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Iran, South Africa eye joint bank

Tehran Times Economic Desk
TEHRAN — Iran and South Africa re-emphasized the implementation of banking agreements, such as the establishment of a joint bank, which would streamline bilateral trade and economic cooperation.

International Relations and Cooperation Deputy Minister Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim lead the South African delegation to the fourth meeting of the SA-Iranian Deputy Ministerial Working Group that took place on 28-29 September in Tehran. The South African delegation met with the Iranian Deputy Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance, Behrouz Alishiri and reviewed ways of expanding economic and trade ties.

During the meeting Alishiri pointed out that due to Iran's political and economic stability it had less trouble compared to other countries during the global economic crisis.

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Ahmadinejad calls for Iran-5+1 summit to solve nuclear issue

Iran seeks to buy nuclear fuel for Tehran reactor

Tehran Times Political Desk

TEHRAN — President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad announced on Wednesday that Iran has put forward a proposal for the establishment of an assembly of heads of state of Iran and the 5+1 group countries to discuss issues related to Iran's latest diplomatic package of proposals.

Ahmadinejad said Iran has called for the establishment of three expert committees, a council of representatives, and an assembly of heads of state of Iran and the 5+1 group (France, Britain, Russia, China, the United States, and Germany).

The expert committees would first debate the proposals with the participation of the countries' representatives, and then the council of representatives would analyze the proposals, and whatever is approved by the council would be discussed by the heads of state for final approval, he explained.

Iran seeks to buy nuclear fuel for Tehran reactor

Ahmadinejad also announced that Iran is interested in buying enriched uranium for the Tehran reactor from foreign countries.



In New York Iran announced that it is prepared to buy nuclear fuel from foreign countries, Ahmadinejad said on the sidelines of a cabinet meeting on Wednesday.

He also commented on the talks Iran and the 5+1 group are scheduled to hold in Geneva later today.

Iran enters talks with the 5+1 group welcoming positive proposals on the country's nuclear program in order to establish a good foundation for collective cooperation, he stated.

Underlining the significance of the talks, he said international crises can only be solved through interaction and collective measures.

The upcoming meeting in Geneva between Tehran and the six countries is a test of certain countries' honesty and respect for justice, the rule of law, and the rights of people, he noted.

Ahmadinejad said the diplomatic package Iran presented to the 5+1 group countries and the talks in Geneva will give the U.S. and the EU countries a chance to reconsider their attitude.

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Noruz and Iranian radifs registered on UNESCO list

Tehran Times Culture Desk

TEHRAN — Noruz and the titles and items of the radifs in Iranian music have been registered on



A Noruz "Haft Seen" spread, which includes seven items that begin with the Persian letter "seen", which is pronounced in the same way as "s" in English. This "Haft Seen" spread features sib (apple), saman (a sweet pudding made from wheat seedlings), seer (garlic), sekkeh (coins), sumac (a spice), serkeh (vinegar), and sabzeh (green sprouted seeds).

UNESCO's List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

The decision to add Noruz and the radifs to the list was made on Wednesday during a meeting of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage, which is underway in Abu Dhabi, Iran's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization announced in a press release.

(Contd. on P. 15)

Iran may consider withdrawing from NPT: MP

TEHRAN (Press TV) — A senior Iranian lawmaker says Iran may consider withdrawing from the NPT if the Western powers continue to pressure the Islamic Republic to relinquish its inalienable right to enrich uranium to produce nuclear fuel.

"If the P5+1 continues to talk with us with the language of force to push us into a corner, and to talk about more sanctions, there might be no choice but to step out of the talks," MP Hassan Ghafourifard told Press TV in an exclusive interview on Tuesday. "Our patience has a limit. We have been discussing this problem for the three to four years and they have always asked Iran to stop enrichment," he added.

The Iranian parliamentarian stated that Iran will not suspend its uranium enrichment program "under any condition."

"For the first step, we may step out of talks with the P5+1. If things go from bad to worse, then we might take more action on that... like withdrawing from the NPT (nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty)," Ghafourifard said.

"If they don't want to understand the position, which is the position of peaceful enrichment of uranium, then there might be no use to stay in the NPT," he added.

Iran and the P5+1 group (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council -- the United States, Britain, France, Russia, and China -- plus Germany) are scheduled to hold talks in Geneva on October 1.

(Contd. on P. 15)

Indonesia quake kills 75, thousands trapped

PADANG, Indonesia (Reuters) — A powerful earthquake struck off the city of Padang on Indonesia's Sumatra island Wednesday, killing at least 75 people and trapping thousands under rubble, officials said.

The death toll was likely to rise as many buildings in the city of 900,000 people had collapsed, Vice President Jusuf Kalla told a late night news conference in Jakarta.

"We have received a report from the mayor of Padang that the death toll is 75. But many others are trapped in collapsed shops, building and hotels. It is difficult to know because it is dark now," Kalla said.

TV footage showed devastation, with piles of rubble and smashed houses after the 7.6 magnitude earthquake, which caused widespread panic across the city.

Rustam Pakaya, the head of the health

ministry's disaster center in Jakarta, said "thousands of people are trapped in the rubble of buildings."

The main hospital had collapsed, roads were cut by landslides and Metro Television said the roof of Padang airport had caved in. Thousands were expected to spend the night in the open while a full assessment of the damage would need to wait until daybreak.

The disaster is the latest in a spate of natural and man-made calamities to hit Indonesia, a sprawling archipelago of 226 million people.

Kalla said the government was preparing for an emergency response of up to two months.

Welfare Minister Aburizal Bakrie said authorities should prepare for the worst, adding damage could be on a par with an earthquake in the central Java city of

Yogyakarta in 2006 that killed 5,000 people and damaged or destroyed 150,000 homes.

The quake was felt around the region, with some high-rise buildings in Singapore, 440 km (275 miles) to the northeast, evacuating staff. Office buildings also shook in the Malaysian capital, Kuala Lumpur.

The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center canceled an earlier tsunami alert.

"Hundreds of houses have been damaged along the road. There are some fires, bridges are cut and there is extreme panic here," said a Reuters witness in the city, who also said broken water pipes had triggered flooding.

His mobile phone was then cut off and officials said power had been severed in the city. A resident called Adi later told Metro Television there was devastation around him.

(Contd. on P. 15)

China urges diplomacy, prioritizes Iran oil supply

China wants a diplomatic solution to Iran's building of a uranium-enrichment facility and opposes any tough international sanctions that would stop Iran from exporting oil, experts and state media said on Wednesday.

China will oppose new sanctions if the United States proposes a ban on Iran exporting oil, the Global Times quoted Yin Gang, an expert on Middle East affairs at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, as saying.

Yin said the possibility of a proposed ban on oil exports was low, but said China needed to balance its warming political ties with the United States and its economic links with Iran.

'China has voted for the three UN Security Council resolutions on Iran despite the fact that China regards Iran as a friend, and has called for peaceful dialogue to address the issue,' he said.

(Contd. on P. 15)

Tsunami smashes Pacific islands, over 100 feared dead



Debris near a church in the village of Leone, American Samoa, on Wednesday. (Raj Borsellino/Reuters)

SYDNEY (Reuters) — A series of tsunamis smashed into the Pacific island nations of American and Western Samoa killing possibly more than 100 people, some washed out to sea, destroying villages and injuring hundreds, officials said on Wednesday.

President Barack Obama declared a major disaster in American Samoa, a U.S. territory, and ordered federal aid to help recovery efforts, with a U.S. C-130 military transport aircraft due to leave Honolulu for the tiny South Pacific islands.

(Contd. on P. 15)

U.S. speeds Iraq withdrawal; 4,000 more headed home

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States is speeding up its military withdrawal from Iraq, sending 4,000 more troops home next month, the top American commander there said Wednesday.

The reduced number of forces in Iraq — from 124,000 to 120,000 by the end of October — marks the latest U.S. step in winding down the six-year war.

During testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, Army Gen. Ray Odierno called for "strategic patience" during the withdrawal and the transition of responsibilities to Iraq's security forces. "Iraq is making steady progress, but has a long way to go," he said.

The committee's top Republican, Rep. Howard "Buck" McKeon, said he worried that approaching deadlines for pulling back may be too ambitious.

(Contd. on P. 15)

INTERVIEW

Expert: No division between rationalist theories and constructivism

By Javad Heirania

TEHRAN — Political theoretician Bruce Bueno de Mesquita believes there is no "division between rationalist theories and constructivism."

In an e-mail interview with the Mehr News Agency on Monday, Bueno de Mesquita



said, "Constructivism and rationalist theories complement each other."

Following is the text of the interview:

Q: There are four major intellectual discussions in international relations theories: realism versus liberalism; behaviorism versus traditionalism; neo-realism versus neo-liberalism; and rationalism versus constructivism. What is the main debate?

A: These debates, in my view, are uninteresting and misguided. The "isms" have become articles of faith for too many scholars. For me, the issue is, what hypotheses follow logically from the assumptions of the particular theory or theories and, for those that follow logically, what is the evidence of their accuracy. In my judgment, rationalist arguments produce logically consistent and coherent propositions that are more consistent with the actions and outcomes we observe than is true for other approaches. Further, I do not see a division between rationalist theories and constructivism. Constructivism is a theory of preference formation; rationalist theories do not have a theory of preference formation.

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