

Iran's Role in Iraqi Deal Vital

Iran played a very important and sensitive role in the agreement reached between the Sadr bloc in parliament and the ruling Shiite alliance, political advisor of Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council said.



Moshen Hakim

"We hope Iraqi problems will be resolved as soon as possible upon the implementation of the agreement," Seyyed Moshen Hakim said during a news program of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting on Sunday.

According to Mehr News Agency, Hakim also expressed hope that security, calm and peace would be restored to Iraq.

He stressed that the views of both sides have been outlined in the agreement, which should serve as the yardstick for overcoming all misunderstandings and problems from now on.

Meanwhile, Iraqi government spokesman, Ali Al-Dabagh, on Saturday said the government endorses the agreement to end fighting in the Baghdad bastion of Shiite cleric Muqtada Al-Sadr.

The Iraqi government has called on all citizens to assume responsibility for the ongoing developments in order to restore security and stability to Sadr City.

Haddad, Bosnian Envoy Confer

The outgoing Bosnia-Herzegovina's ambassador to Iran, Senahid Bristic, met with Majlis Speaker Gholamali Haddad Adel to bid farewell to him on Sunday.

During the meeting, Haddad said Iran and Bosnia-Herzegovina enjoy amicable relations, IRNA reported.

The speaker expressed hope that bilateral ties would expand in the fields of politics, economy and culture, inviting his Bosnian counterpart to Iran.

Bristic, for his part, termed Iran-Bosnia ties as deep rooted.

Referring to the two countries' commonalities, Bristic called for closer bilateral ties, adding that Bosnia-Herzegovina is interested in increasing bilateral cooperation.

Palestine Workshop in Tehran

Iran's Red Crescent Society will hold a two-day workshop on Palestine as viewed by international law on Monday.

Some 12 Iranian and six foreign academics will study the Zionist regime's illegal existence and long-term occupation of Palestine at the two-day event, IRNA reported.

Limitations on international human rights law during the occupation, illegal establishment of Israel and the need to prosecute Israeli officials and bring them to trial as war criminals are among the focal points of the workshop.

The workshop will be held at Tehran's International Law College.

The fake Zionist regime is preparing to celebrate the 60th anniversary of its illegitimate establishment on May 15, while the real owners of the occupied Palestinian territories are suffering from oppression and humiliation.



IAEA Talks Scheduled



Iran's representative in the International Atomic Energy Agency said technical negotiations between Iran and IAEA will be held on Monday in Tehran.

Ali Asghar Soltaneh told Fars News Agency on Sunday Hermann Nackartes, head of regional section of IAEA Safeguards Agreement, will lead the UN team in the three-day negotiations.

"The new round of talks is a follow-up of past negotiations," Soltaneh said.

Earlier, Olli Heinonen, deputy director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, ended his meetings with the Islamic Republic's top security and nuclear officials behind closed doors at Iran's Atomic Energy Organization (IAEO).

Heinonen had met with Soltaneh and IAEO deputy head for international affairs, Mohammad Saeedi.

The Iranian delegation is headed by Javad Vaedi, deputy head of the Supreme National Security Council for international affairs.

Nackartes accompanied Heinonen on his Tehran visit.

The IAEA delegation did not carry out any inspections of Iran's nuclear facilities and left Tehran following talks with Iranian officials.

IAEA Chief Mohamed ElBaradei says these talks have led to good progress in verifying Iran's past and present activities.

Iran Criticizes Israeli Celebrations

Tehran says countries celebrating Israel's 60th anniversary are all "partners in the crimes committed by the regime occupying Palestine".

"Zionists and their allies are now celebrating the 60th year of the foundation of the occupying regime," said Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki in a meeting on Saturday with Secretary-General of the Parliamentary Union of OIC member-states, Mahmut Erol Kilic, IRNA reported.

"One must ask whose gravesite, among the innocent martyred Palestinians, are they celebrating on," he said. "Those commemorating the Zionist regime's foundation will have no choice but to carry the burden of their crimes."

Mottaki noted that the Islamic Inter-Parliamentary Union (IIPU) can play an effective role in creating unity among Palestinian groups and preventing cultural onslaught.

"Islamic values have become a prime target of the enemy's cultural inroad and OIC member-states should stop at nothing to counter such threats," he said.

The foreign minister also said IIPU member-states should consolidate unity among themselves and strengthen their cultural interests," he said.

"Nowadays, Muslim culture and faith have been targeted internationally by our enemies and advocates of the idea of clash of civilizations."

Mahmut Erol Kilic, for his part, called for consultations with Mottaki on ways of strengthening IIPU.

Appreciating Iran's cooperation in strengthening IIPU, Erol Kilic said, "We hope that with joint efforts we can increase understanding among Islamic nations and gather them under one umbrella."

Tehran-Baghdad Relations Benefit Both

Expansion of Tehran-Baghdad ties in various sectors benefit their nations, Ali Saeedlou, vice president for executive affairs, said on Sunday.

Saeedlou made the remark in a meeting with Iraqi Ambassador in Tehran Mohammad Majid Al-Sheikh, IRNA reported.

He stressed that reconstruction projects in Iraq should be carried out more speedily.

Pointing to the amicable relations between the Iranian and Iraqi nations, Saeedlou said preparations should be made for establishing closer links between the Iranian and Iraqi private sectors for boosting their trade exchanges.

According to the presidential website, Saeedlou also said religious, spiritual and historical commonalities between the two nations provide them with a very good opportunity to deepen their relations in all fields.

Saeedlou, who also heads the Iran-Iraq Economic Development Headquarters, referred to the fact that the enemies are afraid of solidarity between the two neighboring countries, adding that the enemies of the two nations are attempting to separate them.

The Iranian official underscored the need for providing pilgrims with appropriate serv-



Ali Saeedlou



Mohammad Majid Al-Sheikh

ices. Al-Sheikh, for his part, expressed satisfaction with the determination of both the sides for expanding mutual ties, saying that the Islamic Republic has had the best of cooperation with the Iraqi nation.

He hoped that mutual cooperation would continue in future.

Referring to numerous commonalities between Iranians and Iraqis, Sheikh added that the two nations are keen on promoting sustainable relations.

The ambassador also vowed to make efforts to resolve some of the problems facing Iranian pilgrims in Iraq.

Qatar Calls For Expansion of Ties



Labor Minister Mohammad Jahromi and Qatari Minister of Labor and Social Affairs and Housing Sultan Hassan Al-Dosary are seen in Tehran in Doha on Sunday.

Iranian Labor Minister Mohammad Jahromi and his Qatari counterpart Sultan Hassan Al-Dosary discussed issues of mutual interest in Doha on Sunday.

During the meeting, Jahromi called for expansion of bilateral cooperation in labor-related fields, IRNA reported.

"The Islamic Republic has a say in the fields of agriculture, oil, petrochemical, steel, aluminum and copper industries, as well as information technology and tourism," he said.

He noted that Iranian universities have trained technical, engineering and medical specialists.

Jahromi further said training in Iran is based on labor market needs and conforms to international standards.

He also voiced Iran's willingness to cooperate with Qatar in the field of training workforce.

Referring to training courses held by Iranian universities to create jobs, Jahromi said Iran is ready to share its valuable experiences with the Qatari government.

Jahromi regretted that the number of Iranians working in Qatar has declined.

Al-Dosari, for his part, called for expansion of bilateral cooperation in labor-related fields.

He also expressed hope Qatar would utilize the experiences of Islamic Republic in the field of workforce training.

"Iran has made great progress in medical and engineering fields," he said, calling for joint research by the two countries.

The Qatari minister noted that agreements have been signed with 11 countries to dispatch skilled workers to Qatar, adding that 800,000 foreign workers are active in Qatar currently.

Dosari looked forward to expansion of Tehran-Doha ties in future.

Boat Carrying...

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Also on Sunday, Myanmar's state television said the cyclone's death toll has gone up by about 5,000 to 28,458. The number of missing was reduced to 33,416.

International aid groups, however, say that the death toll could eventually top 100,000 as humanitarian conditions worsen.

British aid group Oxfam said the death toll could multiply by up to 15 times, or rise to 1.5 million, if people do not get clean water and sanitation soon, which could result in a medical catastrophe.

The government has refused to let in most foreign experts who have experience in handling humanitarian disasters. It insists it is capable of distributing the aid being pledged by international donors. Meanwhile, aid is piling up in foreign countries, awaiting approval from the junta.

The country's main airport in Yangon is also incapable of handling more than five flights a day, when it should be taking in at least one every hour, said PLAN, a London-based children's aid group.