

## **Other News (1-15 December 2013) - Iran**

### **Iran sends second monkey into space**

/Dec 14/tert.am/

Iran's president has said that the Islamic Republic has successfully sent a monkey into space for the second time, part of a program aimed at manned space flight, the Inquirer News reported.

Hassan Rouhani's website said Saturday that the rocket used liquid fuel for the first time. It did not say when the launch took place or give other details.

Iran frequently claims technological breakthroughs that are impossible to independently verify. The Islamic Republic has said it seeks to send an astronaut into space as part of an ambitious aerospace program.

Iran said that it sent its first monkey into space in January. One of two official packages of photos of the simian space traveler depicted the wrong monkey, however, raising doubts among international observers as to whether the launch was as successful as reported.

### **Iran ready to start building railroad to link it with Armenia - mass media**

/Dec 9/ITAR-TASS, Russia/

Iran is ready to start building a railroad, which will link it with Armenia, Iranian mass media reported on Monday.

"Tehran provided funding to build a 160-kilometre railroad," local mass media quoted Iranian Ambassador in Yerevan Mohammad Raisi as saying on Monday.

The price of the project is estimated at 2.8 billion U.S. dollars, experts say.

Iran is considering a possibility to create a united railway, which will link it with Russia and China. The World Bank intended to take part in implementing the project.

### **Iran Insists on Delivery of S-300 Defense System from Russia**

/Dec 11/english.farsnews.com/

TEHRAN (FNA)- Tehran will not drop its deal with Moscow on the purchase of the Russian S-300 air defense system, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said, insisting that Russia should comply with the contract terms and deliver the missile shield to Iran.

Speaking in a joint press conference with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov in Tehran on Wednesday, Zarif responded to a question on the latest developments in the S-300 deal, and said, "We still insist on the implementation of the past agreements."

`Russian deputy prime minister in a recent visit to Iran held talks with senior Iranian defense officials (on S-300) and these talks will continue ...,' Zarif added.

In October, Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Marziyeh Afkham expressed the hope that the talks between Iran and Russia over the delivery of S-300 air defense system would persuade Moscow to fulfill its international commitment to this end.

`In line with the friendly ties between Iran and Russia, negotiations between officials and experts in charge are continuing, so that the international obligations of the Russian side will be fulfilled and a result will be reached on the S-300 system,' Afkham said.

In 2007, Iran signed a contract worth \$800mln to buy five Russian S300 missile defense systems.

But the deal was scrapped in 2010 by then-Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, who was unilaterally expanding on sanctions against Iran imposed by the UN Security Council.

Iran filed a \$4bln lawsuit against Russia in the international arbitration

court in Geneva, which is currently pending review. Moscow has struggled to have the lawsuit dropped, including by offering the Tor anti-aircraft systems as replacement, media reported earlier this month, adding that the offer was rejected by Tehran. The Antei-2500, however, may be a better solution. The system does not formally fall under the existing sanctions against Iran while still being useful for the Middle-Eastern country. While the S-300 was developed for the use by missile defense forces, the Antei-2500 was specifically tailored for the needs of ground forces, which could also be an advantage for Iran, known for its large land force. The S-300 is a series of Russian long range surface-to-air missile systems produced by NPO Almaz, all based on the initial S-300P version. The S-300 system was developed to defend against aircraft and cruise missiles for the Soviet Air Defense Forces. Subsequent variations were developed to intercept ballistic missiles. The S-300 system was first deployed by the Soviet Union in 1979, designed for the air defense of large industrial and administrative facilities, military bases, and control of airspace against enemy strike aircraft.

### **Swedish FM Calls for Removal of Western Sanctions against Iran**

/Dec 15/ english.farsnews.com/

TEHRAN (FNA)- Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt underlined that the time has now arrived for the removal of the US-led EU sanctions against Iran.

'There is no reason that the European Union should not annul some parts of the sanctions it has imposed against Iran,' Bildt said.

On November 24, Iran and the Group 5+1 (the five permanent UN Security Council members plus Germany) reached an interim deal aimed at laying the groundwork for the full resolution of the West's decade-old dispute with Iran over its nuclear energy program.

On Saturday, Head of the Iranian Parliament's Research Center Kazzem Jalali blasted Washington for breaching Geneva deal by the latest series of sanctions on Iranian firms.

Jalali said that the West has made a mistake in decision making about Iran as it lacks a true analysis of the realities of Iranian society.

On Friday, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister and Senior Negotiator Seyed Abbas Araqchi condemned Washington for breaching the Geneva agreement by blacklisting a dozen companies and individuals for evading US sanctions, and said Tehran will take proper retaliatory measures against it.

'This (US) action is against the spirit of the Geneva agreement and we will show a proper reaction,' Araqchi told FNA.

'We are assessing the conditions and will adopt a proper reaction,' he added.

Iranian negotiators in Vienna halted nuclear talks with major world powers on Thursday to return to Tehran for consultations after Washington imposed new sanctions against the country.

The negotiators had been discussing the implementation of a landmark interim accord agreed last month with the Group 5+1 (Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States, plus Germany).

Under the interim deal reached in Geneva, Iran agreed to freeze parts of its suspect nuclear program for six months in return for some \$7bln in relief from western sanctions.

The United States also agreed to refrain from slapping new sanctions on Iran, but senior administration officials argued that Thursday's measures were taken as part of the existing sanctions regime against Tehran.

### **Senior Lawmaker: EU Parliament Seeking to Develop Ties with Iran**

/Dec 15/ english.farsnews.com/

TEHRAN (FNA)- Head of the European Parliament's Delegation for Relations with Iran Tarja Cronberg underlined the EU's firm intention to expand relations with Tehran, and said the EU legislators are devising a strategy

for increasing cooperation with Iran.

`The main agenda of our trip to Iran is the expansion of cooperation with the Iranian parliament and the European parliament is devising a strategy for cooperation with Iran after the Geneva agreement (between Tehran and the world powers),' Cronberg said in a meeting with Iran's Deputy Anti-Narcotics Police Chief Colonel Morteza Mirzayee in Tehran on Sunday.

`The European parliament is trying to expand relations with Iran, and fighting illicit drugs is one of the most important fields for such ties and cooperation,' she added.

Iran lies on a major drug route between Afghanistan and Europe, as well as the Persian Gulf states. Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the Iranian police have lost around 4,000 of their personnel in the country's combat against narcotics.

Cronberg underlined that the relations between Tehran and the EU will certainly improve after the implementation of the contents of the Geneva agreement signed by Iran and the six world powers in November.

Iran and the Group 5+1 (the US, Russia, China, Britain and France plus Germany) reached a final deal on November 24 after days of difficult and intensive negotiations and a decade-long nuclear standoff.

The deal includes removal of a part of the US-led West's sanctions against Iran's crude supplies, petrochemical exports and part of the banking operations, including the pay-back of Iran's crude export revenues.

According to the deal, no further sanctions will be imposed against Iran. Iran's crude sales will be maintained at the current level and Iran's oil revenues will also be released.

Sanctions on Iran's petrochemical sector will be completely removed and the sanctions on the country's auto industry will also be lifted.

Sanctions on imports and exports of gold and precious metals, as well as the ban on the insurance of transportation and shipping services will be fully lifted as well.

## **US insincerity threatens Iran nuclear deal: Analyst**

/Dec 15/ [www.presstv.ir/](http://www.presstv.ir/)

John Kerry's new Iran blame game

An Iranian analyst says the US deep-seated dishonesty towards Iran is endangering Tehran's hard-won nuclear deal with the world powers.

`In the past, the United States has been untrustworthy when it comes to Iran and that is why now many people believe that the whole agreement is in danger of collapse,' Mohammad Marandi told Press TV in an interview on Sunday.

He was referring to the nuclear deal Iran clinched with the six world powers on its nuclear program in Geneva in November.

As recently as last Thursday, the administration of US President Barack Obama issued new sanctions against more than a dozen companies and individuals for `providing support' for Tehran's nuclear program. As part of the Geneva deal, it was agreed that no more sanctions would be imposed on Iran for six months.

Marandi said the US `is not only moving against the spirit of the deal, but also against the deal itself.'

`I think that most would agree that this is nothing new. The United State has never been an honest partner when it comes to Iran,' he added.

As an example of US insincerity, Marandi referred to Iran's negotiations with the US on war-stricken Afghanistan, saying, `Iran sincerely tried to resolve the problem in the country, the United States immediately went and called Iran an `Axis of Evil'.'

The analyst, however, said Tehran may `give the United States a chance to show that it has changed its behavior towards Iran.'

`And that if the United States refuses to change, then it reveals that the issue is not Iran's; it has nothing to do with different Iranian administrations or presidents and that the problem really lies with the United States itself,' said Marandi.