



>> Hashemi Best Choice

Former Interior Minister Mostafa Pour-Mohammadi said under the present circumstances Mehdi Hashemi is the best choice for the post of interior minister because he has a good grip on the ministry's affairs. See Page 2



>> Confab on Prophet (PBUH)

Iran's Embassy in Norway held a one-day international conference on Muslim Prophet (PBUH) and Peace, which was attended by Muslim and western experts.

www.iran-daily.com

IRAN DAILY

Number 3131 • Monday May 20, 2008 • Ordibehesht 31, 1387 • Jamadi Al-Ula 14, 1429 Price 2,000 Rials

Jannati Confers With Musharraf



02

Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf urged greater cooperation between Iran's Guardians Council and Pakistan's Council of Islamic Ideology to reach out to the downtrodden Muslims and bring about a positive change in their lives.

Iran Khodro Expanding Global Reach



04

Iran's largest vehicle manufacturer, Iran Khodro, continues to expand its regional and global reach by opening a plant in Syria in April and readying a new plant in Turkey for 2009.

Action Demanded on US Qur'an Desecration



13

A major Sunni party, headed by Iraq's vice president, on Monday demanded tough government action against a US soldier who fired bullets into the Qur'an, the Muslim holy book, AFP reported.

Trash Crisis In Italy



11

A resurgent trash crisis in Naples and squabbling over immigration pose challenges to newly elected Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi as he finalizes a sweeping security and economic reform package, Reuters reported.

Lebanese Talks A Step Forward

> Compiled by Davood Baqeri



No Barriers for Boosting Eritrea Ties 02

Iran says no date has yet been fixed for the visit by European Union Foreign Policy Chief Javier Solana to Tehran.

Foreign Ministry Spokesman Mohammad Ali Hosseini told reporters on Monday in Tehran that talks were being held for a visit by Solana and representatives of the five UN veto powers plus Germany (5+1) to give 'refreshed' incentives to the Iranian government.

Hosseini referred to an offer by 5+1 for persuading Iran to suspend uranium enrichment activities.

There had been reports that Solana and deputy foreign ministers of the 5+1 would come to Tehran to present the package to Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said last week that western incentives would not stop Iran's nuclear projects, including uranium enrichment, but noted that Iran would, nevertheless, evaluate the package.

Referring to remarks by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov last week that the 5+1 should offer Iran security guarantees, Hosseini said Iran does not need such guarantees and never demanded any.

The spokesman added that Iran had in return forwarded its own package of proposals to the western states and hopes Iran's initiative would prepare the ground for constructive talks between Iran and the 5+1.

02 >

Perspective

Bush's Egypt Visit

By Davood Ahmadzadeh

US President George W. Bush's recent visit to Egypt and talks with President Hosni Mubarak can be scrutinized from different angles.

Cairo's ties with Washington are aimed at restoring regional peace and stability, enhancing military and economic cooperation, spreading democracy and consolidating the Egypt-Israel peace agreement of 1979.

Egypt and the US share regional stances, including their support for Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora's government, hostility toward Hezbollah and also explicit opposition to the policies of Sudan in developing cordial bonds with Iran.

Despite the objection of American human rights groups to Mubarak's harsh domestic policies, the US continues to offer economic and military aid to Egypt.

It must be recalled that former Egyptian President Anwar Sadat was the first Arab leader to visit the occupied Palestinian territories and break the taboo of forging ties with Israel. Ever since this visit, Egypt has received billions of dollars from the US within the framework of economic and military aid as a reward for making peace with Israel. The aid is used to strengthen peace in the Middle East and encourage other Arab leaders to join the so-called Middle East peace process.

Egypt and the US also have extensive military and security relations. The two countries regularly hold joint military drills on different occasions. That's why during the Operation Desert Storm for the liberation of Kuwait, Egyptian soldiers joined the coalition forces led by the US. Despite their common standpoints, Washington and Cairo have experienced fundamental challenges in recent years. America's prolonged presence in Iraq and the spread of war in the region are disliked by Egyptian statesmen, who have urged the US to withdraw its troops from Iraq and let the Iraqis determine their own fate.

02 >

Call for Afghan Foreign Troop Pullout Timetable

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said Iran calls for full restoration of democracy to Afghanistan and for a timetable for the withdrawal of foreign forces from the country. 03

Kouchner Confirms Contacts With Hamas Abbas Threatens to Resign

France's foreign minister says Paris has had informal contacts with the leaders of Hamas, the Islamic group that rules Gaza.

Bernard Kouchner says the contacts over the past few months do not amount to formal relations or negotiations, AFP reported.

Kouchner was speaking on Europe-1 radio after a report on Monday in the daily Le Figaro in which a retired French diplomat says he met with Hamas leaders a month ago.

According to the paper, the diplomat, Yves Aubin de la Messuziere, says Hamas told him they were ready to accept a Palestinian state in the 1967 borders.

Le Figaro also says the retired diplomat told it that Hamas is ready to stop suicide attacks and recognize

the legitimacy of Palestinian Authority Chief Mahmud Abbas.

Meanwhile, an Israeli lawmaker said Abbas has threatened to resign if he does not reach a peace settlement with Israel within six months.

Abbas made the threat during a meeting on Sunday with lawmaker Yossi Beilin in the Egyptian resort of Sharm El-Sheik.

A statement issued by Beilin's office quoted Abbas as saying he "would see no point in continuing in his position" if a deal is not reached.

"I didn't take the presidency upon myself in order to serve the role of president but rather to pursue a mission, and I have no point in continuing in this capacity if it becomes apparent that we can't reach peace," the statement quoted Abbas as saying.

