

MALAYSIA AND KENYA STRENGTHEN TIES

At the invitation of H.E. Mwai Kibaki, President of the Republic of Kenya, H. E. Dato' Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, the Prime Minister of Malaysia paid an official visit to Kenya from 17 to 19 April, 2007. Prime Minister Badawi congratulated President Kibaki for assuming the Chairmanship of both the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the East African Community (EAC) and commended Kenya's positive role in facilitating the peace process in Sudan and Somalia. President Kibaki also congratulated Prime Minister Badawi for assuming the Chairmanship of Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

Two MOUs on Planning and Implementation of Road Projects and on Science and Technology were signed. It was also agreed to establish a Joint Commission and Joint Trade Committee that would spur business relationships between the two countries.

Kenya is a principal beneficiary of Malaysia' technical cooperation programme under which a number of training courses and study tours are organized. Malaysian higher education institutions offer quality education at a competitive cost and the number of privately sponsored Kenyan students in Malaysia has been increasing steadily. During the visit, it was further agreed that negotiations on a Memorandum of Understanding between the two countries on Education should be embarked upon as soon as possible.

Source: Joint Communiqué, 19 April, 2007

CHILE AND VENEZUELA PLEDGE TO WORK TOGETHER TO OVERCOME POVERTY

The President of Chile, H.E. Michelle Bachelet, made a state visit to Venezuela on 18 April 2007, accompanied by a high level delegation comprising the Chilean Foreign Minister Alejandro Foxley, Housing Minister Patricia Poblete, Women's Affairs Minister Laura Albornoz and Energy Minister Marcelo Tokman. President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela received the Chilean delegation at Miraflores Palace in Caracas. Following their meeting, the two Presidents signed a Joint Declaration and signed four memorandums of agreement in a number of different areas. The two countries agreed to redouble their efforts to exchange information about programmes to fight poverty.

According to a press release issued by the Chilean government, President Bachelet stressed the fact that "our people want peace and cooperation, and they hope that their governments can work together for these universal goods. Our people hope that we can work together to overcome poverty and put an end to the exclusion that continues to mark our Latin American societies."

Later, President Chávez bestowed the Order of the Liberator upon President Bachelet.

Source: [www. Chileangovernment.gov.cl](http://www.Chileangovernment.gov.cl)

CHILE AND INDIA CONCLUDE PARTIAL FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

The Chilean Senate unanimously approved a partial free trade agreement between India and Chile in mid-April 2007. Once the accord goes into effect, it will offer preferential tariffs in India for 98% of Chilean exports, allowing them to be sold for more attractive prices in India. Meanwhile, 71% of Indian exports to Chile will receive the same advantages. Chile lowered the tariffs on 296 Indian products, while India lowered tariffs on 178 of Chilean products.

Chilean products that will soon enter India with lower tariffs include pork, frozen pork and beef products, frozen chicken and turkey and prepared chicken, pork and beef platters. Tariffs on Chilean salmon, fishmeal, copper, wood, cellulose and newsprint into India would also be lowered.

Source : www.chileangovernment.gov.cl

IRAN- BRAZIL OIL EXPLORATION DEAL EXPECTED

According to press reports quoting officials of the Iranian Khazar Exploration & Production Company (KEPC), Brazilian state-owned oil company Petrobras is to sign a deal with KEPC in the coming days to conduct oil exploration and development operations in the Caspian Sea. KEPC's Managing Director, Mohammad Hossein Dana stated that the deal, which amounted to \$450m, would help the country to capitalize on Brazil's deepwater technology.

Rising global demand for energy resources has made many countries embark on exploration in deeper waters - a technology that Iran still lacks.

Source: IRNA, 29 April 2007

INDIA SEEKS DEEPER ENERGY COOPERATION WITH ALGERIA

Algerian President H.E. Abdul-Aziz Bouteflika received on Sunday 18 April 2007, visiting Indian Petroleum and Gas Minister Mr Murli Deora. The Indian Minister was on a three-day business visit aimed at expanding bilateral cooperation in oil and gas sectors, particularly natural gas. The Algerian Prime Minister Abdul-Aziz Belkhadem and Algerian Minister of Energy and Mining Chekib Khalil also participated in the discussions.

During the meeting, Mr Deora delivered an invitation to the Algerian President to visit India.

Source: Kuwait News Agency, 22 April 2007

NIGERIA-MALAYSIA BUSINESS COUNCIL ESTABLISHED

The creation of the Nigerian- Malaysian Business Council was recently announced with the objective of encouraging trade and industry ties between the two countries. According to press reports in Nigeria, co-founders Mr. Larry Segun-Lean and Dr. Michael Aderohunmu stated that among the salient objectives of the Council were the networking among members and the organization of activities on subjects of current importance to the business communities of both countries.

Source: The Nation, 12 April 2007

SRI LANKA - IRAN ECONOMIC TIES TO IMPROVE

According to reports emanating from Iran's Ministry of Enterprise Development and Investment Promotion, the Mostazafan Foundation of Iran is to send a mission to Sri Lanka to look into the investment possibilities on the island.

A senior delegation of the Foundation led by its President, Mohammed Forouzandeh, met Sri Lanka's Minister of Enterprise Development and Investment Promotion, Dr. Sarath Amunugama on April 4 at the Ministry along with the Iranian Ambassador to Sri Lanka, Behnam Behrouz.

The Foundation, which is directly under the purview of Iran's Supreme Leader, has about 180 companies and entities and employs around 30,000 staff. Its economic activities span agro-industry, mining, oil products, ceramics, tiles, equipment, cellulose and rubber.

Sri Lanka imports the bulk of its petroleum needs from Iran while the latter is a major importer of Ceylonese tea.

Source: ColomboPage News Desk, Sri Lanka, April 6, 2007

EGYPT AND MEXICO PLAN 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

Egypt's Assistant Foreign Minister for American and OAS Affairs, Ambassador Hatem Seif-El-Nasr, and the Mexican Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Maria De Lourdes Aranda met on 19 April 2007, at the Mexican Foreign Ministry headquarters in Mexico City.

Both sides reviewed a number of proposals related to the celebrations expected to take place in both countries in 2007/2008 on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations between Egypt and Mexico, on 31 March 2008. The proposals include introducing a direct air link between Cairo and Mexico City in view of the growing number of tourists from both countries as well as organizing a number of cultural activities in both countries to commemorate the occasion.

Source: www.mfa.gov.eg