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Summary

Ayat. Jannati Accuses U.S. of Funding Opposition

Tehran's substitute Friday-prayer leader and the Secretary of the Guardian Council has charged the U.S. with giving opposition figures one billion dollars to topple the Islamic establishment during last year's post-election unrest.

"I have acquired documents showing that the Americans paid one billion dollars to leaders of sedition through Saudi individuals who are currently the U.S. agents in

regional countries,” ILNA quoted Head of the Guardian Council Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati as saying yesterday.

Erdogan Underlines Iran Right to Have Peaceful Nuclear Energy

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, by underlining Iran’s right to use peaceful nuclear energy, criticized West silence on the Zionist regime nuclear arsenal.

In a joint press conference after meeting with British Prime Minister David Cameron here on Tuesday, Erdogan also underlined Turkey’s commitment to Tehran Declaration. He continued that upon Turkey’s policy on necessity of solving Iran’s nuclear issue through diplomatic ways and upon Tehran Declaration, Turkey cast a negative vote to the UN Security Council resolution for imposing new sanctions against Iran.

Sanctions Against Iran “Misguided”

The decision by the EU to follow the U.S. in imposing unilateral sanctions against Iran is misguided and counter-productive, according to the Campaign Against Sanctions and Military Intervention in Iran (CASMI). “The U.S. has had unilateral sanctions against Iran for decades; in which time European companies managed to fill in the gap while U.S. companies were at a disadvantage,” said CASMI steering committee member Mohammad Kamaali.

President: Iran Breaks Trend of Dependence on Big Powers

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said Iran has managed to remove the grip of big economic powers and multi-national companies by conducting grand national oil, gas and petrochemical projects using its domestic resources. He made the remarks in this southern Iranian town on Wednesday while inaugurating two petrochemical plans in the special economic energy zone of South Pars.

Sanctions Against Iran Lack Int'l Support

President's Chief of Staff Esfandiar Rahim Mashae dismissed western officials' claims about international support for their sanctions and embargos against Iran, and stressed that the move is suffering a weak back-up even in the West. "I have spoken with European and Asian diplomats about the anti-Iran sanctions, and none of them acknowledged that sanctions are practical or influential or can deter us from continuing our path," Mashae said, addressing Iranian expatriates yesterday.

VP: Sanctions, Way to Growth and Progress

The sanctions imposed by Western countries are a way to the Islamic Republic of Iran's growth and progress, said Vice President for Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Hojjat-ol-Eslam Mohammad-Reza Mir-Tajoddini in Mashhad. "The enemies with their different sanctions against the system of Islamic Republic try to mar and obstruct the way to reaching the system's high goals," he added. "These sanctions are not only no obstacle to

the system's progress but pave the way for the country's growth and progress in different areas," Mir-Tajoddini continued.

Italy Frees Another Iranian From House Arrest

Milan's prosecutor freed another Iranian national, Ali Damirchilou, from house arrest in Italy, a senior Iranian diplomat announced. "Thanks to efforts made by Iran's Embassy in Rome, its Consulate General in Milan and the Islamic Republic's legal office in Paris, the Milan Prosecutor retracted the house arrest order for Damirchilou," Iran's Ambassador to Rome Seyed Mohammad Ali Hosseini said. Earlier, Italian counterterrorism prosecutor Armando Spataro had released the Iranian reporter, Hamid Ma'souminejad, from house arrest.

Reports on Japanese Oil Tanker Blast in Strait of Hormuz Rejected

An informed source yesterday rejected media reports about an explosion on a Japanese supertanker in the Strait of Hormuz, stressing that the Japanese ship was outside Iran's territorial waters when the explosion occurred. "The tanker's deck caught fire for unknown reasons outside the Strait (Hormuz) and outside Iran's territorial waters and the ship was later transferred to Diba port in Oman with the help of the Omani forces," the source told FNA on the condition of anonymity.

EU Independence Questioned Over Anti-Iran Sanctions

Foreign Ministry Spokesman Ramin Mehman-Parast said here Monday EU's deeply regrettable posing of new sanctions against Iran puts under question that union's political independence. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman made the comment in response to a question regarding the European Union's imposing of additional sanctions against our country, which he condemned, arguing, "The EU takes its steps under the influence of the pressure impose by the United States, and it does so with eyes that are blind-folded, which leads to losing both its identity and its independence."

Canada Imposes Anti-Iran Sanctions

Canada has imposed a fresh round of sanctions against Iran's energy sector hours after the European Union approved similar unilateral measures.

Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon told reporters on Monday that the new sanctions include a ban on Canadian investment in Iran's oil and gas sectors. Cannon added that Iranian banks would also be targeted by the new measures, which prevents them from opening branches on Canadian soil.

Sanctions Against Iran Risky for EU Interests

Imposing sanctions against Iran over its nuclear policy can have a negative impact on the political and economic interests of the European Union, the Hamburg-based daily Welt

said in an editorial on yesterday. "These penalties leveled against Iran are not without a risk. The Europeans are factually pulling out of the lucrative market (of Iran) which could also be of utmost significance for the energy supply of the EU," the paper said. "Furthermore, Iran plays an important role as regional power in the conflict regions Afghanistan and the Middle East. The question of Afghanistan can not be resolved without Iran," it added.

Israel, Saudis in Talks Over Iran Attack

Israeli spy chief Meir Dagan has met Saudi officials to discuss a possible military strike against the Islamic Republic, a report says. The World Net Daily website cited informed Arab security sources on Monday that Mossad chief Dagan has visited Saudi Arabia in recent weeks. It is believed that Tel Aviv is trying to persuade Riyadh to allow Israel to use its airspace for a possible military strike on Iran, the report added. The Israeli spy chief also met Saudi intelligence officials in 2009.

Firm in Alleged Iran Trade Deal to Pay CAB €1.5m

An aviation company at the centre of an international row over allegedly exporting helicopter engines and aircraft parts to Iran has consented to pay more than €1.5m to the State as part of an agreement with the Criminal Assets Bureau (CAB). The deal between Cab and Mac Aviation, of Drumcliffe, Co Sligo, was announced in the High Court on Monday. The full terms of the settlement were not revealed. But an agreed statement confirmed that the company would pay €1.5m to the Finance Minister following action by Cab under the Proceeds of Crime Act, 1996.

Ahmadinejad: U.S. Psywar Plan Includes 2 Hot Wars

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad says the United States and Israel plan to attack two countries in the Middle East as part of a conspiracy to apply pressure on Iran. "We have precise information that the Americans have devised a plot, according to which they seek to launch a psychological war on Iran," Ahmadinejad stated in an exclusive interview with Press TV on Monday. "They plan to attack at least two countries in the region within the next three months," he added.

Ban Welcomes Resumption of Iran-Vienna Group Talks

The United Nations Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, is looking forward to resumption of talks between Iran and the Vienna Group, according to a UN official. Talking to reporters in New York, the United Nations Secretary General Speaker, Martin Nitschke, said the UN Chief has always been favoring resumption of the talks and agreement in that connection. On Iran's letter to the IAEA, Nitschke said the letter has something to do with the Vienna Group. "So let's see what they have to say."

Larijani: Anti-Iran Resolution, New Conspiracy

Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani regarded the recent resolution against Iran as a new conspiracy by arrogant powers to weaken the will of the Iranian nation. Speaking on the 22nd anniversary of Mersad military operation during the Sacred Defense, Larijani said: "The history testifies that the more the enemies increase their attacks and conspiracies against the Iranian nation, the more and stronger the nation's will and unity become."

Rigi Confessions to Be Publicized in Due Time

Minister of Information Hojatolislam Heidar Moslehi said on Monday that confessions made by the terrorist ring leader Abdulmalek Rigi at the court of justice will be publicized in due time. Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a cabinet ministers meeting on Monday, he said the Iranian Information Ministry had already warned of the border crossings of terrorists from eastern border to Zahedan prior to double bomb blasts in the city and had put its personnel on high alert. A devoted Basiji (volunteer forces) identified the terrorist and prevented him from entering the mosque in Zahedan, he said.

Iran to Submit Letter to IAEA Today

Iran will submit another letter to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) today briefing the latest developments with the uranium swap agreement, Turkish foreign minister said here yesterday. "Iran notified us that they will submit a letter to the IAEA tomorrow morning," Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said yesterday after a trilateral meeting between him, his Brazilian counterpart Celso Amorim, and the Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki, the first meeting of the three foreign ministers after the Tehran Declaration was inked on May 18. Iran, in the letter, is expected to reaffirm its commitment to meeting the Vienna Group (U.S., France, Russia and the IAEA), regarding the uranium swap detailed in the Tehran Declaration, Davutoglu said, adding during the lunch meeting Iran also reiterated commitment to meeting the P5+1 (the five permanent security council members plus Germany), concerning a diplomatic solution to its nuclear program.

Iran Mulling Over ICJ Ruling on Kosovo

Foreign Ministry Spokesman Ramin Mehman-Parast said the country is mulling over the International Court of Justice (ICJ) advisory ruling on Kosovo. "Islamic Republic of Iran is studying the Hague-based ICJ advisory ruling on Kosovo case," Mehmanparast said.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran respects the international law and believes that talks in a constructive climate is the only influential step to achieve an appropriate solution to secure rights of citizens and establish peace and tranquility in Balkan."

Ahmadinejad: Russia Part of New Anti-Iran Scenario

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad here Friday unveiled truth about new US-Zionist scenario against Iran, expressing sorrow that Russia, too, is now harmonizing with it. President Ahmadinejad who was speaking at the closing ceremony of the National Youth Festival added, “They (Iran’s enemies) have decided to launch attacks against a couple of Arab countries in the region that are our friends, getting assistance from the Zionist regime, to create an atmosphere of fear in decision making.”

Economic Front

Pursuit of Taiwan-Iran Trade Ties Legitimate

The government is not against commercial activity with Iran that benefits Taiwan's businesspeople, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) officials said in the wake of a new round of international sanctions against the Islamic republic. The remarks also come after the Israeli representative in Taiwan told the Central News Agency that it would be imprudent for Taiwan to deepen its relations with Iran at this moment.

Iran’s Non-Oil Exports to PGCC Rise

Iran’s non-oil exports excluding gas condensate to Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC) member states have witnessed 56 percent increase during the first two months of the current Iranian year (started March 21), said general manager of African and Arabic Countries Trade Office in Trade Promotion Organization of Iran. Hossein Hosseini said some 579 million dollars worth of non-oil products were exported to PGCC countries over the same period.

Isfahan Hosts Two Int’l Exhibits

The Sixth International Exhibition of Steel, Metallurgy, Foundry and Related Mines and Industries opened in Isfahan province yesterday. Over 100 Iranian and four foreign companies from Turkey and the UK are showcasing their products during the four-day event. Meanwhile, the Third International Exhibition of Higher Education Centers, Training Institutes and Educational Material is simultaneously underway in Isfahan's permanent fair ground.

Iran Can Transfer Economic Power to Other States

The First Vice-President, Mohammad-Reza Rahimi, said here on Tuesday that Iran can transfer its high economic power to other parts of the world. Speaking in ceremonies to inaugurate a 400.63 kilovolt power station in Mahalat, a city southwest of the capital city Tehran, Rahimi said Iran has made huge amount of investment in the neighboring and African countries.

Official: Banking System Unharmed by Sanctions

Managing-Director of Iran's Bank Melli underlined that the West's increased pressures and fresh sanctions against the country will not undermine his bank's activities. "Sanctions will not stop, block, decrease or close our activities and we will continue our work powerfully," Mahmoud Reza Khavari said. "Trusting in God, Bank Melli will continue its activities through utilizing the country's capabilities and without violating the banking and international rules and regulations," Khavari added.

Oil Industry Privatization Underway

Iran's minister of petroleum said implementation of the article 44 of the constitution is underway, noting that by complete implementation of the article, oil refineries and oil products distribution companies will be privatized. Speaking to reporters at the inauguration ceremony of a new fuel smart card system center on Monday, Masoud Mir-Kazemi expressed hope that by expanding infrastructures and data storing centers, necessary support to be provided for private sector to run the system.

Two Petchem Projects Open in Assaluyeh

Two projects at Morvarid Petrochemical Company and Pardis Petrochemical Company inaugurated yesterday by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in the southern Iranian port city of Assaluyeh in Bushehr province. Around 900 million dollars has been invested in the projects that are estimated to add 2.25 million tons to domestic petrochemical production. The unit at Morvarid will produce ethylene and the second phase of Pardis Company is set to produce urea and ammonia.

Carpet Exports Up by 37%

Iran's hand-woven carpet exports have witnessed a 37-percent increase during the first quarter of the current Iranian year (started on March 21, 2010), an Iranian official announced yesterday. The exports of Iran's hand-woven carpet during the first three months of the year amounted to 104 million dollars in value which shows a 36.7 percent growth compared with the same period last year, head of Iran's National Carpet Center Feisal Mardasi said. Mardasi also announced that the exported carpets during the mentioned period weighed 16,254 tons which also shows a 38.3 percent rise in comparison with the same period last year which stood at 11,747 tons.

Wheat Imports Down

Iran imported 450,000 tons of wheat during the first quarter of the current Iranian year (started March 21), registering a 76-percent decrease against the same period last year. More than 1.8 million tons of wheat were imported over the first quarter of last Iranian year (started March 21, 2009). UAE, Kazakhstan, Russia and Holland were the main wheat exporters to Iran. Earlier in April, Iran announced that it will resume exporting two million tons of wheat to three neighboring countries after a three-year halt.

Gasoline Rationing Plan Saves \$11b

Managing Director of National Iranian Oil Products Distribution Company (NIOPDC) said on Monday that Iran has managed to save 11 billion dollars thanks to the gasoline rationing plan which has spared the need for excessive imports of the commodity. Referring to the distribution and delivery of 17 million fuel smart cards to Iranian auto drivers, Farid Ameri said since 2007, when gasoline rationing plan went into effect, some 11 billion dollars has been saved for the country out of cut in the gasoline imports.

Iran to Issue \$500m South Pars Bonds

To aid in the development of Iran's energy sector, the Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC) will issue 500 million dollars in bonds to finance the exploitation of South Pars gas field. Ali Vakili, Managing Director of POGC, said the participation bonds are expected to be offered by August 21 through Bank Saderat. "Recently POGC has been authorized by the Central Bank of Iran to issue participation bonds -- it plans to issue 500 million dollars in bonds in the month of Mordad (23 July - 21 August)," Shana quoted Vakili as saying on Sunday.

Iran's Electricity Consumption Up

Iran's electricity consumption increased by 9.5 percent late July due to the worst heat wave sweeping the country in the first month of the summer, deputy energy minister said on Monday. Mohammad Behzad announced that Iran's electricity consumption level reached 41.5 megawatts late July, showing 9.5 percent growth, compared to the figure -- 39.26 megawatts -- in the same period last year. As a result of a major heat wave -- the worst in Iran in the past 70 years -- sweeping the country late July, Tehrani residents were asked to consume as little electricity as possible so that the officials in charge would continue to meet the high demand and avoid planned power outages.

Turkey Gas Imports to Rise

With the exploitation of the sixth national network gas transfer, as the second gas export pipeline to Turkey, gas export capacity to the country via the eight gas transmission region will rise by 50 to 60 million cubic meters per day. Director of the Iran's eight gas transmission region, Valiollah Dini told reporters that current capacity to transfer gas to Turkey through existing gas pipeline in the region is 30 million cubic meters per day that could be raised to 45 million cubic meters per day.

Oil Hovers at \$79 as Traders Eye Equities, Demand

Oil prices hovered for a second day near 79 dollars a barrel yesterday in Asia as investors weighed a three-day stock market rally against signs of sluggish U.S. crude demand. Benchmark crude for September delivery was down 3 cents at 78.95 dollars a

barrel at midday Singapore time in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract was unchanged to settle at 78.98 dollars on Monday. Surging U.S. stock markets have underpinned oil prices as traders often look to equities as a barometer of overall investor sentiment. The Dow Jones industrial average rose 1 percent Monday and is up about 4 percent in the last three trading sessions. Most Asian stocks gained yesterday.

Israel Draws the Line at Taiwan Deepening Ties With Iran

Israel has no objection to Taiwan fostering a better relationship with the Arab world but will frown on closer Taiwan-Iran ties, the top Israeli envoy to Taiwan. Rafael Gamzou, the head of the Israel Cultural and Economic Office in Taipei, in an interview with the Central News Agency made a sharp distinction between non-Arab Iran and the Arab bloc, saying Israel never raises any obstacles to its friends developing relationships with the Arab world -- with the exception of Iran. "We are so much interested in developing relationships with the Arabs so why should we ask our friends not to do it," he said. "But if you ask me about Iran, the Iran today, then my answer would be slightly different."

Nano Scientists Improve Fuel Cells' Efficiency

Iranian researchers could improve fuel cells' efficiency by synthesizing a combined structure of micro fibers-silver nanoparticle and its successful application in the oxygen reduction reaction. "The combined structure of micro fibers - silver nanoparticle- creates a better conductivity within the composite in comparison with silver nanoparticles due to its one-dimensional structure," Nafiseh Sharifi, one of the researchers from Sharif University of Technology, told INIC. "We succeeded in synthesizing a combined structure of micro fibers-silver nanoparticle from cellulose fibers of cotton through a new method. The simplicity of the method is one of its advantages over the current methods," she continued.

Iran Gasoline Exporter by 2015

A research group expects Iran to become self-sufficient in gasoline production in the next five years. Iran's plans to increase its oil refining capacity will allow it to join the group of gasoline exporting countries within five years, a London-based energy think tank says in a report. According to a research note released by Energy Market Consultants (EMC), which is part of FACTS Global Energy Group, by upgrading some of its refineries, Iran will not only be able to meet its domestic gasoline needs but will also attain a surplus in production by 2015, Dow Jones Newswires reported.

95% Medicines Produced in the Country

95 percent of the medicine required for the treatment of different diseases is being produced inside the country, according to an official in the Health Ministry. Addressing the closing ceremony of the ninth annual meeting of the Iranian Pharmacists Society, Shانه-Saz said: "Our strategy in importing medicine is to tackle shortages, create a

positive competition atmosphere and transfer knowledge."The Ministry is to improve distribution process of medicine instead of increasing the number of pharmacies and optimize the consumption pattern of the society, he added.

Iran-Georgia Joint Economic Commission Meet

Tehran will host Iran-Georgia Joint Economic Commission's 5th round of meetings this year , it was reported yesterday.The decision was made during a meeting between Iranian ambassador to Georgia Majid Saber and the newly assigned Minister of Economic and Sustainable Development of Georgia Vera Kobalia.Also head of Georgian side in the joint commission, Kobalia emphasized bilateral negotiations on fixing a date for the meeting.

Politico-Strategic Front

Iran, Turkey Ink Security Agreement

Iran and Turkey ink security agreement here yesterday.The agreement was inked by Iranian Interior Minister's Security Deputy, Ali Abdollahi and Turkey's Acting Deputy Interior Minister Osman Gunes in the context of the 13th joint security meeting in Tehran.Abdollahi expressed hope for enhanced ties between the two countries in all fields, particularly the security and economic cooperation.He said several issues including international campaign against terrorism, and cooperation on security affairs and smuggling of illicit drugs across the border area were discussed in the meeting.

Commander Guarantees U.S. Shame in ME

Commander of the Iranian Army's Ground Forces warns Western military analysts and chiefs against attacking the Middle East to avoid "humiliation" over their "unwise" move. "We advise American, British and Israeli commanders and analysts against another unwise act in order to avoid [future] humiliation and distress over failures in the Middle East because in this case they would have to pay a heavy price," the Brig. Gen. Ahmad-Reza Pourdastan said yesterday."Americans can be certain that in the event of a ground, naval or aerial attack against our country, they will be faced with a crushing and decisive response which will be much more fatal and crushing than their initial act [of aggression]," Mehr News Agency quoted the commander as saying.

Iran to Pursue N. Rights within IAEA Rules

A senior Iranian lawmaker said that the sanctions imposed on Iran by the West would not undermine the country's efforts in restoring its legitimate nuclear rights."Iran has focused all its efforts on continuing its peaceful nuclear activities within the regulations of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)," member of the parliament's National

Security and Foreign Policy Commission Hossein Ebrahimi told the Arabic-language Alalam TV network. He stressed Tehran's cooperation with the UN nuclear watchdog, and stated, "Iran's response to the IAEA was also presented on the basis of continued cooperation with the agency in accordance with the rules of this international body and to avoid a violation of the frameworks and regulations of this body."

MP: Iran to Supply Nuclear Fuel by Sept.

In the wake of new European Union (EU) sanctions against Iran, the Islamic Republic says it is determined to supply the fuel needed for its nuclear research center. Senior Iranian lawmaker Mohammad Karami-Rad on Wednesday downplayed the latest EU sanctions, saying, "Despite the ongoing sanctions during the past years, Iran has had the maximum limit of trade with Europe," IRNA reported. "The [numerous] contracts Iran has signed in the field of industry and business with various countries illustrate the ineffectiveness of the sanctions," he emphasized.

Plans Ready for Confronting Enemy Threats

A senior Iranian military commander said on Monday that the U.S. and Israel are unable to wage military attacks on Iran, but meantime stressed that Tehran has already readied the necessary plans and measures to confront enemy threats. "The enemy has devised many scenarios but it is unable to successfully implement them. Iran, too, has drawn precise plans for confronting possible threats," Iranian Armed Forces Deputy Chief of Staff for Cultural Affairs and Defense Publicity Brigadier General Masoud Jazayeri said, underlining the Iranian armed forces' ability to defend and safeguard the country and the Islamic Republic's borders.

DM Warns Zionists Over Iran Attack

Any unwise step by the Zionist regime would ring the bell of its complete destruction, Defense Minister Brigadier General Ahmad Vahidi said. The minister commented on the latest movements made by the Zionist regime in the region. "The Zionist regime is facing many domestic, regional and international problems and that is the reason why it is trying to get rid of such heavy burden by resorting to a blame game," Vahidi stated.

Iran Ups Ballistic Missile Capability

A senior commander with Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) says the country is now capable of 'producing an endless number of ballistic missiles.' "Our production lines are running very smoothly," IRGC's Deputy Commander Brigadier General Hossein Salami was quoted by Fars News Agency as saying yesterday. Iran has also made enormous progress in the field of air defense, added the top general.

U.S. Warships as "Easy Targets for Iranian Navy"

A senior Iranian military figure underlined the Iranian Navy's preparedness to repel possible attacks on the country, saying that each hostile U.S. warship would be swarmed by over 100 Iranian military vessels in the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman if war breaks out between the two arch foes. "We have seen over 100 combat vessels for each (U.S.) warship" for the time of war or whenever necessary, Former Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Naval Forces Rear Admiral Morteza Saffari told the Persian-language Panjareh (Window) Weekly.

Iran Exporting Military Products to 40 Countries

A senior Iranian military expert dismissed possible effects of the western sanctions on Iran's defensive power and industries, saying that the country is exporting arms and military products to 40 world states at present. "Despite 30-year-long sanctions against the defense industries, the Islamic Republic is currently exporting military equipment to 40 countries," General Yadollah Javani said.

Iran Eyes Nuclear Fusion Energy

Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Ali-Akbar Salehi says Iran seeks to conduct nuclear fusion research in an effort to break into the alternative energy. Iran has launched serious "fusion research today," Iranian media outlets quoted Salehi as saying yesterday. Speaking at the inauguration ceremony of the national program on nuclear fusion, Salehi also said that some 50 scientists have been employed to work on the project. Iran initiated the study phase of the project at the AEOI headquarters in the capital Tehran yesterday where scientists in relevant fields are expected to join the effort for the construction of the first indigenous nuclear fusion reactor and a pilot plant.

Social Front

Iranians Shine at Int'l Chemistry Olympiad

Iranian students won one gold and three silvers and stood 5th at the 42nd International Chemistry Olympiad (IChO) in Japan. The gold medal was achieved by Amir Hussein Naseri while silver medals were won by Muhammad Reza Moshiri, Hussein Dadash Azar and Hanieh Safari. China, South Korea, Thailand and the US stood first to fourth respectively. The 42nd International Chemistry Olympiad (IChO) was held in Tokyo July 19-28, in which 280 students from 70 countries competed.

Interior Minister: Details on Zahedan Blasts Act to Be Announced Soon

Interior minister Mostafa Mohammad-Najjar said here Monday Zahedan terror incident is seriously under survey and people will be informed of new details on it soon. Mohammad-Najjar who was speaking at a press conference at the opening ceremony of Ardebil Transportation Township, added, "As the people's servants we have to inform you presently that a number of the involved terrorists in that deadly incident have been arrested."

Exhibition of Paintings by Fallahzadeh at Niavaran Cultural Center

An exhibition of paintings by Reza Fallahzadeh opens at Niavaran Cultural Center on Thursday. The exhibition will present 32 new works by Fallahzadeh in Abstract and Surrealist styles executed in watercolor, oil or mixed media. Born in Tehran in 1951, Fallahzadeh studied at Brussels Art University and has been creating art for the past 33 years. He has had numerous exhibitions at home and abroad. The exhibition at Niavaran Cultural Center runs through Tuesday, August 10.

Tehran, Moscow Cooperate in Fighting Drugs

Russia and Iran are cooperating to prevent drug trafficking, the head of Russia's Drug Police Victor Ivanov told reporters on Monday. He said the two countries regularly exchange information on drug trafficking routes. Russia is receiving Afghan drugs from Iran mainly through Azerbaijan which is a support for insurgents and military factions on the North Caucasus. The U.S. Ambassador in Russia John Beyrle said the U.S. hasn't such developed contacts with Iran in this sphere as Russia has.

Iran's Biggest Telescope Unveiled

Iran has unveiled its largest domestically-manufactured telescope, as part of an overall policy to achieve self-sufficiency in the field of technology. Iran's first Vice President Mohammad Reza Rahimi unveiled the telescope dubbed Tara yesterday in a ceremony attended by a number of lawmakers as well as governors of Isfahan and Markazi province in the central city of Golpayegan. The telescope was manufactured by Golpayegan's Astronomy Society with a fund worth \$80,000 to be used in the fields of astronomy, medicine, and military.

Police Seize 6 Tons of Narcotics

Border guard forces seized a large cargo of narcotics in an armed clash in a border town in eastern Iran, a senior police commander announced on Monday. "During the armed clash which erupted in Saravan border (in Iran's southeastern province of Sistan and Balouchestan) yesterday, drug-traffickers were first trapped in an ambush operation by the border police squads and were later forced to escape the country after two-hour long clashes," Commander of Iran's Border Guard Units General Hossein Zolfaqari said, elaborating on the yesterday operations of his units.

President: Atiyeh Mehr Plan to Guarantee Bright Future for Iranian Children

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said here yesterday that Atiyeh Mehr Plan will ensure a bright future for each Iranian youth. "Families are recommended to deposit sums into their offspring's account in addition to the share of government in the (Mehr Imam Reza) Fund, thus guaranteeing a bright and shining future for them," said President Ahmadinejad in a ceremony, marking inauguration of Imam Reza Fund. Under a government plan, the Mehr Imam Reza Fund will be opened with an initial fund of 10 billion rials deposited by government for each newly born baby. The fund asset will gradually increase with money savings by parents of the baby until s/he reaches the age of 18.

HOLIDAY NOTICE

The Shiites Celebrate the Birthday of the Occult Imam Mahdi, Whose Second Coming Will Usher in a New Age of Justice. IRAN NEWS Extends Its Congratulations to the World Shiites and Offers Its Next Issue on Wednesday.

Detailed News

Political Front

Ayat. Jannati Accuses U.S. of Funding Opposition

Tehran's substitute Friday-prayer leader and the Secretary of the Guardian Council has charged the U.S. with giving opposition figures one billion dollars to topple the Islamic establishment during last year's post-election unrest.

"I have acquired documents showing that the Americans paid one billion dollars to leaders of sedition through Saudi individuals who are currently the U.S. agents in regional countries," ILNA quoted Head of the Guardian Council Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati as saying yesterday.

"These Saudis, who spoke on behalf of the U.S., told the opposition figures that if you can overthrow the Islamic establishment, we would pay another 50 billion dollars," he added.

"The opposition leaders staged riots with the help of the U.S. and they were confident that the Islamic Revolution will fall with the assistance of the US because it is a soft war which will disappoint the nation," he explained.

The Iranian cleric further pointed out that a system which does not have the support of the nation will collapse automatically.

Ayatollah Jannati said Saudi Arabia is obeying the U.S. “in a servile manner” and added that Iran is the only country which stood by itself and chanted “death to America” with strength.

The 12-member Guardians Council, which among other things is tasked with overseeing the elections and ensuring that they are held in a free and fair manner, endorsed the result of June 2009 presidential election that saw Mahmoud Ahmadinejad win for his second term in office.

Erdogan Underlines Iran Right to Have Peaceful Nuclear Energy

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, by underlining Iran’s right to use peaceful nuclear energy, criticized West silence on the Zionist regime nuclear arsenal.

In a joint press conference after meeting with British Prime Minister David Cameron here on Tuesday, Erdogan also underlined Turkey’s commitment to Tehran Declaration.

He continued that upon Turkey’s policy on necessity of solving Iran’s nuclear issue through diplomatic ways and upon Tehran Declaration, Turkey cast a negative vote to the UN Security Council resolution for imposing new sanctions against Iran.

Criticizing the Zionist regime action in blockading Gaza Strip, Erdogan said that residents of Gaza under constant Israelis pressure and attacks are living in a prison.

Turkish prime minister called Israelis' attack to the freedom flotilla in international waters, which were carrying humanitarian aid for resident of Gaza, a piracy and added it is surprising that people of the world are reacting to the piracies in Somalia, but are silent about Israelis actions.

Erdogan underlined again that Israel must apologize for its action and compensate the loss and end its blockade against Gaza.

He also declared his country's opposition to existence of nuclear arsenal in the region.

Sanctions Against Iran “Misguided”

The decision by the EU to follow the U.S. in imposing unilateral sanctions against Iran is misguided and counter-productive, according to the Campaign Against Sanctions and Military Intervention in Iran (CASMI).

“The U.S. has had unilateral sanctions against Iran for decades; in which time European companies managed to fill in the gap while U.S. companies were at a disadvantage,” said CASMI steering committee member Mohammad Kamaali.

“The new measures by the EU deprive European companies from trading with Iran; thereby benefiting their U.S. competitors,” Kamaali said.

With both EU and U.S. effectively forcing their companies out of Iran, he suggested the consequence of imposing sanctions against oil, gas and financial interests would be that “Iran will be looking more to emerging powers in the East and South America.”

“If the ultimate goal of sanctions is to force Iran to change course in its nuclear program, then sanctions have not been effective in any shape or form,” said Kamaali, who is an active member of the British-Iranian community in London and an advocate of intercultural dialogue.

“In fact such hostile acts by the West have so far only added to the mistrust in Tehran. I do not foresee any significant change of policy in Iran's nuclear program as a result of UN resolutions or the new unilateral sanctions,” he said.

“The West's failed method of carrot-and-stick is a misguided and dangerous path that has only made it more difficult to reach a peaceful resolution.”

CASMII has been particularly critical of the West's response to the fuel-exchange Tehran Declaration brokered by Brazil and Turkey, saying it revealed “the degree of hypocrisy Iran has to deal with.”

“What is needed in any negotiation is a minimum level of trust between the parties and that is now almost non-existent,” Kamaali told IRNA.

With regard to the demand in UN Security Council Resolutions for Iran to stop enriching uranium, he said this was “politically motivated and fundamentally illegitimate.”

“All member states of the NPT have foregone the development of nuclear weapons in return of receiving full and comprehensive assistance from the IAEA to develop nuclear energy including the nuclear fuel cycle for peaceful purposes.”

“Iran not only has not received such assistance, its ordinary scientific activities under the supervision of the IAEA are objected to by a few Western countries,” CASMII's board member said.

CASMII was set up in London by Iranian and non-Iranian academics, students and professional of different political persuasions as an independent campaign organization with the purpose of opposing sanctions and foreign interference in Iran.

President: Iran Breaks Trend of Dependence on Big Powers

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said Iran has managed to remove the grip of big economic powers and multi-national companies by conducting grand national oil, gas and petrochemical projects using its domestic resources.

He made the remarks in this southern Iranian town on Wednesday while inaugurating two petrochemical plans in the special economic energy zone of South Pars.

He said Iran's success in completing the remaining phases in Assalouyeh has had big outcomes not only for Iran itself but for many other countries as well.

He warned that if foreign companies failed to stop attempts to impose their unilateral and hegemonic policies for conducting industrial projects, then they would lose their markets in other countries as well.

The President went on to say that the hegemonic powers such as the U.S. which have been committing crimes and have looted the resources of nations in the world for years will be made to stand accountable for their actions once justice overtakes the world.

Addressing the big world powers, he said they could never halt the progressive move of the Iranian nation because Iranians have already proven that they are vigilant enough to confront enemies' sanctions.

Ahmadinejad said the Iranian nation did not welcome sanctions but was firm in its position, adding that the Iranian nation had already doubled its efforts to get to the peak of progress and this was a reality which the enemies of Iran who are guided and managed by the Zionists have been neglecting in the past three decades.

Sanctions Against Iran Lack Int'l Support

President's Chief of Staff Esfandiar Rahim Mashaei dismissed western officials' claims about international support for their sanctions and embargos against Iran, and stressed that the move is suffering a weak back-up even in the West.

"I have spoken with European and Asian diplomats about the anti-Iran sanctions, and none of them acknowledged that sanctions are practical or influential or can deter us from continuing our path," Mashaei said, addressing Iranian expatriates yesterday.

"In fact, no one cares for the sanctions at all," stressed Mashaei, who is also caretaker of the High Council of Iranian Expatriates' Affairs Abroad.

The Iranian official further underlined Iran's significant role on the international scene, and noted, "The Iranian nation is a great nation. Ignoring Iran is not possible, because the world needs Iran..."

The remarks by Mashaei came two days after 27 EU member states adopted new sanctions targeting Iran's foreign trade, banking and energy sectors. They include a ban on dealing with Iranian banks and insurance companies, as well as steps to prevent investment in Tehran's oil and gas sector.

VP: Sanctions, Way to Growth and Progress

The sanctions imposed by Western countries are a way to the Islamic Republic of Iran's growth and progress, said Vice President for Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Hojjat-ol-Eslam Mohammad-Reza Mir-Tajoddini in Mashhad.

"The enemies with their different sanctions against the system of Islamic Republic try to mar and obstruct the way to reaching the system's high goals," he added.

"These sanctions are not only no obstacle to the system's progress but pave the way for the country's growth and progress in different areas," Mir-Tajoddini continued.

"Today, Iran despite different sanctions has made a lot of progress in peaceful nuclear technologies," he said.

Italy Frees Another Iranian From House Arrest

Milan's prosecutor freed another Iranian national, Ali Damirchilou, from house arrest in Italy, a senior Iranian diplomat announced.

"Thanks to efforts made by Iran's Embassy in Rome, its Consulate General in Milan and the Islamic Republic's legal office in Paris, the Milan Prosecutor retracted the house arrest order for Damirchilou," Iran's Ambassador to Rome Seyed Mohammad Ali Hosseini said.

Earlier, Italian counterterrorism prosecutor Armando Spataro had released the Iranian reporter, Hamid Ma'souminejad, from house arrest.

Damirchilou was arrested in March along with Hamid Ma'souminejad, a senior correspondent for the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) in Rome, and five Italians on charges of illegal arms trafficking.

The move sparked a diplomatic row between Rome and Tehran as Iranian officials described the move as a 'politically-motivated' act.

Reports on Japanese Oil Tanker Blast in Strait of Hormuz Rejected

An informed source yesterday rejected media reports about an explosion on a Japanese supertanker in the Strait of Hormuz, stressing that the Japanese ship was outside Iran's territorial waters when the explosion occurred.

"The tanker's deck caught fire for unknown reasons outside the Strait (Hormuz) and outside Iran's territorial waters and the ship was later transferred to Diba port in Oman with the help of the Omani forces," the source told FNA on the condition of anonymity.

"Therefore the news about the blast on the ship in the Strait of Hormuz are denied," the source added.

EU Independence Questioned Over Anti-Iran Sanctions

Foreign Ministry Spokesman Ramin Mehman-Parast said here Monday EU's deeply regrettable posing of new sanctions against Iran puts under question that union's political independence.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman made the comment in response to a question regarding the European Union's imposing of additional sanctions against our country, which he condemned, arguing, "The EU takes its steps under the influence of the pressure impose by the United States, and it does so with eyes that are blind-folded, which leads to losing both its identity and its independence."

Mehman-Parast said that the impose sanctions by that union are both ineffective and unconstructive, adding, "These sanctions neither assist the process of negotiations, nor are able to impose any harm in the will of the Iranian nation for materializing their natural rights regarding their peaceful nuclear program."

He added, "The Islamic Republic of Iran has many times made moves aimed at generating a positive atmosphere for proceeding towards problem solving, while that union's move just further complicated the situation."

The foreign ministry spokesman added, "The recent move of the European Union is made in continuation of the west's defeated policies against Iran throughout the past 30 years, which have had no results, save for strengthening the spirit of self sufficiency and resistance among the great Iranian nation on the one hand, and depriving the EU in particular, and the entire west in general, of the unique opportunities of cooperation with a regional power with great political, economic and cultural potentials."

Mehman-Parast said, "The path of imposing sanctions is an old, already tried, incompetent path with reverse effects."

The Iranian diplomat referring to the trust building moves made by the Islamic Republic of Iran, addressing the EU member countries' officials, and asked them, "How come under such conditions that a step is taken forward some sides step into the scene and try to turn interactions into confrontation?"

Mehman-Parast at the end emphasized, "The Islamic Republic of Iran evaluates the European Union's recent move a another hostile act against the Iranian nation that further aggravates the atmosphere of mistrust between the Iranians nation and the initiators of that move, and will have negative aftermaths for them."

Canada Imposes Anti-Iran Sanctions

Canada has imposed a fresh round of sanctions against Iran's energy sector hours after the European Union approved similar unilateral measures.

Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon told reporters on Monday that the new sanctions include a ban on Canadian investment in Iran's oil and gas sectors.

Cannon added that Iranian banks would also be targeted by the new measures, which prevents them from opening branches on Canadian soil.

He stressed that the new sanctions are not intended to punish the people of Iran.

However, experts have suggested that the Canadian sanctions cannot affect Iran and are more of a gesture made to show alliance with the U.S.

"Canada really doesn't have much influence in the Middle East and particular in Iran," a Canadian foreign affairs and security expert, Eric Margolis, told CTV News Channel Monday morning.

"This has much to do with Canadian domestic politics as it does with Iran," he added.

Sanctions Against Iran Risky for EU Interests

Imposing sanctions against Iran over its nuclear policy can have a negative impact on the political and economic interests of the European Union, the Hamburg-based daily Welt said in an editorial on yesterday.

"These penalties leveled against Iran are not without a risk. The Europeans are factually pulling out of the lucrative market (of Iran) which could also be of utmost significance for the energy supply of the EU," the paper said.

"Furthermore, Iran plays an important role as regional power in the conflict regions Afghanistan and the Middle East. The question of Afghanistan can not be resolved without Iran," it added.

Reacting to the latest EU sanctions, Tehran had strongly condemned it, branding it "ineffective and not constructive."

Israel, Saudis in Talks Over Iran Attack

Israeli spy chief Meir Dagan has met Saudi officials to discuss a possible military strike against the Islamic Republic, a report says.

The World Net Daily website cited informed Arab security sources on Monday that Mossad chief Dagan has visited Saudi Arabia in recent weeks.

It is believed that Tel Aviv is trying to persuade Riyadh to allow Israel to use its airspace for a possible military strike on Iran, the report added.

The Israeli spy chief also met Saudi intelligence officials in 2009.

Last month, unnamed US defense sources told The Times that Israel had been given overflight clearance by the Saudis and received permission to use the northern Saudi airspace. Riyadh, however, dismissed the report.

"The kingdom of Saudi Arabia stresses that it will never allow any one to use the Saudi territory to attack other countries. This is especially the case about the occupying regime of Israel, with which Saudi Arabia has no relations," Saudi Arabia's Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

Israel has repeatedly threatened to bomb Iran's nuclear facilities. While considering Israeli threats as highly unlikely, Iran has stated that any act of aggression against its soil would be met with a crushing response.

Firm in Alleged Iran Trade Deal to Pay CAB €1.5m

An aviation company at the centre of an international row over allegedly exporting helicopter engines and aircraft parts to Iran has consented to pay more than €1.5m to the State as part of an agreement with the Criminal Assets Bureau (CAB).

The deal between Cab and Mac Aviation, of Drumcliffe, Co Sligo, was announced in the High Court on Monday.

The full terms of the settlement were not revealed.

But an agreed statement confirmed that the company would pay €1.5m to the Finance Minister following action by Cab under the Proceeds of Crime Act, 1996.

Mac Aviation also consented to making a payment to the Exchequer to settle all outstanding tax and social welfare issues.

The court heard that the agreement between the two sides had been reached without any admission by the company to criminal or civil liabilities or without any admission to any factual issues by or on behalf of the company.

The High Court had also earlier ruled that part of the hearing dealing with proceedings under the Proceeds of Crime Act should be held in public rather than in camera.

Ahmadinejad: U.S. Psywar Plan Includes 2 Hot Wars

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad says the United States and Israel plan to attack two countries in the Middle East as part of a conspiracy to apply pressure on Iran.

"We have precise information that the Americans have devised a plot, according to which they seek to launch a psychological war on Iran," Ahmadinejad stated in an exclusive interview with Press TV on Monday.

"They plan to attack at least two countries in the region within the next three months," he added.

He said the U.S. seeks to achieve two main objectives with the scheme.

"First of all, they want to hamper Iran's progress and development since they are opposed to our growth, and secondly they want to save the Zionist regime because it has reached a dead-end and the Zionists believe they can be saved through a military confrontation," Ahmadinejad explained.

He also advised U.S. President Barack Obama not to follow the policies of George W. Bush.

In addition, he warned Russian officials to avoid playing into the hands of Washington because that would go against their national interests.

Commenting on the nuclear issue, Ahmadinejad said Iran will resume nuclear talks with the West in September, adding that Iran wants Turkey and Brazil to participate in the negotiations.

Ban Welcomes Resumption of Iran-Vienna Group Talks

The United Nations Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, is looking forward to resumption of talks between Iran and the Vienna Group, according to a UN official.

Talking to reporters in New York, the United Nations Secretary General Speaker, Martin Nitschke, said the UN Chief has always been favoring resumption of the talks and agreement in that connection.

On Iran's letter to the IAEA, Nitschke said the letter has something to do with the Vienna Group. "So let's see what they have to say."

Meanwhile, Iran's Ambassador and permanent representative to the IAEA, Ali-Asghar Soltanieh, on Monday delivered to the IAEA Chief, Yukia Amano, Iran's official letter, in which Tehran had announced its readiness for negotiations with the Vienna Group on exchange of fuel for Tehran Research Reactor.

Meanwhile, the IAEA Spokesperson, Gill Tudor, confirming the matter, announced in Vienna on Monday, "The IAEA Director General, Yukiya Amano, today received a letter from the government of Iran concerning talks on provision of nuclear fuel for the Tehran Research Reactor."

Larijani: Anti-Iran Resolution, New Conspiracy

Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani regarded the recent resolution against Iran as a new conspiracy by arrogant powers to weaken the will of the Iranian nation.

Speaking on the 22nd anniversary of Mersad military operation during the Sacred Defense, Larijani said: "The history testifies that the more the enemies increase their attacks and conspiracies against the Iranian nation, the more and stronger the nation's will and unity become."

Addressing the ringleaders of the White House, Majlis Speaker added: "America says from one side that we have extended the hand of friendship toward Iran but from another side takes decisions in the Congress against the Iranian nation. The Iranian nation has been familiar with these dual policies for years."

Larijani strongly criticized U.S. President Barack Obama for his unmet pledges, and described the U.S. administration as "an administration of lies".

He questioned Washington's honesty in making pledges to the worldwide Muslim community, specially during Obama's speech to Muslims last year.

On June 4, 2009, Obama delivered a speech in Cairo, Egypt, calling for a "new beginning" to relations between America and the Muslim world and seeking to emphasize the common ground and shared values between the two.

Larijani reminded current developments in the occupied Palestinian territories, further expansion of Jewish settlements, Israelis' mistreatment of the Palestinians and Zionists' attacks on mosques, and asked, "Mr. Obama, how much effort did you make to restore the rights of the Palestinian people?"

"Obama's administration is an administration of lie," he continued.

Elsewhere, Larijani slated Washington for repeating the same mistakes and wrong attitudes of the past in approaching Iran's nuclear program and its ignorance and disrespect for Tehran's emphasis on the peaceful nature of its nuclear activities.

Larijani further recalled the United States' approach towards terrorism, and noted, "The same case is true with regard to (the US approach towards) the issue of terrorism, they appear to be condemning terrorism but support terrorism behind the scene."

"In the confessions made by (Abdolmalek) Rigi (the ringleader of the Jundollah terrorist group), it came to be known that he was in connection with the NATO and the U.S. and that they supported this terrorist group," Larijani noted.

Rigi Confessions to Be Publicized in Due Time

Minister of Information Hojatoleslam Heidar Moslehi said on Monday that confessions made by the terrorist ring leader Abdulmalek Rigi at the court of justice will be publicized in due time.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a cabinet ministers meeting on Monday, he said the Iranian Information Ministry had already warned of the border crossings of terrorists from eastern border to Zahedan prior to double bomb blasts in the city and had put its personnel on high alert.

A devoted Basiji (volunteer forces) identified the terrorist and prevented him from entering the mosque in Zahedan, he said.

Referring to the confessions made by Rigi, the Iranian minister said foreign intelligence services such as Mossad, CIA and even NATO fully back terrorists and their sabotage.

A number of suspects have been arrested in connection with Zahedan bomb blasts on charges of having a hand in the criminal bomb attacks, he said.

With regards to Sharam Amiri's case, the Iranian minister said Amiri had been acting as a 'double agent'.

He also warned the secret services of the West to notice that the Islamic Republic of Iran fully monitors their activities.

Iran to Submit Letter to IAEA Today

Iran will submit another letter to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) today briefing the latest developments with the uranium swap agreement, Turkish foreign minister said here yesterday.

"Iran notified us that they will submit a letter to the IAEA tomorrow morning," Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said yesterday

after a trilateral meeting between him, his Brazilian counterpart Celso Amorim, and the Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki, the first meeting of the three foreign ministers after the Tehran Declaration was inked on May 18.

Iran, in the letter, is expected to reaffirm its commitment to meeting the Vienna Group (U.S., France, Russia and the IAEA), regarding the uranium swap detailed in the Tehran Declaration, Davutoglu said, adding during the lunch meeting Iran also reiterated

commitment to meeting the P5+1 (the five permanent security council members plus Germany), concerning a diplomatic solution to its nuclear program.

Davutoglu said "there is a general understanding that such a meeting will be held in Istanbul, and Turkey is ready to provide any assistance it can."

The security council voted for sanctions against Iran soon after the declaration had been signed, which was voted against by non-permanent members Turkey and Brazil.

Davutoglu reaffirmed Turkey's commitment to solving the Iranian nuclear issue peacefully, saying the purpose of the Tehran agreement was to pave the way for diplomacy.

"The Tehran Declaration does not solve every problem, but it lays the foundation for a diplomatic solution," he said.

He also said that Iran might hold talks on the country's nuclear program with the European Union in early September, after the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

Davutoglu said Mottaki "confirmed the meeting might take place after Ramadan."

"This is positive momentum," Davutoglu said, expressing Turkey's readiness to host the meeting if needed.

Iran's top nuclear negotiator, Saeed Jalili, had sent a letter to EU's foreign policy chief, Catherine Ashton, detailing Tehran's conditions for the talks early July.

"The Jalili-Ashton meeting is overdue," Davutoglu said.

Jalili's letter had reiterated those three points and stressed that the EU must make it clear whether the talks will be aimed at "interaction and co-operation, or hostility and confrontation."

Prior to the meeting Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Amorim said, "We will always encourage Iran to take a flexible position. I think that's in their interest," Amorim said. "But I think that other countries should act accordingly."

"We believe Iran should be able to pursue a peaceful nuclear program, but also give the world assurances that it has no military component."

Iran Mulling Over ICJ Ruling on Kosovo

Foreign Ministry Spokesman Ramin Mehman-Parast said the country is mulling over the International Court of Justice (ICJ) advisory ruling on Kosovo.

"Islamic Republic of Iran is studying the Hague-based ICJ advisory ruling on Kosovo case," Mehmanparast said.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran respects the international law and believes that talks in a constructive climate is the only influential step to achieve an appropriate solution to secure rights of citizens and establish peace and tranquility in Balkan."

ICJ ruling on Thursday recognized Kosovo independence.

Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in 2008.

The action sparked worldwide debate and following Serbia request, the UN General assembly called for the ICJ to determine whether the breakaway region had breached international law or not.

Sixty-nine countries including the US and most EU member states have recognized Kosovo's independence.

Ahmadinejad: Russia Part of New Anti-Iran Scenario

President Mahmoud Ahamdinejad here Friday unveiled truth about new US-Zionist scenario against Iran, expressing sorrow that Russia, too, is now harmonizing with it.

President Ahmadinejad who was speaking at the closing ceremony of the National Youth Festival added, "They (Iran's enemies) have decided to launch attacks against a couple of Arab countries in the region that are our friends, getting assistance from the Zionist regime, to create an atmosphere of fear in decision making."

He said, "Recent remarks by the Russian President Dmitry Medvedev are in fact revealing that scenario and we regret the fact that Medvedev has become the spokesman of this project and the plot hatched by Iran's enemies."

Ahmadinejad meanwhile stressed that Tehran is still interested in maintaining and expanding relations with Moscow.

Elsewhere in his address the president said, "Iran was scheduled to send human beings to space in the (Iranian) year 1403 (2025 C), but in response to the posed threats and the UN Security Council resolutions against Iran, in accordance with a cabinet ratification, that program would be implemented five years earlier."

Ahmadinejad emphasized, “Although the enemies of Iran had assumed that by issuing a resolution, launching a psychological war, and harmonizing with certain elements they would manage to segregate Iran, they had better know that Iran has not only not been segregated, but also been developing and advancing in all fields.”

The president added, “The enemies pursued the same objective by kidnapping some Iranian scientists and staging hue and cry and inside Iran, too, some ignorant people, or those who have a wrong image of the events harmonized with them, but in near future I will reveal the enemies’ scenario against Iran.”

He assured everyone that the Iranian nation has thus far dismantled hundreds of such plots and humiliated the designers of such scenarios.

The president added, “Enemies know that if the Iranian nation by sticking to their collective soul and humane civilization background which is the backbone of the path towards perfection and can adapt with entire world, then there would be no room for them anymore; which is what worries them.”

President Ahmadinejad said that the project of launching satellites is one of the prides of the Iranian nation during the current era and emphasizing that the facilities of the Iranian satellites would be manufactured in Iran, stressed, “The Iranian nation has unveiled their plots and would never surrender.”

Elsewhere in his address the president said that the enemies of Iran are timid liars, arguing, “How can they be so scared of their claimed one bomb by Iran under such conditions that they are armed with five thousand atomic bombs?”

He emphasized, “Our nation has always been the harbinger of peace, justice and love for the entire mankind and of course during some eras there have been unpopular and despotic regimes relying on the aliens that have harmed the process of the Iranian nation’s progress.”

The president also referred to some western propagation methods and superstitions, such as highlighting the news on the predictions of an octopus, or some fortune tellers on the results of the 2010 Football World Cup, arguing, “Such people cannot be the leaders of the world nations towards human perfection, while the Iranian nation with its love for the entire blessed values, is after establishing a humane world that would move towards absolute perfection.”

The president said, “We are after constructing Iran, but this does not mean viewing the matter from nationalist angle and singling out the Iranian race. Today the name of Iran is synonymous with prestige, justice seeking, monotheism, anti-despotism, and the entire blessed values that are dear for the world nations.”

Listing the black points in the colonialist historic record of the United States, he said, “The people who have deprived hundreds of thousands of aboriginal people (the red

Indians) from their homes and their lands (at the beginning of their history) and throughout their 250-year history taken hundreds of thousands of slaves from other nations and created countless crimes against the mankind cannot be good models for the other peoples.”

Economic Front

Pursuit of Taiwan-Iran Trade Ties Legitimate

The government is not against commercial activity with Iran that benefits Taiwan's businesspeople, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) officials said in the wake of a new round of international sanctions against the Islamic republic.

The remarks also come after the Israeli representative in Taiwan told the Central News Agency that it would be imprudent for Taiwan to deepen its relations with Iran at this moment.

Rafael Gamzou, the head of the Israel Cultural and Economic Office in Taipei, said in an interview published Sunday that Israel has no objection to Taiwan fostering a better relationship with the Arab world, but that it would frown on closer Taiwan-Iran ties. He pointed out that many countries are condemning the Iranian regime for its nuclear power program.

MOFA spokesman Henry Chen, however, said the government would not interfere with economic affairs.

"The Republic of China (Taiwan) is not seeking to establish official diplomatic ties with Iran...Business is business, " he said. "We're not against anything as long as it creates commercial profitability for our people."

"Taiwanese businesspeople have been doing business with Iranians for a long time. The bilateral relations were not developed overnight. Businesspeople will do whatever they think is profitable even if they have to do so without help from the government, " he added.

While Taiwan does not rule out developing closer trade relations with Iran, setting up a trade office in Taipei would require much more consideration, he said without elaborating.

The Taiwan External Trade Development Council, a semi-official agency in charge of foreign trade promotion, established an office in Tehran in 1992.

Iran's Non-Oil Exports to PGCC Rise

Iran's non-oil exports excluding gas condensate to Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC) member states have witnessed 56 percent increase during the first two months of the current Iranian year (started March 21), said general manager of African and Arabic Countries Trade Office in Trade Promotion Organization of Iran.

Hossein Hosseini said some 579 million dollars worth of non-oil products were exported to PGCC countries over the same period.

He added, "The figure stood at 370 million dollars during the same time a year before."

He went on to say that Iran's non-oil exports to PGCC states account for 15 percent of its total non-oil exports.

He added also non-oil exports of the country registered 18 percent growth in terms of weight.

PGCC including Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar and Bahrain aims to promote political and economic cooperation between the member states and also their relations with other world's nations.

Isfahan Hosts Two Int'l Exhibits

The Sixth International Exhibition of Steel, Metallurgy, Foundry and Related Mines and Industries opened in Isfahan province yesterday.

Over 100 Iranian and four foreign companies from Turkey and the UK are showcasing their products during the four-day event.

Meanwhile, the Third International Exhibition of Higher Education Centers, Training Institutes and Educational Material is simultaneously underway in Isfahan's permanent fair ground.

Over 45 companies from home and other countries including Malaysia, India, the Philippines and the UK are participating in the event.

Both exhibitions will be wrapped up on July 31.

Iran Can Transfer Economic Power to Other States

The First Vice-President, Mohammad-Reza Rahimi, said here on Tuesday that Iran can transfer its high economic power to other parts of the world.

Speaking in ceremonies to inaugurate a 400.63 kilovolt power station in Mahalat, a city southwest of the capital city Tehran, Rahimi said Iran has made huge amount of investment in the neighboring and African countries.

He recalled a time when an Iraqi prime minister sought Iran's electricity aid at the time of his country's power outage and said Iran hence added 200 kilovolts to the amount of electricity exports to Iraq.

He added that Iran has also entered a deal with Turkey for power sale and noted that the country's high electricity generation potential is source of honor.

On the target-oriented subsidy plan, he said the plan will soon go into effect with the hope to solve many of the country's problems.

Official: Banking System Unharmed by Sanctions

Managing-Director of Iran's Bank Melli underlined that the West's increased pressures and fresh sanctions against the country will not undermine his bank's activities.

"Sanctions will not stop, block, decrease or close our activities and we will continue our work powerfully," Mahmoud Reza Khavari said.

"Trusting in God, Bank Melli will continue its activities through utilizing the country's capabilities and without violating the banking and international rules and regulations," Khavari added.

Pointing to the newly imposed EU sanctions on Iran, the official said that a large number of the firm, companies and citizens of the same countries which have supported the sanctions are interested in making investment in Iran.

"The sanctions do not have legal basis, therefore, citizens of the sanctioning countries voice their willingness to invest in our country during their meetings (with Iran)," the official noted.

The European Union on Monday adopted new sanctions targeting Iran's foreign trade, banking and energy sectors. They include a ban on dealing with Iranian banks and insurance companies, as well as steps to prevent investment in Tehran's oil and gas sector.

Oil Industry Privatization Underway

Iran's minister of petroleum said implementation of the article 44 of the constitution is underway, noting that by complete implementation of the article, oil refineries and oil products distribution companies will be privatized.

Speaking to reporters at the inauguration ceremony of a new fuel smart card system center on Monday, Masoud Mir-Kazemi expressed hope that by expanding infrastructures and data storing centers, necessary support to be provided for private sector to run the system.

Mir-Kazemi said running the activities through virtual means is one of the important characteristics of the flexible organizations and added expanding IT and virtual networks accelerate doing things and improve the system of organizations.

He added by launching new fuel smart card system center in National Iranian Oil Products Distribution Company (NIOPDC), the capacity for storing data increases.

“So the country faces no restriction to supply different kind of fuels through fuel smart card system.”

According to Mir-Kazemi commissioning the new fuel smart card system center, help process and store data on vehicles and gas stations more efficient and provide better management reports.

He also expressed hope that the possibility of providing services at CNG refilling stations through smart cards to be realized in the near future.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he said up to now 1000 fuel stations of the country are equipped with online electronic payment by which vehicles spend less time in the stations.

Two Petchem Projects Open in Assaluyeh

Two projects at Morvarid Petrochemical Company and Pardis Petrochemical Company inaugurated yesterday by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in the southern Iranian port city of Assaluyeh in Bushehr province.

Around 900 million dollars has been invested in the projects that are estimated to add 2.25 million tons to domestic petrochemical production.

The unit at Morvarid will produce ethylene and the second phase of Pardis Company is set to produce urea and ammonia.

The projects will create over 1,000 direct jobs and nearly 15,000 indirect vacancies.

President Ahmadinejad and his entourage arrived in Assalouyeh yesterday morning to inaugurate these two petrochemical projects.

Iran has the world's second largest natural gas reserves after Russia -- around 15 percent of the world's total proven reserves. The reserves contain an estimated 974 trillion cubic feet.

At present, Iran is producing only a small share of its gas reserves, about 5.5 trillion cubic feet per year. This means that Iran is one of the few countries capable of supplying much larger amounts of natural gas in the future.

Carpet Exports Up by 37%

Iran's hand-woven carpet exports have witnessed a 37-percent increase during the first quarter of the current Iranian year (started on March 21, 2010), an Iranian official announced yesterday.

The exports of Iran's hand-woven carpet during the first three months of the year amounted to 104 million dollars in value which shows a 36.7 percent growth compared with the same period last year, head of Iran's National Carpet Center Feisal Mardasi said.

Mardasi also announced that the exported carpets during the mentioned period weighed 16,254 tons which also shows a 38.3 percent rise in comparison with the same period last year which stood at 11,747 tons.

Describing the U.S. as the biggest importer of Iranian hand-woven carpet, he said that the country's purchase of Iranian carpet has amounted to 17 million dollars during the first quarter of this year.

He mentioned that the UAE, Germany, Qatar, Japan, Italy, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Canada, Austria, Britain, Kuwait, Sweden, France, Australia and Denmark stand next to the U.S. in buying Iranian carpets.

Wheat Imports Down

Iran imported 450,000 tons of wheat during the first quarter of the current Iranian year (started March 21), registering a 76-percent decrease against the same period last year.

More than 1.8 million tons of wheat were imported over the first quarter of last Iranian year (started March 21, 2009).

UAE, Kazakhstan, Russia and Holland were the main wheat exporters to Iran.

Earlier in April, Iran announced that it will resume exporting two million tons of wheat to three neighboring countries after a three-year halt.

“The government has issued authorization for exporting two million tons of wheat to Oman, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates during the second Iranian year (April 21 to May 21),” said Deputy Commerce Minister Hamid Alikhani.

He added the country's wheat production was expected to reach 9 to 12 million tons, leaving enough supplies for exports.

Alikhani noted that all wheat exports will be carried out by the private sector.

Iran exported its first wheat shipment of 40,000 tons to Oman in 2007. The Persian Gulf country purchased an additional 160,000 tons from Iran during the same year.

Later, a cold winter followed by drought decreased Iran's agricultural yield, including wheat production, forcing the country to stop the crop's exports.

Gasoline Rationing Plan Saves \$11b

Managing Director of National Iranian Oil Products Distribution Company (NIOPTDC) said on Monday that Iran has managed to save 11 billion dollars thanks to the gasoline rationing plan which has spared the need for excessive imports of the commodity.

Referring to the distribution and delivery of 17 million fuel smart cards to Iranian auto drivers, Farid Ameri said since 2007, when gasoline rationing plan went into effect, some 11 billion dollars has been saved for the country out of cut in the gasoline imports.

He added that had the gasoline rationing plan not been implemented, fuel consumption nationwide would have reached as much as 98 million liters per day.

Under the gasoline rationing plan, a total 180 liters of gasoline have been considered for the summer season, some 60 liters for private vehicles in each month of summer.

The plan predicts allocation of 25 liters of gasoline for motorcycles and the same amount for the public sector vehicles including pick-up trucks, taxis and cabs for each month of summer.

A monthly ration of 500 liters of semi-subsidized gasoline has also been considered for this purpose. The smart card system will be dismantled for ever gradually on a government decision.

Based on the official estimates, daily consumption of open market gasoline has risen to nine million liters this year from 1.5 million liters on average last year.

Head of Iran transportation and fuel management headquarters, Mohammad Royanian, said recently that based on the summer ration of gasoline, the total gasoline consumed nationwide would amount to the domestic production of 45 million liters and there would thus be no need for importing gasoline.

"Currently, gasoline is being imported. A portion of the imports is stored and the remaining portion is to be used for procuring the needs of smart cards," noted Royanian.

He recalled that about 26 million liters of gasoline had been consumed per day on the average nationwide since the beginning of the current Iranian year (started March 21).

Iran to Issue \$500m South Pars Bonds

To aid in the development of Iran's energy sector, the Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC) will issue 500 million dollars in bonds to finance the exploitation of South Pars gas field.

Ali Vakili, Managing Director of POGC, said the participation bonds are expected to be offered by August 21 through Bank Saderat.

"Recently POGC has been authorized by the Central Bank of Iran to issue participation bonds -- it plans to issue 500 million dollars in bonds in the month of Mordad (23 July - 21 August)," Shana quoted Vakili as saying on Sunday.

The official noted that the parliament has planned to issue a total of 5 billion dollars in bonds in the current Iranian year (ending March 20, 2011) for the development of Iran's oil industry, he said.

"Some 3 billion dollars of the bonds will be used to finance the South Pars gas field project."

On Saturday Vakili said investment in the South Pars gas field has increased by 120 percent during the current Iranian year (started March 21).

He told IRNA that the boom was the result of the issuance of 3 billion euro in foreign currency bonds and 3,014 billion dollars in national participation bonds.

He went on to say that investment in South Pars had surpassed 11 billion dollars.

"Due to accurate planning, this year there will be no problem with regard to funding the South Pars project," he said.

Iran has the world's second largest natural gas reserves after Russia.

Iran's Electricity Consumption Up

Iran's electricity consumption increased by 9.5 percent late July due to the worst heat wave sweeping the country in the first month of the summer, deputy energy minister said on Monday.

Mohammad Behzad announced that Iran's electricity consumption level reached 41.5 megawatts late July, showing 9.5 percent growth, compared to the figure -- 39.26 megawatts -- in the same period last year.

As a result of a major heat wave -- the worst in Iran in the past 70 years -- sweeping the country late July, Tehrani residents were asked to consume as little electricity as possible so that the officials in charge would continue to meet the high demand and avoid planned power outages.

In late July, temperatures in Tehran reached 43 degrees Celsius, with temperatures of over 50 degrees reported in other regions.

Turkey Gas Imports to Rise

With the exploitation of the sixth national network gas transfer, as the second gas export pipeline to turkey, gas export capacity to the country via the eight gas transmission region will rise by 50 to 60 million cubic meters per day.

Director of the Iran's eight gas transmission region, Valiollah Dini told reporters that current capacity to transfer gas to Turkey through existing gas pipeline in the region is 30 million cubic meters per day that could be raised to 45 million cubic meters per day.

He also said that by launching the sixth national network gas transfer, current capacity for exporting gas to Turkey will mount to 80 to 90 million cubic meters per day.

Meanwhile managing director of the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) said on Friday that by construction of a 56 inches gas pipeline over the next three years, Iran will be able to export 50 to 60 million meters of gas per day to Turkey and Europe through the pipeline.

Javad Oji added Turkey intends to transfer Iran's gas to Europe by construction of an independent gas pipeline in its territory. He went on to say that by signing the contract on Thursday, the first step was taken to realize the plan.

He noted that by launching the independent pipeline, NIGC would be able to market its gas in Europe by paying transit fee to turkey.

A gas transferring pipeline contract between Iran and Turkey, 660 kilometers long and worth one billion euro, was signed by NIGC and Turkish ASB Company on Thursday.

Oil Hovers at \$79 as Traders Eye Equities, Demand

Oil prices hovered for a second day near 79 dollars a barrel yesterday in Asia as investors weighed a three-day stock market rally against signs of sluggish U.S. crude demand.

Benchmark crude for September delivery was down 3 cents at 78.95 dollars a barrel at midday Singapore time in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract was unchanged to settle at 78.98 dollars on Monday.

Surging U.S. stock markets have underpinned oil prices as traders often look to equities as a barometer of overall investor sentiment. The Dow Jones industrial average rose 1 percent Monday and is up about 4 percent in the last three trading sessions. Most Asian stocks gained yesterday.

Meanwhile, U.S. crude inventories in recent weeks have either grown or fallen less than analysts expected, suggesting consumption remains tepid.

In other Nymex trading in August contracts, heating oil rose 0.24 cent to 2.045 dollars a gallon, gasoline was steady at 2.106 dollars a gallon and natural gas gained 2.6 cents to 4.638 dollars per 1,000 cubic feet.

Brent crude was down 7 cents to 77.43 dollars a barrel on the ICE futures exchange.

Israel Draws the Line at Taiwan Deepening Ties With Iran

Israel has no objection to Taiwan fostering a better relationship with the Arab world but will frown on closer Taiwan-Iran ties, the top Israeli envoy to Taiwan.

Rafael Gamzou, the head of the Israel Cultural and Economic Office in Taipei, in an interview with the Central News Agency made a sharp distinction between non-Arab Iran and the Arab bloc, saying Israel never raises any obstacles to its friends developing relationships with the Arab world -- with the exception of Iran.

"We are so much interested in developing relationships with the Arabs so why should we ask our friends not to do it," he said. "But if you ask me about Iran, the Iran today, then my answer would be slightly different."

Earlier this year, the Associated Press reported that Tehran had expressed interest in establishing a commercial representative office in Taiwan, but that Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) had turned down the proposal after consultations with Gamzou's office.

In the interview, Gamzou said it was a matter of timing. At the moment, many major countries in the free world, such as the U.S. and the European nations, are condemning Iran for its nuclear power program, therefore, it would be imprudent for Taiwan to deepen its relationship with Tehran, he said.

"A few months ago, we read that there was a big commercial delegation coming from Tehran and an association of trade or some kind of chamber of commerce was inaugurated here," he said. "We thought the timing was really not a perfect one, not only from our point of view, but from a Taiwanese point of view."

He suggested that Taiwan adopt a wait-and-see attitude as the free world, under the leadership of the U.S., decides how to deal with Iran.

According to the Taiwan External Trade Development Council (TAITRA) , Iran was Taiwan's 25th largest trading partner in 2009, with a total trade volume of over US\$2.54 billion, more than double the Taiwan-Israel trade volume for the same period.

TAITRA also noted that in April 2009, in an effort to execute President Ma Ying-jeou's directive to help Taiwan gain better market access, the MOFA planned to ease visa restrictions for Iranians.

A Taiwan-Iran Economic and Trade Association was established in Taipei in December 2009 and at the same time, TAITRA signed a memorandum of understanding with the Tehran Chamber of Commerce on the mining industry.

TAITRA currently maintains a Taiwan Trade Center in Tehran.

Nano Scientists Improve Fuel Cells' Efficiency

Iranian researchers could improve fuel cells' efficiency by synthesizing a combined structure of micro fibers-silver nanoparticle and its successful application in the oxygen reduction reaction.

"The combined structure of micro fibers - silver nanoparticle- creates a better conductivity within the composite in comparison with silver nanoparticles due to its one-dimensional structure," Nafiseh Sharifi, one of the researchers from Sharif University of Technology, told INIC.

"We succeeded in synthesizing a combined structure of micro fibers-silver nanoparticle from cellulose fibers of cotton through a new method. The simplicity of the method is one of its advantages over the current methods," she continued.

She first coated silver nanoparticles on cellulose fibers of cotton through chemical reactions. Then she removed cellulose from the coating that contained nanoparticles by heat treatment. Cellulose fibers acted as a template and nanoparticles took the form of the cellulose tissues.

Iran Gasoline Exporter by 2015

A research group expects Iran to become self-sufficient in gasoline production in the next five years.

Iran's plans to increase its oil refining capacity will allow it to join the group of gasoline exporting countries within five years, a London-based energy think tank says in a report.

According to a research note released by Energy Market Consultants (EMC), which is part of FACTS Global Energy Group, by upgrading some of its refineries, Iran will not

only be able to meet its domestic gasoline needs but will also attain a surplus in production by 2015, Dow Jones Newswires reported.

The EMC believes Iran is able to conclude its current schedule of upgrades at Arak, Abadan and Isfahan refineries as well as the construction of one of three condensate splitters at the Bandar Abbas refinery by 2015.

The report suggests a base-case scenario according to which, by completion of the upgrades, Iran will be able to meet its domestic gasoline need, estimated at around 400,000 barrels a day and will also achieve a small surplus in production of between 60,000 and 70,000 barrels a day.

The study group says that if the base-case scenario is realized, efforts to keep pressure on Iran in the medium and long term by limiting its access to global gasoline markets could be weakened.

According to the report, Iran produces between 280,000 and 285,000 barrels of gasoline a day and until recently had acquired the remaining 30 percent, which is about 115,000-120,000 barrels a day, through big oil companies, a number of which are European.

The report also assesses a lower- and higher-case scenario for Iran's efforts to upgrade its refineries.

In the lower-case assessment the report considers only the completion of the upgrades in the Arak and Abadan refineries by 2015, resulting in a decline in Iran's imports by about 30 percent, but leaving a continued gasoline import requirement of about 80,000-90,000 barrels a day.

In the higher-case scenario, in which the refinery upgrades in Arak, Abadan and Isfahan are completed, and all three condensate splitters in the Bandar Abbas plant are constructed, Iran will achieve a gasoline export capacity of 200,000 barrels a day.

"In the longer term, it is possible to project Iran reaching self-sufficiency in its gasoline requirements, perhaps even turning into a net exporter, but much will depend upon the funding for its domestic refinery projects and the speed of completion of these projects," EMC said in the report.

Iran imported 120,000 barrels a day of gasoline in May as part of a stock-building program to meet summer gasoline demands, the report said. But imports fell to 96,000 barrels a day in June.

Iranian Deputy Oil Minister Mohammad Shahnazizadeh announced in May that the country will become self-sufficient in gasoline production within three years, as policies to suppress demands and increase refining will finally free it from a precarious reliance on imports.

"We said by the end of the (Iranian) year 1391 (March 2013) hopefully Iran will become self-sufficient in all oil products," he said.

Mehdi Varzi, a London-based energy consultant, said Iran could become self-sufficient in three years if it manages to both add gasoline production capacity and raise domestic prices.

95% Medicines Produced in the Country

95 percent of the medicine required for the treatment of different diseases is being produced inside the country, according to an official in the Health Ministry.

Addressing the closing ceremony of the ninth annual meeting of the Iranian Pharmacists Society, Shانه-Saz said: "Our strategy in importing medicine is to tackle shortages, create a positive competition atmosphere and transfer knowledge."

The Ministry is to improve distribution process of medicine instead of increasing the number of pharmacies and optimize the consumption pattern of the society, he added.

The Islamic Republic of Iran ranks first in medicine production among regional countries.

Iran-Georgia Joint Economic Commission Meet

Tehran will host Iran-Georgia Joint Economic Commission's 5th round of meetings this year , it was reported yesterday.

The decision was made during a meeting between Iranian ambassador to Georgia Majid Saber and the newly assigned Minister of Economic and Sustainable Development of Georgia Vera Kobalia.

Also head of Georgian side in the joint commission, Kobalia emphasized bilateral negotiations on fixing a date for the meeting.

The 5th round of Iran-Georgia joint economic commission was to be held late July which has been delayed. The meeting will be held in Tehran this year.

Referring to the growing ties between Iran and Georgia, Kobalia also called for further expansion of ties in joint investment, tourism and trade sectors.

Politico-Strategic Front

Iran, Turkey Ink Security Agreement

Iran and Turkey ink security agreement here yesterday.

The agreement was inked by Iranian Interior Minister's Security Deputy, Ali Abdollahi and Turkey's Acting Deputy Interior Minister Osman Gunes in the context of the 13th joint security meeting in Tehran.

Abdollahi expressed hope for enhanced ties between the two countries in all fields, particularly the security and economic cooperation.

He said several issues including international campaign against terrorism, and cooperation on security affairs and smuggling of illicit drugs across the border area were discussed in the meeting.

Referring to Turkey-Iran ancient-old historical and cultural affinity, Gunes said two countries have enjoyed longstanding friendly and brotherly cooperation.

"As per the agreement, the two countries are obliged to cooperate in the fields of combat against drug-trafficking, terrorism, and organized crimes," he said.

The Turkish acting deputy interior minister arrived in Tehran on Monday to participate in 13th joint security meeting.

The joint Iran-Turkey security meeting is held annually.

Commander Guarantees U.S. Shame in ME

Commander of the Iranian Army's Ground Forces warns Western military analysts and chiefs against attacking the Middle East to avoid "humiliation" over their "unwise" move.

"We advise American, British and Israeli commanders and analysts against another unwise act in order to avoid [future] humiliation and distress over failures in the Middle East because in this case they would have to pay a heavy price," the Brig. Gen. Ahmad-Reza Pourdastan said yesterday.

"Americans can be certain that in the event of a ground, naval or aerial attack against our country, they will be faced with a crushing and decisive response which will be much more fatal and crushing than their initial act [of aggression]," Mehr News Agency quoted the commander as saying.

General Pourdastan's warning followed President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's exclusive interview with Press TV on Monday, in which he revealed U.S. and Israeli plans to attack two countries in the Middle East within the next three months.

"First of all, [by attacking Iran's neighbors], they want to hamper Iran's progress and development since they are opposed to our growth, and secondly they want to save the

Zionist regime (Israel) because it has reached a dead-end and the Zionists believe they can be saved through a military confrontation," Ahmadinejad explained.

Pourdastan said that the increase in moral corruption, desertion and suicide among American forces deployed near the Iranian borders "attests to the failure and lack of discipline in the U.S. military."

The commander said that the military had become one of the top ranking forces in the world due to its state-of-the-art military equipment and various drills.

Iran to Pursue N. Rights within IAEA Rules

A senior Iranian lawmaker said that the sanctions imposed on Iran by the West would not undermine the country's efforts in restoring its legitimate nuclear rights.

"Iran has focused all its efforts on continuing its peaceful nuclear activities within the regulations of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)," member of the parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Commission Hossein Ebrahimi told the Arabic-language Alalam TV network.

He stressed Tehran's cooperation with the UN nuclear watchdog, and stated, "Iran's response to the IAEA was also presented on the basis of continued cooperation with the agency in accordance with the rules of this international body and to avoid a violation of the frameworks and regulations of this body."

Pointing to the recently approved EU sanctions on Iran, the lawmaker stressed that pressures and sanctions can never leave a negative impact on Iran's determination to pursue its legitimate nuclear rights.

"Iran has repeatedly showed its good will and will continue its move on the path towards the peaceful use of the nuclear energy," Ebrahimi underscored.

MP: Iran to Supply Nuclear Fuel by Sept.

In the wake of new European Union (EU) sanctions against Iran, the Islamic Republic says it is determined to supply the fuel needed for its nuclear research center.

Senior Iranian lawmaker Mohammad Karami-Rad on Wednesday downplayed the latest EU sanctions, saying, "Despite the ongoing sanctions during the past years, Iran has had the maximum limit of trade with Europe," IRNA reported.

"The [numerous] contracts Iran has signed in the field of industry and business with various countries illustrate the ineffectiveness of the sanctions," he emphasized.

Tehran will provide fuel for Tehran Research Reactor by September, added Karami-Rad - who is a member of the Iranian Parliament's Foreign Policy and National Security Commission.

The remarks come a day after Iranian Energy Minister Majid Namjou announced that the country's first nuclear power plant will come on stream in the southern city of Bushehr by September, generating 1,000 megawatts of electricity.

Plans Ready for Confronting Enemy Threats

A senior Iranian military commander said on Monday that the U.S. and Israel are unable to wage military attacks on Iran, but meantime stressed that Tehran has already readied the necessary plans and measures to confront enemy threats.

"The enemy has devised many scenarios but it is unable to successfully implement them. Iran, too, has drawn precise plans for confronting possible threats," Iranian Armed Forces Deputy Chief of Staff for Cultural Affairs and Defense Publicity Brigadier General Masoud Jazayeri said, underlining the Iranian armed forces' ability to defend and safeguard the country and the Islamic Republic's borders.

The commander reiterated Iran's power in strategic, military and defense fields, and noted, "The Islamic Republic of Iran's strategic depth stretches deep into the United States of America."

"The enemy is well aware of Iran's military and political power and strength and is informed of our strategic depth to some extent. Therefore, it is not able to wage a hasty action against the Islamic Republic," Jazayeri stated.

Jazayeri further described the recently intensified war rhetoric against Iran as "political bluff", and noted, "Americans and Zionists' problems as well as their political, economic and military capacities are not high enough to enable them to manage a new crisis in the region."

DM Warns Zionists Over Iran Attack

Any unwise step by the Zionist regime would ring the bell of its complete destruction, Defense Minister Brigadier General Ahmad Vahidi said.

The minister commented on the latest movements made by the Zionist regime in the region.

"The Zionist regime is facing many domestic, regional and international problems and that is the reason why it is trying to get rid of such heavy burden by resorting to a blame game," Vahidi stated.

He added that the Zionist leaders are even likely to develop false thoughts and illusions in order to reduce pressures exerted on them by public opinion.

Vahidi stressed that any ill-advised act of the Zionist regime would bring about destructive consequences for them.

Iran Ups Ballistic Missile Capability

A senior commander with Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) says the country is now capable of 'producing an endless number of ballistic missiles.'

"Our production lines are running very smoothly," IRGC's Deputy Commander Brigadier General Hossein Salami was quoted by Fars News Agency as saying yesterday.

Iran has also made enormous progress in the field of air defense, added the top general.

He then touched upon the wide-ranging domain of activities the IRGC is involved in, from economy to war on terror.

He said the IRGC's campaign against terrorism has an 'international dimension' and added 'terrorism and narco-trafficking are closely intertwined.'

The top commander said drug cultivation and trade have flourished in Afghanistan since the U.S.-led invasion of the country.

"The IRGC has undertaken to ensure security in southeast of the country, and has formed an impenetrable bulwark against illicit drugs and organized crime in cooperation with police as well as other(domestic) security and intelligence agencies." the IRGC's deputy chief said.

Elsewhere in his remarks, General Salami underlined anti-Iran sanctions will only further encourage the nation to move toward self-sufficiency.

"Iran is no stranger to sanctions as it has been under sanctions for the past thirty years," he said.

U.S. Warships as "Easy Targets for Iranian Navy"

A senior Iranian military figure underlined the Iranian Navy's preparedness to repel possible attacks on the country, saying that each hostile U.S. warship would be swarmed by over 100 Iranian military vessels in the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman if war breaks out between the two arch foes.

"We have seen over 100 combat vessels for each (U.S.) warship" for the time of war or whenever necessary, Former Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps

(IRGC) Naval Forces Rear Admiral Morteza Saffari told the Persian-language Panjareh (Window) Weekly.

"As far as the navy is concerned, the necessary preparedness and exercises exist," he said, and added, "The enemy knows that it has many weak points."

Saffari pointed to the presence of over 100 foreign military vessels in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, and described them as available targets for Iran.

Each U.S. warship carries a large number of crews and forces and Iran is able to target a number of them and inflict heavy losses on the enemy forces, Saffari continued, underlining that the U.S. warships are "easy targets for the Iranian naval forces".

"As soon as the Supreme Leader wishes or in case the enemy dares to exercise the smallest threat against the Islamic establishment, all the IRGC troops together with those Basij (volunteer) forces who have had the necessary trainings are ready to show rapid reaction to them (hostile military vessels)," Saffari warned.

Iran Exporting Military Products to 40 Countries

A senior Iranian military expert dismissed possible effects of the western sanctions on Iran's defensive power and industries, saying that the country is exporting arms and military products to 40 world states at present.

"Despite 30-year-long sanctions against the defense industries, the Islamic Republic is currently exporting military equipment to 40 countries," General Yadollah Javani said.

Tehran launched an arms development program during the 1980-88 Iraqi imposed war on Iran, to compensate for a U.S. weapons embargo. Since 1992, Iran has produced its own tanks, armored personnel carriers, missiles and fighter planes.

Javani underlined that although western sanctions have always backfired, the U.S. and western countries are still attempting to impose further pressures on Iran in a bid to hit a blow to the Islamic Republic for its anti-imperialist ideology.

They are actually seeking to pressure the Islamic Republic in an effort to undermine the anti-imperialist ideology of the Islamic Revolution in the world, he said.

He also said that Tehran's progress in different fields has also motivated the western powers to increase their pressures against Iran.

"The progress and the new capacities of the Iranian people have made the western countries approve resolutions and impose sanctions against them."

Iran Eyes Nuclear Fusion Energy

Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Ali-Akbar Salehi says Iran seeks to conduct nuclear fusion research in an effort to break into the alternative energy.

Iran has launched serious "fusion research today," Iranian media outlets quoted Salehi as saying yesterday.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony of the national program on nuclear fusion, Salehi also said that some 50 scientists have been employed to work on the project.

Iran initiated the study phase of the project at the AEOI headquarters in the capital Tehran yesterday where scientists in relevant fields are expected to join the effort for the construction of the first indigenous nuclear fusion reactor and a pilot plant.

Nuclear fusion is the process by which some light atomic particles, such as hydrogen isotopes, merge to form a heavier atom with the release of significant amount of energy.

It is clean and less costly and but so far the almost-weightless isotopes have refused to join together for commercial purposes.

"It takes 20 to 30 years before this process can be commercialized but we have to use all the capacity in the country to provide the necessary speed for fusion research," Salehi added.

He said that the country's nuclear program is moving on its normal track and is making good progress.

"Thanks God, Iran's nuclear activities are progressing well and we are not concerned at all," Salehi continued.

Asked about alleged reports by the British daily Financial Times that Iran has suffered a series of technical setbacks in its nuclear program in recent months, he reiterated, "The rapidity or slowness of Iran's nuclear activities is determined by the scientific and technical decisions that we take within the country and we never analyze such issues through media."

"Let the media have their desirable analyses for themselves, while we advance our work for ourselves," Salehi said.

He also said the Islamic Republic of Iran is likely to send its response to the Vienna Group's request for the resumption of nuclear talks within the next two or three days.

"This will be an overall answer to the Vienna Group (Russia, France, the U.S. and the IAEA) that may be sent within the next two or three days," Salehi reiterated.

"This is an answer to the technical questions, and we will present it in a session that we may have with the Vienna Group," Salehi noted, adding that the letter has been prepared by the AEOI and the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC).

Social Front

Iranians Shine at Int'l Chemistry Olympiad

Iranian students won one gold and three silvers and stood 5th at the 42nd International Chemistry Olympiad (IChO) in Japan.

The gold medal was achieved by Amir Hussein Naseri while silver medals were won by Muhammad Reza Moshiri, Hussein Dadash Azar and Hanieh Safari.

China, South Korea, Thailand and the US stood first to fourth respectively.

The 42nd International Chemistry Olympiad (IChO) was held in Tokyo July 19-28, in which 280 students from 70 countries competed.

Interior Minister: Details on Zahedan Blasts Act to Be Announced Soon

Interior minister Mostafa Mohammad-Najjar said here Monday Zahedan terror incident is seriously under survey and people will be informed of new details on it soon.

Mohammad-Najjar who was speaking at a press conference at the opening ceremony of Ardebil Transportation Township, added, "As the people's servants we have to inform you presently that a number of the involved terrorists in that deadly incident have been arrested."

He said, "The individuals involved in such terrorist activities should know that the Islamic Republic of Iran deals with such criminals and their internal and alien elements resolutely and harshly and would make them pay dearly for their heinous acts."

The interior minister emphasized, "We have so far tried to make our borders safe for our entire neighbors and we expect the statesmen in our neighboring countries to do the same by safeguarding their shared borders with Iran, preventing the occurrence of insecurity in border regions."

He added, "The Zionists and the global oppressors were behind the recent incidents in Zahedan and they are after transferring the insecurity with which they have been involved in Afghanistan into Iran."

He said that the global oppressors, particularly the United States have failed in achieving any of their nasty objectives in this respect, adding, "The massive funeral procession of

the martyrs of Zahedan bomb blast, comprised of both Shi'a and Sunni groups of people was a sever blow in the mouth of those who try to intrigue factional, tribal and religious disputes in Iran.”

Najjar referred to the crisis after the presidential election in Iran as a sample of the plots hatched by the global oppression against Iran, arguing, “That plot was based on lots of planning and spending high budgets against the Islamic system and the people, which faced defeat due to the people’s unity and alertness.”

He emphasized, “Although the enemies have mobilized various teams aimed at striking blows against the Islamic Iran, but the information and intelligence forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, too, quite alertly and basked on timely and precise planning dismantled the enemies’ entire plots, and would do the same in the future.”

Exhibition of Paintings by Fallahzadeh at Niavaran Cultural Center

An exhibition of paintings by Reza Fallahzadeh opens at Niavaran Cultural Center on Thursday.

The exhibition will present 32 new works by Fallahzadeh in Abstract and Surrealist styles executed in watercolor, oil or mixed media.

Born in Tehran in 1951, Fallahzadeh studied at Brussels Art University and has been creating art for the past 33 years. He has had numerous exhibitions at home and abroad.

The exhibition at Niavaran Cultural Center runs through Tuesday, August 10.

Tehran, Moscow Cooperate in Fighting Drugs

Russia and Iran are cooperating to prevent drug trafficking, the head of Russia’s Drug Police Victor Ivanov told reporters on Monday. He said the two countries regularly exchange information on drug trafficking routes.

Russia is receiving Afghan drugs from Iran mainly through Azerbaijan which is a support for insurgents and military factions on the North Caucasus.

The U.S. Ambassador in Russia John Beyrle said the U.S. hasn’t such developed contacts with Iran in this sphere as Russia has.

Iran's Biggest Telescope Unveiled

Iran has unveiled its largest domestically-manufactured telescope, as part of an overall policy to achieve self-sufficiency in the field of technology.

Iran's first Vice President Mohammad Reza Rahimi unveiled the telescope dubbed Tara yesterday in a ceremony attended by a number of lawmakers as well as governors of Isfahan and Markazi province in the central city of Golpayegan.

The telescope was manufactured by Golpayegan's Astronomy Society with a fund worth \$80,000 to be used in the fields of astronomy, medicine, and military.

In recent years, the Islamic Republic has upped its efforts to achieve supremacy in different fields of science and technology.

On Friday, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said the Islamic Republic has plans to launch its first manned shuttle into space by 2019.

Police Seize 6 Tons of Narcotics

Border guard forces seized a large cargo of narcotics in an armed clash in a border town in eastern Iran, a senior police commander announced on Monday.

"During the armed clash which erupted in Saravan border (in Iran's southeastern province of Sistan and Balouchestan) yesterday, drug-traffickers were first trapped in an ambush operation by the border police squads and were later forced to escape the country after two-hour long clashes," Commander of Iran's Border Guard Units General Hossein Zolfaqari said, elaborating on the yesterday operations of his units.

The commander added that the border police could seize 6 tons of the 8-ton drug cargo in the operation, while 2 tons of narcotics burnt during the crossfire.

Zolfaqari underlined Iran's resolve to confront drug-trafficking in border regions, and noted, "We will not allow drug-traffickers to feel secure in the country's borders."

President: Atiyeh Mehr Plan to Guarantee Bright Future for Iranian Children

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said here yesterday that Atiyeh Mehr Plan will ensure a bright future for each Iranian youth.

"Families are recommended to deposit sums into their offspring's account in addition to the share of government in the (Mehr Imam Reza) Fund, thus guaranteeing a bright and shining future for them," said President Ahmadinejad in a ceremony, marking inauguration of Imam Reza Fund.

Under a government plan, the Mehr Imam Reza Fund will be opened with an initial fund of 10 billion rials deposited by government for each newly born baby. The fund asset will gradually increase with money savings by parents of the baby until s/he reaches the age of 18.

Once aged 20, the Fund owners will have the right to draw cashes out of the account for such purposes as marriage, housing, education, medicare and Hajj pilgrimage.

President Ahmadinejad said that shares of the newly born babies will be dropped into the account even once the target-based subsidy plan is implemented. “The plan will be more functioning in the future in meeting essential needs of them (the Fund owners).”

The president said with implementation of the plan and saving assets of the country’s children in their banking accounts, the way will be prepared for granting different kinds of financial facilities such as the non-profit loans and meeting needs of the needy, while expanding the production and industrial activities in the country.

Furthermore, the youth will be able to meet their basic needs such as housing, marriage and education out of their savings, he added

HOLIDAY NOTICE

The Shiites Celebrate the Birthday of the Occult Imam Mahdi, Whose Second Coming Will Usher in a New Age of Justice. IRAN NEWS Extends Its Congratulations to the World Shiites and Offers Its Next Issue on Wednesday.