation bagged export orders to the tune of Dlr 50 million from these countries, mainly Israel and Lebanon.

**Lawyer:**

## Appeal court ruling in Tehran Municipality case to be delayed again

TEHRAN - The appeal court ruling on the suspended mayor of Tehran, Gholamhussein Karbaschi, will probably be delayed again due to withdrawal from the case of one of the three judges of the appeal court, said Karbaschi's lawyer Bahman Keshavarz Tuesday.

Karbaschi who was tried by a Tehran court in July on charges of fraud, was sentenced to five years in jail, payment of Rls one billion in cash fine and return of Rls 1600 million worth of Tehran Municipality property.

The court also banned Karbaschi from holding any government post for the next 20 years. He appealed the verdict on August 16.

Keshavarz told IRNA that the court ruling was sus-

posed to be announced late in the Iranian month of Azar (November 21-December 21) but with respect to the withdrawal of the third judge one should not expect the verdict so soon.

Keshavarz added that although the court can issue its verdict in the presence of two judges but he was informed on Monday that the head of the court (Abdulali Naseh) prefers to issue the ruling upon the judgement of the three judges.

"Therefore, we should wait for the third judge and since the new judge needs to go through the case carefully, in order to judge about the case, the verdict will take some time to be issued," he said.

Director general of the public relations office of the

judiciary, Fotovat Nasiri-Savadkouhi, said in an interview Monday that the verdict on Karbaschi's case has been issued.

The judges have considered some commutation in the ruling, he said, adding that the charges and the cases of conviction remain the same. Nasiri-Savadkouhi added that two counselors helped the appeal court judge in reviewing the Tehran Municipality case but due to differences of view between them in some cases, a third counselor had joined and finally the court issued its ruling with regards to all the aspects of the case.

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## Committee formed for public education on recycling Iran-Turkey trade declines

TEHRAN - A committee was formed for public education on recycling and the role it plays in the country's economy as well as in improvement of the environment.

Speaking at the headquarters for regulating consumption patterns on Monday, secretary of the government's Council for Public Education Hassan Qadiri Abyaneh said Monday wastes and garbage is dubbed as "dirty gold".

He said if garbage is recycled on the spot, only in Tehran over Dlr 100 million would be saved annually.

This amount could be spent for building three large dams, Qadiri Abyaneh said, adding that paper, plastics, glassware and metals are among substances which can be recycled.

He said the committee was formed upon orders of government spokesman and head of the council Ataollah Mo-hajerani. The official said that formulation of consumption patterns demand cooperation of all government organizations as well as the mass media.

has a fleet of 45 aircraft, is working on proposals to buy old Saudi planes."

On his part, Shariatmadari said Saudi officials have asked to employ Iranian doctors and nurses in Saudi Arabia.

This is in addition to cooperation in the pharmaceutical sector since Iran meets 97 percent of its domestic requirement with local production.

Predicting two-way trade to reach 7.5 billion Saudi riyals next year, Assadaloh Asgaroladi, vice president of Iran's Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Mines, said "we are in the process of acquainting ourselves with

regulatory provisions of the kingdom in order to remove all existing trade and investment barriers."

Total bilateral trade between Iran and Saudi Arabia presently amounts to 2.6 billion Saudi riyals.

The two countries have also agreed to hold three single country fairs. Iran is to organize a 10-day fair in Dahr-an in March.

Saudi Arabia and Iran signed a memorandum of understanding in Riyadh last week to formalize the establishment of five joint sub-committees under the framework of the Saudi-Iranian joint economic commission.

As part of the plan, saplings are being planted in 10,000 hectares of the southern slopes of the Alborz mountain range. The operation on some 1,600 hectares of the area has already been com-

pleted, he added.

Kalantari further called for public participation to speed up the pace of the project in the areas to the north and northeast of Tehran.

Touching on last week's forest fires in the northern provinces of Gilan, Mazandaran and Golestan, Kalantari said that low precipitation and as a result dry weather has been the main cause of the fires. The fires damaged some 584 hectares of forests in total, but only 30 hectares sustained major damages, the forestry head said.

## Rise in price of foodstuffs in Tehran

TEHRAN - The Central Bank of Iran (CBI) announced that the price of dairy and protein-rich items, cereals, rice, sugar, tea, fruits, and vegetables rose between 0.2% and 23.9% for the week ending December 11, compared to the preceding week.

The CBI also reported that the price of eggs, chicken, and sugar had increased by 23.9, 8.1 and 5.3 percent, respectively, in the above mentioned period.

Price of vegetables, fruits, rice, red meat, dairy and tea also registered an increase of 2.6, 2.3, 2.0, 1.4, 0.4 and 0.2 percent, respectively, in the same period.

According to the report, which tracks price for 11 retail food items in Tehran, only the price of vegetable oil registered a decline of 0.5 percent in the said period.

The report also shows that the price of eggs, vegetables, sugar, and fruits were 30.3, 12.5, 11.8, 9.1 percent higher, respectively, for the week compared to the corresponding week in the month before.

In the same period, the prices of vegetable oil, rice and dairy products were 0.3, 0.7 and 0.4 percent lower, but the average price of other surveyed items were 3.4 percent higher, the report said.

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