

BRAZIL, MEXICO STRENGTHEN ALTERNATE ENERGY LINKS

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva visited Mexico in the first week of August 2007 and signed agreements with his Mexican counterpart, President Felipe Calderon, on alternative fuels. The agreements focus on sharing technology for the production of bio-fuels such as ethanol. Brazil is the world's leading producer of ethanol from sugar cane. The two countries also signed a series of agreements covering justice, immigration policy as well as energy cooperation.

President Calderon assured his Brazilian counterpart that Mexico's "heart is in Latin America", despite its geographical proximity to the United States. The talks between President Lula and President Calderon bring together the leaders of Latin America's two biggest economies.

Source: BBC News, 7 August 2007

IRAN, ALGERIA SIGN BILATERAL COOPERATION AGREEMENTS

The Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad ended his two-day visit to Algeria on 8 August 2007 with the signing of four agreements for the promotion of bilateral cooperation in culture, housing and civil engineering construction, aviation, and judicial cooperation on international crime. President Ahmadinejad's visit to Algeria took place at the official invitation of his Algerian counterpart President Abdelaziz Bouteflika. The two presidents headed delegations of top political, economic and industrial leaders who took part in discussions and negotiations aimed at bolstering bilateral ties between Tehran and Algiers.

This was the first visit by President Ahmadinejad and the second by an Iranian president to Algeria. President Ahmadinejad was accompanied by Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki, Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad-Hossein Saffar Harandi and senior presidential advisor, Mojtaba Samareh Hashemi.

Source: IRNA, 8 August 2007

MEXICO, ARGENTINA SIGN PACT ON POLITICAL, ECONOMIC RELATIONS

Mexican President Felipe Calderon and his Argentinian counterpart, President Nestor Kirchner, signed a pact aimed at increasing economic and political cooperation in Mexico City on 31 July 2007. Press reports quoting President Calderon state that the agreement includes mechanisms for increasing trade between the two countries. Mr Calderon said that the agreement will speed up Mexico's integration with Mercosur, besides strengthening bilateral relations between Mexico and Argentina in the areas of politics, culture, technology and science.

The two leaders also announced that they were working on an agreement to integrate the automobile industries of the two countries with the objective of helping auto companies to streamline their operations and specialize in particular models or parts and to ship them to third country markets.

Source: VOA News and Associated Press, 1 August 2007

INDIAN FIRM TO EXPORT VEHICLES TO BRAZIL, CHILE AND EGYPT

Indian automobile company Mahindra and Mahindra, announced on 24 August 2007 that it will begin exports of its pick-up trucks to Brazil by the end of the current year. According to Pawan Goenka, President of the company's automotive division, Mahindra's Scorpio single and double cabin models will be assembled by Brazil's Bramont for sale locally, initially. Mahindra, which launched its Scorpio brand pick-up truck in Chile in August 2007, will also begin exporting Scorpio SUVs to Egypt in a similar arrangement in the first half of 2008. The firm hopes to use its Brazilian tie-up to export vehicles to the United States from 2008.

Mahindra is following in the footsteps of its bigger Indian rival Tata Motors Ltd. that has a venture with Italy's Fiat, to make Fiat-branded pick-up trucks in Argentina for sale in South and Central American and some European markets.

Source: Reuters, 24 August 2007

SENEGAL SET TO RECEIVE IRANIAN INVESTMENT IN AUTOMOBILE AND ENERGY SECTORS

Iran has promised to speed up the development of a car assembly plant in Senegal, according to a government statement issued in Dakar. Last November, Iran had pledged to invest \$80m in a car plant in Senegal to be 60% owned by Iran Khodro, 20% by the Senegalese government and 20% by Senegalese private investors. The statement follows a meeting between Iranian officials and Senegal's President, Abdoulaye Wade in the last week of July 2007.

In another major boost to bilateral ties, Iran's national oil company will take a stake in Senegal's state-owned refinery and sell the West African country a year's supply of crude oil on preferential credit terms, Senegal's energy ministry said. The announcement follows a visit by Senegalese Energy Minister Samuel Sarr to Tehran in mid-August to discuss oil projects, which the ministry said included increasing the capacity of Senegal's state-owned refinery from 1.2 million tonnes to 3 million tonnes a year.

Source: BBC News, 3 August 2007 and Reuters, 28 August 2007.

JAMAICA, BRAZIL STRENGTHEN MUTUAL COOPERATION

Jamaica and Brazil have signed two bilateral agreements that will allow for human resources development (HRD) cooperation between the countries and visa exemptions for holders of diplomatic and official passports. Jamaican Prime Minister, Portia Simpson Miller and President of Brazil, Luiz da Silva signed the agreements when they met in Jamaica on 9 August 2007 to conduct high level talks on a variety of issues including energy, sport and social policies.

Under the HRD deal, Jamaican diplomats, officials, students and researchers will be able to train in a number of subject areas, including international relations in Brazil. Jamaica will also offer ten scholarships to Brazilians wishing to train in hospitality and will provide technical and coaching assistance in track and field sports.

Source: www.icm.ac.uk, 14 August 2007

PERU, MEXICO TO NEGOTIATE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Peru's Minister of Foreign Trade, Mercedes Aráoz, announced in August 2007, that Peru and Mexico would begin negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement in September 2007. In addition, Mexico and Peru have also decided to extend their Economic Complementation Agreement (ECA) No 8, which was to expire on 31 December this year, until 30 June 2008.

According to reports, Peru was particularly interested in negotiating agricultural issues with Mexico. Peru's agricultural products do not directly compete with Mexican products, and so, it was hoped that a mutually beneficial deal could be arrived at between the two countries.

Source: www.bilaterals.org, 21 August, 2007

VENEZUELA, ARGENTINA SIGN ENERGY COOPERATION PACT

The Presidents of Venezuela, Argentina and Bolivia met on 10 August 2007 in the southern Bolivian town of Tarija. Venezuela's Hugo Chavez, Bolivia's Evo Morales, and Argentina's Nestor Kirchner signed agreements to share the costs of energy production. They agreed to fund the construction of a gas-separation plant near Bolivia's border with Argentina.

Source: VOA News, 10 August, 2007