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Tehran profits from non-dlr oil sale

TEHRAN (Reuters) — Iran has made a huge profit from its policy of increasing its sales of oil for currencies other than the U.S. dollar, Central Bank Governor Mahmoud Bahmani was quoted as saying on Tuesday.

The comment came after Britain's The Independent newspaper quoted unidentified sources as saying Persian Gulf states were in secret talks with Russia, China, Japan and France to replace the U.S. dollar with a basket of currencies in the trading of oil.

But Kuwait's oil minister said there were no such discussions among Persian Gulf exporters, and a source in the United Arab Emirates central bank said they will stay with the dollar as the crude trading currency.

Iran a few years ago began increasing its sales of oil for currencies other than the dollar, saying a weak U.S. unit eroded its purchasing power. The Islamic state is under U.S. and U.N. sanctions over its disputed nuclear program.

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Iran's message to world is peace: Leader

Iranophobia project will fail



TEHRAN Times Political Desk
NOSHAHR — Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei says that the Iranian people's message to all nations is peace, justice, and happiness.

"The international bullies will not be able to implement the Iranophobia project because the Islamic Republic's national strength is not a threat to nations but it is rather considered a model of progress, integrity, and pride for nations," he said in an address to students and graduates at a military academy in Noshahr, Mazandaran Province on Tuesday.

Ayatollah Khamenei said the fact that the armed forces are ready to make sacrifices to protect the people, the establishment, and national security is the reason why the people and the establishment have a high regard for the armed forces.

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Rafsanjani: Accusations will undermine national unity

TEHRAN Times Political Desk
TEHRAN — Expediency Council Chairman Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani stated that creating an atmosphere of "accusation" is impediment to national unity.

Rafsanjani made the remarks in a meeting with the members of the Majlis cleric faction on Tuesday.

He also criticized certain media outlets for promoting distrust in the society.

In order to achieve unity and national cohesion, those elements who help create dissension among officials should be identified and seriously dealt with, Rafsanjani noted.

A number of cleric MPs including Mohammad Taqi Rahbar, Hossein Ebrahimi, Ali Banaii, Mohammad-Reza Mir-Tajeddini, and Hossein Sobhaninia expressed their views in the meeting.

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PERSPECTIVE



Food supply hangs in the balance

By Stephen Leahy

Rocketing food prices and hundreds of millions more starving people will be part of humanity's grim future without concerted action on climate change and new investments in agriculture, experts reported this week.

The current devastating drought in East Africa, where millions of people are on the brink of starvation, is a window on our future, suggests a new study looking at the impacts of climate change.

"Twenty-five million more children will be malnourished in 2050 due to effects of climate change," such as decreased crop yields, crop failures and higher food prices, concluded the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) study.

"Of all human economic activities, agriculture is by far the most vulnerable to climate change," warned the report's author, Gerald Nelson, an agricultural economist with IFPRI, a Washington-based group focused on global hunger and poverty issues.

The report, "Quantifying the Costs of Agricultural Adaptation to Climate Change", may be the "most comprehensive assessment of the impact of climate change on agriculture to date", as IFPRI claims, but researchers concede that there is no current way to quantify all of the future repercussions of changing weather patterns on the food supply.

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Key Rwandan genocide suspect arrested in Uganda

KAMPALA, Uganda (AP) — Interpol agents have arrested one of the most wanted suspects in Rwanda's 1994 genocide, a former top intelligence official accused of sending soldiers to execute the Rwandan queen, officials said Tuesday.

Officers of the Lyon, France-based global police agency arrested former Rwandan deputy intelligence chief, Idelphonse Nizeyimana, on Monday in Kampala, said Uganda's government spokesman Fred Opolot.

Ugandan police spokeswoman Judith Nabakooza said Nizeyimana is believed to have entered Uganda through neighboring Congo using fake travel documents.

Nizeyimana will be flown to Arusha, Tanzania, where

the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda sits.

More than half a million members of the Tutsi ethnic minority and moderates from the Hutu majority were slaughtered during the 100-day Rwandan genocide in 1994.

Rwanda's genocide began hours after a plane carrying President Juvenal Habyarimana was shot down.

The former captain in Rwanda's army is wanted on charges of genocide by the tribunal. Under the U.S. State Department's Rewards for Justice program, there is a reward of up to \$5 million on Nizeyimana's head for any information leading to his capture.

According to a 2000 indictment prepared by the tribunal, Nizeyimana is alleged to have

formed secret units of soldiers that carried out the execution of the then Queen of Rwanda, Rosalie Gicanda, a symbolic figure for all Tutsis, among other prominent Tutsis.

Nizeyimana is the second high-profile arrest of a key Rwanda genocide suspect in two months.

A former mayor, Gregoire Ndahimana, appeared before the tribunal last week after being captured in Congo in August. Ndahimana had been on the run for 15 years and had a similar bounty on his head, but no one claimed it when he was arrested.

With Nizeyimana's arrest, 11 top suspects remain with similar bounties on their heads for their alleged roles in the 1994 genocide.

Majlis should examine establishment of national election committee: MP

TEHRAN Times Political Desk
TEHRAN — MP Ghodrattollah Alikhani stated on Tuesday that the proposal for the establishment of the national election committee should be examined in the Majlis.

Alikhani added that the proposal can be a solution for the post-election problems.

If the proposal is presented as a bill to the Majlis, it can be efficient in decreasing the interference of ruling administrations in the election, he told the Mehr News Agency on Tuesday.

Expediency Council Secretary Mohsen Rezaei has put forward a proposal calling for the establishment of a national committee for election affairs without the interference of ruling factions.

"National committee for elections should be established so that the government is barred from involvement in election affairs" and this will increase the people's trust, he said in a meeting with university students in Masjed Soleyman, Khuzestan Province.

Saudi King Abdullah expected in Damascus

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — Saudi King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz was scheduled to arrive in Damascus on Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's invitation, the official Saudi Arabian and Syrian state-run news agencies confirmed.

News reports confirm Abdullah's three-day visit is a reciprocal one, having hosted Assad twice in the past six months. Assad last held talks with Abdullah in Jeddah on September 23.

Relations have deteriorated between the two countries after former Lebanese Premier Rafik Hariri's assassination on Feb. 2005. The formation of a new government in Lebanon will certainly be on the agenda during Abdullah's visit.

Another important topic will be the issue of Palestine, as Hamas has its headquarters in Damascus, while Saudi Arabia supports Fatah. According to an AFP report, Syria has postponed a visit to Damascus by Palestinian Authority President Mahmud Abbas due to begin on Tuesday.

The Palestinian official, who

spoke to AFP on condition of anonymity, said the postponement came because of a "surprise" visit to Damascus by Saudi King Abdullah.

An earlier report on Al-Jazeera television said Damascus postponed Abbas's trip in protest over Palestinian delegation to the UN Human Rights Council dropping its support for an immediate vote on a damning report on the Gaza war. For this Abbas has faced a growing wave of criticism both at home and abroad.

According to a report posted on Gulf News website on Tuesday, an Arab diplomat in Riyadh told the UAE daily that the Saudi King's visit will focus on "wide ranging talks aimed at further boosting bilateral relations not only on Saudi-Syrian plank but also on Arab-Arab levels."

The source said that the protocol director at the Saudi royal palace, Mohammad Al Tubaishi, visited Damascus three days ago to finalize protocol procedures for the Saudi monarch's visit.

Ayatollah Sistani warns turnout will suffer if names are not revealed

NAJAF, Iraq (AFP) — Iraq's top Shiite cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali Husseini al-Sistani on Tuesday cast doubt over January's general election, warning MPs that turnout will suffer unless the vote is an open process.

The United Nations also raised concerns, saying it was "urgent" for parliament to pass a law governing what would be the second national vote since the overthrow of dictator Saddam Hussein in the U.S.-led invasion of 2003.

Sistani is revered by his followers and his stature dwarfs Iraqi politicians, including Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, himself a Shiite.

The election slated for January 16 would be thrown into chaos if Sistani withdrew his support as Shiites comprise more than half the population and most would shun the ballot if it lacks his backing.

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'No theory of intl. relations predicted global economic crisis'

TEHRAN Times Political Desk



TEHRAN — Cornell University professor Peter J. Katzenstein says that none of the major theories of international relations accurately predicted the current global economic crisis.

He made the remarks during an e-mail interview with the Mehr News Agency conducted by Javad Herannia and Hossein Kaji last week.

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: If there is one these days, which is not so clear, it is the last one.

Q: As we know, we are in the middle of a global economic crisis. Why were most of the major international relations theories not able to predict it?

A: Nobody predicted it well. Rational expectation theory and rationalism have suffered most since they cannot deal with Knightian uncertainty very well. I doubt that this will have much effect on the character of research.

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