

Shiraz can play a role in Iran-Europe ties: Austrian envoy

Tehran Times Political Desk
SHIRAZ — Fars Province and its capital Shiraz can play an important role in expanding Iran-Europe relations, said the Austrian ambassador to Tehran on Tuesday.

The ambassador made the remarks in a meeting between a delegation from the European Union Chamber of Commerce and Shiraz mayor.

The Austrian envoy said that Fars with its rich culture and economic potential can help increase relations between Iran and European countries.

He also said Takhte Jamshid is a symbol of cultural grandeur of this province.

He went on to say that Shiraz-Bandar Abbas railroad network, which is currently under construction, promises good prospects for Fars Province's economic growth as it connects the province to the sea.

He also referred to Austria-Iran amicable ties and expressed hope the relations between Iran and Europe would expand in the near future.

Shiraz mayor also said the city has always been considered as a cultural city in a way that it has the second highest number of local newspapers after Tehran.

He hoped that Shiraz-Bandar Abbas railroad will bring about an economic boom for this city.

Majlis unsettled over Saudis' insults against Iranian pilgrims: MP

Tehran Times Political Desk
TEHRAN — A lawmaker announced on Tuesday that the Majlis is critical of Saudi police's offensive behavior toward Iranians visiting holy sites in Mecca and Medina for Umrah rituals.

Jalal Yahyazadeh said the Majlis is set to issue a statement to protest against such behaviors.

Yahyazadeh told the Mehr News Agency that he believes the Majlis must take serious measures against inconveniences caused by Saudi Arabians.

Yahyazadeh said that Umrah is one of preferred rituals, saying that if such behaviors continue, Umrah tours for Iranians should be stopped.

Iranian pilgrims should not go for Umrah, unless the security is provided for them, he suggested.

Presidential hopefuls to register in May

TEHRAN (FNA) — Iranian Deputy Interior Minister Kamran Danshejou said candidates for Iran's June presidential election should register their names over a period of five days starting May 5.

"Presidential candidates for the 10th round of presidential elections can do the necessary registration beginning on the 5th of May," Daneshjou said on Monday.

He added that candidates would have five days to turn up at the ministry with the required documents for official registration.

Mehdi Karroubi, who heads the Reformist Etemad-e Melli (National Confidence) party, and former Iranian President Seyed Mohammad Khatami have so far announced their official decision to run for presidency in the Reformist camp.

Earlier, an aide to Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said that Ahmadinejad is also planning to run for a second four-year term but he has yet to formally declare his candidacy.

The former Iranian Prime Minister Mir Hossein Mousavi is also expected to enter the country's upcoming presidential race.

Rafsanjani, Iraq PM al-Maliki meet in Baghdad



Tehran Times Political Desk
TEHRAN — Expediency Council Chairman Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki held a meeting in Baghdad on Monday night.

The two sides called for expansion of ties especially in commercial, economic, and cultural areas, the Iraq prime minister's information office announced.

They also stressed the need for

a rapid implementation of the past agreements signed between the two neighboring countries.

Praising the current high level of Tehran-Baghdad relations, al-Maliki called for further boost to the friendly cooperation between

all regional countries.

Rafsanjani also congratulated Maliki on a successful holding of provincial election, calling it a great victory for the Iraqi security forces who have managed to establish peace and security in the country.

Iran's Expediency Council chairman, who started a five-day tour of Iraq on Monday morning, held talks with Iraqi President Jalal Talebani on Monday evening and expressed Iran's deep readiness to provide aid to Iraq.

Also, Rafsanjani in a joint press conference with Iraqi President Jalal Talebani in Baghdad on Monday said that occupation forces are expected to leave Iraqi territory as soon as possible.

"We hope occupation of Iraq will end as soon as possible and the Iraqi people will build a unified and independent state without presence of aliens and successfully achieve development," he said.

Iraq's constitution is an important path to the country's independence, he said and urged all Iraqi religious and political groups to get united. In the meantime, Rafsanjani lauded the efforts of Iraqi officials to uphold national unity in the war-shattered country, IRNA reported.

West's double standards on human rights show its 'partiality': Mottaki

Tehran Times Political Desk
TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki has stated that the West's double standards towards human rights indicates its "partiality", the Foreign Ministry said in a report here on Tuesday.

"The West's contradictory approaches and double standards towards the human rights in the Non-Aligned Movement countries and Islamic states shows its futile partiality," he said in a meeting with Sri Lankan Minister of Disaster

Management and Human Rights Hon Mahinda Samarasinghe on the sidelines of the 10th Human Right Council at the European headquarters of the United Nations in Geneva.

Mottaki also expressed satisfaction over the current level of relations between Iran and Sri Lanka.

"Tehran and Colombo ... have taken good steps for deepening bilateral ties and have regular consultations about international cooperation in different areas."

Iran and Sri Lanka has forged close ties. The Iranian and Sri Lankan presidents have made visits to each other's country.

Mottaki expressed hope that the agreements signed between Iran and Sri Lanka during these visits will be implemented soon.

Samarasinghe, for his part, pointed out that the international cooperation between Iran and Sri Lanka has increased remarkably.

"We are delighted that bilateral relations have increased in all areas," he said.

Deputy FM: Durable peace requires people's support

TEHRAN (IRNA) — Deputy Foreign Minister for European Affairs Mehdi Safari on Tuesday highlighted significant role of Iran in maintaining regional peace and stability and said any durable peace in the region requires active presence of people.

According to the Information and Press Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Safari made the remark in a meeting with head of foreign policy commission of Denmark's Parliament on Tuesday.

As history testifies, countries and peoples of the region have never tolerated presence of alien forces in the region, Safari said.

Referring to existing relations between Iran and the European Union, he said the Iranian Foreign Ministry backs expansion of relations as well as exchange of parliamentary delegations between the two countries.

To successfully solve the issue of Afghanistan, a powerful and democratic government able to reform the country's economy should be established, he said adding that Iran spared no efforts to this effect.

He criticized the West for its double-standard stands on human rights issues, Iran's peaceful nuclear activities and crisis in Gaza and said such stances are not acceptable, Safari said.

The Danish envoy, for her part, voiced satisfaction with her visit to Iran.

During her stay, she held talks with Iranian officials on regional developments mainly Afghanistan and the Middle East region.

Referring to significant role of Iran in regional developments, she called her meetings with Iranian officials as being important and very fruitful.

Expansion of parliamentary cooperation could help further bolster relations between the two countries, she said.

Delegation represents Iran in UN conference on women

UNITED NATIONS (IRNA) — An Iranian delegation has participated in the 53rd session of the United Nations' Commission on the Status of Women which opened Tuesday in New York.

The five-member delegation is led by Elham Aminzadeh who is the aide to the Iranian foreign minister for women's affairs.

The world event this year is focusing on the theme of AIDS and the way it affects women.

Talking in the opening ceremony of the event, Aminzadeh said Iran



AT the end of the meeting, the two sides called for continued talks between the two sides.

Lawmaker warns S. Arabia over disrespect to Iranian pilgrims



Tehran Times Political Desk
TEHRAN — A top Iranian lawmaker called on Saudi Arabia to take measure to rectify its religious police's disrespectful behavior toward Iranian pilgrims visiting the holy sites in Mecca and Medina.

"We hope that this problem would be resolved before the

concerned officials of the Islamic Republic take a decision," Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee Chairman Alaeddin Boroujerdi told reporters on Tuesday.

Boroujerdi said Saudi Arabia is officially tasked to show hospitality toward pilgrims.

Thousands of Iranians visit Mecca and Medina every year to perform Umrah rituals.

Invitation to extraordinary General Meeting

All Shareholders of Dana Geophysics Kish Company (Private Joint Stock) are hereby invited to attend in Extraordinary General Meeting which will be held at 15:00 PM on Tuesday 27.12.1387 (17 Mar 2009) in office located in # 31, 5th floor, Golestan St. Iranzamin Ave. Shahrake Ghods

Agenda

- 1- Capital modification in respect to article 141 of commerce law
- 2- Any other subjects under the jurisdiction of Extraordinary General Meeting

"Board of directors"



Iraqi FM: Meeting of newly-formed 6+3+1 Group nations not against Iran

SHARM EL-SHEIKH, Egypt (KUNA) — Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari on Monday rejected talk that a meeting of the Group of 6+3+1 nations - including the six Persian Gulf Arab states, Egypt, Jordan and Iraq, as well as the U.S. - held at Egypt's Sharm El Sheikh, was aimed against Iran.

Talking to reporters, Zebari said during his attendance at the Gaza donors' conference in Sharm El Sheikh, that the newly formed group was assembled in order to discuss common denominators and issues of joint significance.

He also drew significance to an upcoming meeting at the Iraqi capital, Baghdad, where the G-6+3+1 will meet for the first time next spring to discuss Iraq's imminent future.

A number of visits have been made by international officials recently to Baghdad like Kuwait's Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah and the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council Secretary General Abdulrahman bin Hamad Al-Atiyya, said the Iraqi foreign minister.

The minister also mentioned an upcoming visit by Arab League Secretary General Amr Moussa to Iraq later this month with visits to Baghdad also scheduled for the Turkish and Pakistani presidents as well as the Greek foreign minister.

He denied Iraqi mediation to presumed Iran-U.S. talks, mentioning that these talks were brought up in the 6+3+1 meeting, as well as talks between Syria and the U.S., underlining the need for these in light of U.S. keenness to hold the dialogue.

France to cooperate with Tehran Municipality

Tehran Times City Desk
TEHRAN — The French Veolia Environnement SA expressed its readiness to cooperate with Tehran Municipality in implementing environmental projects and developing the capital's urban transportation system.

The announcement was made as the senior manager of Nicolas de Longeaux met Tehran Deputy Mayor Jafar Tashakori-Hashemi here on Tuesday.

Describing traffic fumes as the main cause of air pollution in metropolises, Longeaux said that air pollution can be controlled through developing public transportation and traffic management systems.

Yannick Morillon, the manager of African and Middle East department of the French company, also attended the meeting and put stress on the significant importance of the Islamic republic in the region and the African countries.

He appreciated Tehran municipality's great achievements in developing urban transportation systems including metro and BRT.

Managing Director of Tehran Metro Co. Mohsen Hashemi also participated in the event and briefed the attendees on the future development projects of the company.

Veolia Environnement SA is a multinational French company with activities in four main areas -- water, waste management, energy, and transport services.

It collaborates with a number of 5 thousands municipalities across the world.