

Iran's per capita income exceeds \$13,000

TEHRAN - The finance and economic affairs minister announced on Tuesday that per capita income in Iran now exceeds 13,000 dollars per year.

Shamseddin Hosseini also said Iran's position as the 17th largest economy in the world in 2012 remains unchanged.

The minister said in the last Iranian calendar year 1390 (March 2011-March 2012), foreign investment grew by 11 percent to over 4.3 billion dollars.

This figure was less than 2.1 billion dollars three years prior to 1390, he added.

Hosseini said between the years 2006 and 2011, Iran's gross domestic product hit 482 billion dollars, a two-fold increase over the course of five years.

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Kuwait hosts Iran cultural week

TEHRAN - The Islamic Republic of Iran's cultural week has kicked off in Kuwait for the first time in a bid to introduce Persian arts, culture and traditions to Kuwaiti visitors.

The event was attended by director of Islamic Culture and Relations Organization of Iran, Mohammad-Baqer Khoramshad, Iran's ambassador to Kuwait, Rouhollah Qahremani Chabok, and a number of Kuwaiti parliamentarians.

Emphasizing on the expansion of cultural ties with Islamic states, Khoramshad said in the opening ceremony of the event that Kuwait and Iran enjoy ancient and extensive bilateral ties based on mutual respect. Kuwait's Secretary General of National Council of Culture, Art and Letters Ali Al-Yoha, for his part, expressed Kuwait City's satisfaction with the opportunity for the artists of both countries to interact more.

President Ahmadinejad:

Iranian people deserve promising future



TEHRAN - President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said on Tuesday that all Iranians should cooperate and help with reconstruction of the country in a proper manner.

President Ahmadinejad made the remarks in the "4th National Conference on Archive for All with a focus on protecting documents of national heritage, MNA reported. The Iranian nation is very great and never seeks to dominate others, he said, adding that it never casts covetous eyes on others' assets, said President Ahmadinejad.

The Iranian nation should turn into an exemplary model for other nations, he said. Cultural arts are regarded as parts of the cultural identity of a nation which should be protected, he said.

National library and the center for preserving documents important organs for the country which should provide easy access to documents to people from all walks of life, he said.

Referring to the country's peaceful nuclear program, the president said the enemies have been trying to exert pressure on the country but to no avail. No one has the right to trample upon the legitimate rights of a nation, he said and referred to the historical reaction of the Iranian people to such attempts.

Addressing intellectuals, experts and university professors, he said "You should highlight the potentials of the Iranian nation and identify the root cause of its historical setbacks."

Foreign minister:

Iran to promote its int'l position through NAM

TEHRAN - Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi said Iran international position will be promoted by hosting NAM meeting and assuming its rotating chairmanship for three years.

Upon arrival at the airport, Salehi told reporters that holding Non-Aligned Movement summit meeting in Tehran in September with more than 120 countries participating has special importance, IRNA reported.

He said that a draft document, which includes more than 600 articles, will be discussed during the two-day meeting for the final ratification to be later submitted to the NAM summit in Tehran, Iran, later in the year.

The top Iranian diplomat highlighted the significance of the NAM as the second largest international body after the UN, and said non-interference in the internal affairs of the countries, reforms in the UN and the prevention of pre-emptive attacks were among major objec-

tives pursued by the movement.

The two-day Coordinating Bureau ministerial meeting will start on Wednesday.

Representatives from 120 member states as well as 28 non-member states and international organizations in their capacity as observers are to attend the meeting in Egypt.

The UN secretary general and the chairman of the UN General Assembly are also among the important political figures to partake in the gathering. Regional and international issues with respect to political and economic developments as well as global issues such as the promotion of multilateralism, the reform of the UN, disarmament, and terrorism will top the agenda. The NAM comprises of 120 countries and is an international organization of states considering themselves not formally aligned with or against any major power bloc. It represents nearly two-thirds of the UN members.

No obstacle to Iran-Egypt ties

TEHRAN - Secretary General of the International Conference on Islamic Awakening says there are no obstacles in the way of restoring the relations between Iran and Egypt.

"The future of the relations between Egypt and Iran depends on the two governments. As far as Iran is concerned, there are no obstacles in the way of restoring the relations between the two countries after the Egyptian revolution," Ali Akbar Velayati said in a meeting with an Egyptian scholastic delegation in the capital Tehran on Tuesday.

"Egypt will achieve its major position in the Islamic and Arab world and we hope that your [Egyptian delegation] visit to Iran will pave the way for the

expansion and promotion of a deep cultural exchange between the two countries," the official added.

Velayati, who also serves as a senior international affairs advisor to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, went on to say that Iran's general policy is with no doubts to develop a close relationship with Muslim countries.

The senior Iranian official also called on the Muslims to get closer to one another to pursue their common goals, adding "Unity among nations will be possible only through close relations."

Referring to the upcoming presidential election in Egypt, he said that "We respect whatever choice the Egyptians make."

Foreign Ministry spokesman:

US anti-Iran claims aim to overshadow Baghdad talks

TEHRAN - Iran's foreign ministry spokesman says the recent remarks by US officials calling on Iran to build confidence with the West in the upcoming negotiations with the P5+1 aim to overshadow the talks.

Addressing reporters in his weekly briefing on Tuesday, Ramin Mehmanparast noted that all issues of interest will be discussed in the upcoming talks, which are scheduled to be held in Baghdad on May 23, in an atmosphere of cooperation and goodwill, Press TV reported.

"Such predictions and remarks made by some people only aim to create an [false] atmosphere and special conditions before the negotiations and should not be taken seriously. The main issue is the negotiations, which will be held in

Baghdad," he said.

"As a member of the [International Atomic Energy] Agency and a member that has fulfilled its obligations and has shown the highest level of cooperation with the agency, we must be able to enjoy our rights," he said.

"We believe we have rights which we should use and we will by no means give up on [the Iranian] nation's rights.... Remarks made by irrelevant people in various countries can have no effects on our rights," he said.

On Monday, April 7, acting US Ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency Robert Wood called on Iran to take "urgent practical steps" to build confidence during the multifaceted talks with the P5+1 comprising the US, the UK, France, Russia, China, and

Germany.

"We seek a sustained process that produces concrete results, and call on Iran to take urgent practical steps to build confidence and lead to compliance with all its international obligations," Wood said.

His remarks come despite the fact that Iran has shown the highest possible level of cooperation with the IAEA since its nuclear energy program was taken up by the agency about a decade ago.

In addition to allowing numerous inspections by the agency, which did not spare even military sites unrelated to Iran's nuclear activities, the country has taken voluntary measures by implementing the Additional Protocol to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) before it was even ratified by the Iranian parliament.

Iran sanctions to make thousands unemployed

TEHRAN - Iran's interim charge d'affaires in Vienna Nasser Keikhaei says the West's sanctions against Tehran will lead to the unemployment of thousands of people in Europe.

"West's sanctions against Iran would in the first instance increase pressure on the western countries," Keikhaei said in an interview with the Austrian daily Wiener Zeitung.

He added a ban on the imports of the Iranian oil or the export of goods to the market of the Islamic Republic will

the population of 75 million would cause thousands of people in Europe to lose their jobs.

The European Statistics Office, Eurostat, announced on Wednesday that almost 17.4 million people across the eurozone countries were unemployed in March, showing a 170,000 rise in the jobless population compared to February.

The jobless rate is the highest since the launch of the euro currency in 1999.

The Iranian diplomat said these sanctions would also

lead to a growth in the East-European markets as the volume of Iran's trade with the Asian countries has increased over the past few years.

The US and the EU imposed new financial sanctions as well as oil embargoes against Iran earlier this year, claiming the country's nuclear energy program may include a military component.

Tehran refutes such allegations, saying frequent inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency have never found any diversion

in Iran's nuclear energy program toward military purposes.

The diplomat pointed to the country's comprehensive economic reform plan and the partial elimination of energy subsidies and noted that the government has adopted a number of measures to alleviate financial pressures on the public, including direct payment of the subsidies in cash, as part of Tehran's efforts to implement economic reforms.

Keikhaei also hailed the high turnout in Iran's recent

Majlis (parliament) elections and argued that while in many European countries less than 50 percent of the eligible voters participate in elections, Majlis polls saw a 64-percent turnout, showing a 13-percent growth compared to the country's previous elections.

Majlis run-off elections were held on May 4 after a total of 225 candidates succeeded in securing the required majority of votes to win the parliament seats in the first round held on March 2.

Iran builds SP jacket in record time

TEHRAN - Iranian contractors have hit a new record for building the jacket of a gas production platform in phase 19 of the huge South Pars gas field in southern Iran.

A report published by the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) on Tuesday noted that NIOC's contractors have hit a new record for designing, building, installing and launching the jacket of the South Pars phase 19 platform which is unprecedented in the 103-year history of Iran's oil industry, Press TV reported.

According to the report, despite international sanctions against Iran's oil and gas industry, the jacket has been built and installed in the Persian Gulf waters in nine days, which is the shortest time recorded for installing offshore jackets.

The report added the construction of a refinery and offshore installations for the South Pars phase 19 shows a progress of 40 percent.

The main goal of the gas field phase 19 development



is a daily production of 50 million cubic meters of natural gas, 77,000 barrels of gas condensate and 400 tons of sulfur.

The phase will also yield 1.1 million tons of liquid gas and one million tons of ethane gas per year which will be used as feedstock by petrochemical industries.

Offshore installations of phase 19 include 21 offshore wells, four platforms, two 32-inch gas transfer pipelines connecting the main platforms to the onshore refinery totaling over 260 kilometers, and two 4.5-inch pipelines for injecting monoethylene glycol.

A consortium comprising

Iran Offshore Engineering and Construction (IOEC) and Petropars companies is currently implementing the 5-billion-dollar project for developing phase 19 of the South Pars gas field.

South Pars covers an area of 9,700 square kilometers, 3,700 square kilometers of which are within Iran's territorial waters in the Persian Gulf. The remaining 6,000 square kilometers, i.e. North Dome, are in Qatar's territorial waters.

The Iranian gas field contains 14 trillion cubic meters of natural gas (about eight percent of the world's reserves) and more than 18 billion barrels of LNG.

Iran plans to produce 15 new vaccines

TEHRAN - Head of Razi Vaccine and Serum Research Institute in Iran Hadi Famil Qadakhchi announced on Tuesday that the country plans to produce 15 new types of vaccine in the next three years.

"Production of 15 new types of vaccine is on (our) agenda and we should acquire the technical know-how (to produce them) in three years," Famil Qadakhchi said in a press conference in Tehran.

He also announced that Razi Institute can now produce 95% of the country's

needs to cattle vaccines, 60% of poultry's vaccines and 5 types of strategic vaccines for humans.

Iran has taken wide strides in science and technology, particularly in medical and medicinal fields, in recent years. Head of Iran's Pasteur Institute Mostafa Qaneyeey had announced in 2011 that the institute plans to produce human vaccines for rabies and hemophilia diseases.

"The center (Pasteur Institute), in cooperation with its affiliated knowledge-based companies, has started a project to produce rabies

and hemophilia human vaccines," Qaneyeey told FNA at the time.

He expressed the hope that his institute would start mass-production of the vaccines within the next 2-3 years, adding that the products will be sold not only in domestic, but also in foreign markets.

Also, Iranian Health Minister Marzieh Vahid Dastjerdi had boasted the country's astonishing progress in producing medical tools, equipment and drugs, saying that Iran ranks first in synthesizing different drugs and medications in the region.

"Iran certainly ranks first in the region in producing medical equipment and medicine and those who stand behind us cannot be compared with Iran at all," Vahid Dastjerdi said addressing the inaugural ceremony of an international exhibition on medical, dentistry and laboratory equipments in Tehran in 2011.

The minister further mentioned that Iran exports medical tools and equipment worth \$12bn each year and produces 96% of its medical needs, adding that the country also produces 70% of its needed pharmaceutical raw materials domestically.

Canadian festival awards

Iranian cartoonist

TEHRAN - Young Iranian cartoonist Ali Miraei has been awarded at the 12th edition of the International Editorial Cartoon competition of the Canadian Committee for the World Press Freedom (CCWPF). Miraei who has received several national and international awards so far, won one of the Awards of Excellence of the competition along with ten other cartoonists, ILNA reported on Monday. Brazilian cartoonist Liza Franca won the first prize while Riber Hansson from Sweden and Turkish cartoonist Hicabi Demirci collected the other prizes. According to the organizers of the competition, the theme for the 12th edition of the event was "Power to the People: Citizens and Social Media."

The event was held to mark the World Press Freedom Day on May 3, a date proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1993.

CBI chief:

Iran's forex revenues stand at \$100bn

TEHRAN - Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), Mahmoud Bahmani, says Iran's foreign exchange revenues exceed USD 100 billion.

Bahmani told a group of senior Sepah Bank directors, "The foreign exchange plus export revenues stand as high as USD 100 billion.

We have no problem in terms of foreign exchange and the only problem fac-

ing the banking system is transfer of money," IRNA reported.

Bahmani then pointed to opposition of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund to sanctions against Iranian banks, saying many countries have voiced their readiness to lift the sanctions facing the Central Bank of Iran.

He said during meetings with managers of banks and

officials of other countries they have announced their willingness to have commercial and trade ties with Iran.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Bahmani put inflation rate last year at 21.5 percent, saying the country managed to control liquidity last year.

"Last year there was a 25.2 percent growth in liquidity, while it now stands at 19.4 percent."

Iran library opens PG computer lab



TEHRAN - Iran's National Library and Document Center has opened a section dedicated to the Persian Gulf and the documents related to the historical identity of the waterway.

The Persian Gulf computer suite of the center was opened during a ceremony attended by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Visitors can use a cluster of 70 computers to get access to a complete set of documents, texts and manuscripts related to the historical identity of the Persian Gulf. Books, articles and audio-visual sources are also among the research facilities offered at the suite.

While historical documents show that the waterway has always been referred to as the 'Persian Gulf,' certain Arab states have mounted efforts to remove 'Persian' from the name of the waterway.

Iran designated April 30 as the national Persian Gulf Day to highlight the fact that the waterway has been referred to by historians and ancient texts as 'Persian' since the Achaemenid Empire was established in what is now modern day Iran. The national Persian Gulf Day marks the anniversary of the expulsion of Portuguese military forces from the Strait of Hormoz in 1622, during the reign of Safavid king Shah Abbas I (1587-1629).

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