

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Tehran's prosecutor-general said Sunday a court has sentenced a suspect to six years in prison for relaying information on the country's nuclear program to a U.S. intelligence agent and a European country.

OCCUPIED AL-QUDS (Dispatches) -- Zionist authorities have begun distributing deportation notices to thousands of African migrants. In letters delivered Sunday, Israel said the migrants have 60 days to accept the offer to leave Occupied Palestine for an unnamed African destination in exchange for \$3,500 and a plane ticket.

Viewpoint
By: Kayhan Int'l Staff Writer
World Muslims Begin Questioning Saudi Control of House of God

Tehran to Host 2nd Congress on Successful Iranian Women

Iran Beach Soccer Team Stays Put in International Rankings

PLO Mulls Withdrawing Recognition of Zionist Regime

Russia Vows Probe Into Downing of Jet in Syria

MOSCOW (Dispatches) -- Russian lawmakers on Sunday urged an investigation into the origin of MANPAD missiles which terrorists used in Syria the day before to down a Russian warplane and killed its pilot on the ground after he ejected. The SU-25 came down in an area of northern Idlib province that has seen heavy airstrikes and fighting on the ground between Syria's government forces and terrorist groups opposed to President Bashar al-Assad. The Russian plane was shot down over the town of Khan al-Subl near the city of Saraqeb, close to a major highway where the Syrian army is trying to advance, a foreign-backed militant source said. Although the Russian pilot escaped the crash, he was killed by terrorists who had tried to capture him, the source said. Tharir al-Sham, a Takfiri group spearheaded by the former Syrian branch of Al-Qaeda, claimed responsibility for shooting down the plane on social media, saying one of its fighters had scored a direct hit with a shoulder launched anti-aircraft missile. Russia's Defense Ministry confirmed in a statement that the Su-25 fighter jet had been shot down in Idlib. Russian military planes retaliated afterwards by targeting the area and killing more than 30 terrorists. "The loss of one aircraft is nothing, but politically, it has great significance and far-reaching consequences," Frants Klintsevich, the first deputy chair of the Russian Federal Council's Defense Committee told Interfax. "Certainly, we will investigate, including a great many things: from the type of the MANPADS to the circumstances of the Su-25 downing," he said. MP Dmitry Sablin, the coordinator of the Russia-Syria parliamentary friendship group, said, "We have information that the MANPADS used to bring down our jet was brought into Syria from a neighboring country several days ago." "Countries from whose territory weapons arrive, that are then used against Russian servicemen, must understand that this will not go unpunished," he told the Russian news agency. Deputy head of the State Duma's Defense Committee, Yury Shvytkin, told RIA news agency he was inclined to believe that the "MANPADS origins were linked with Western countries." A 2017 military spending bill, signed under former U.S. President Barack Obama, allowed supply of such weapons to the militants fighting the Syrian government. In September 2016, Reuters cited an unnamed U.S. official as saying that Washington "has kept large numbers of such man-portable air defense systems, or MANPADS, out of Syria by uniting Western and Arab allies behind channeling training and infantry weapons" to anti-Damascus militants. (Continued on Page 7)

President Rouhani: Iran Has to Be Strong in Face of Threats



From left: Iran's military Chief of Staff Muhammad Baqeri and President Hassan Rouhani attend the inauguration of a defense museum in Tehran, Feb. 4, 2018.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- President Hassan Rouhani here on Sunday reiterated that Iran will increase its defense capabilities, adding the country had to become strong enough so that no enemy dares to threaten it. "We must be strong and powerful, because the Qur'an tells us that we must be so powerful to take away the courage from the enemy and those threatening us," he told the inauguration of a defense museum. Rouhani once again underlined that Iran's defense power is absolutely non-negotiable. "To strengthen their defense capabilities, the Iranian government and nation have never held and will never hold any talks with any state. On this issue, our stance is firm and decisive," he noted.

"As said, we press ahead with our defense capabilities only within the fatwa of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution. And we have announced repeatedly that Iran is not after weapons of mass destruction because our religion bans us from producing and using such weapons," he said. President Rouhani said today all states across the world are threatening each other with new weapons. "Amid such conditions, foreseeing a future with no threats seems impossible." "In a world in which all states are against the WMD, U.S. officials shamelessly threaten Russia with new nuclear weapons. So, it seems the issue of WMD is still important in the world. Amid such a condition, can anyone talk of peace and coexistence and conclude that we don't need any defense power? Today, even those countries which condemn WMD as a weapon against humanity are taking these weapons seriously," he said. The U.S. military has put countering China and Russia, dubbed "revisionist powers", at the center of a new national defense strategy unveiled earlier this month. U.S. officials say by expanding its own low-yield nuclear capability, Washington would deter Russia from using nuclear weapons. Iran's Foreign Minister Muhammad Javad Zarif said the new policy brings humanity "closer to annihilation" and shows American hypocrisy in trying to clamp down on Tehran's nuclear

energy programs. Zarif said the new U.S. nuclear policy was "in violation" of the international Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). "The US Nuclear Posture Review reflects greater reliance on nukes in violation of the #NPT, bringing humankind closer to annihilation," Zarif said on Twitter. Zarif said the same impulse was driving the United States to undermine the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran. "Trump's obduracy in killing the #JCPOA stems from the same dangerous imprudence," Zarif wrote, using the technical name for the nuclear deal. Self-Sufficiency in Arms Production Rouhani noted that national power is not a partisan issue, adding all parties in economic, political, cultural and defense fields should work together regardless of their affiliations to promote Iran's national power. He went on to say Iran has achieved self-sufficiency to a large extent in arms production. "If we need a special weapon which is not produced inside, we have to purchase it immediately from other states and become so powerful that the enemies would not dare to threaten us. The enemies must realize the fact that any invasion of Iran would have dire consequences for them," he said. "This means the enemy has either to be made disappointed about achieving a success or know that if it attacks us, it will have to pay immense costs," the president added. (Continued on Page 7)

China Urges U.S. to Abandon 'Cold War Mentality'

BEIJING (AFP) -- China said Sunday it is "firmly opposed" to the United States' new nuclear weapons policy statement, describing its speculation about Chinese intentions as "wild guesses". The U.S. Defense Department's Nuclear Posture Review released Friday outlines the Pentagon's nuclear ambitions under President Donald Trump, while spelling out how it foresees nuclear threats in the coming decades. Although the review largely focuses on Russia, several sections are dedicated to the lack of transparency in China's nuclear buildup. The report says China has added new types of nuclear capabilities -- ranging from a mobile intercontinental ballistic missile to a new ballistic missile submarine -- "with little to no transparency into its intentions". The report makes "wild guesses" about China's intentions and exaggerates the threat of its nuclear force, defense ministry spokesman Ren Guoqiang said in a statement. China is "firmly opposed to this", Ren said. China "has always kept its own nuclear forces at the minimum level required by national security", Ren said, pointing out that the U.S. has the world's largest nuclear arsenal. "We hope that the United States will abandon its Cold War mentality," Ren said. Since taking office in 2012 President Xi Jinping has pushed for a muscular China, including calls last October to develop a "world-class" military by 2050. China's neighbors have watched warily as the People's Liberation Army has upgraded its arsenal with increasingly sophisticated weaponry and sought to create a more effective and professional fighting force. Upgrades to its nuclear arsenal have received less attention, partly because of its small size, estimated by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute at just 270 warheads compared to 6,800 for the U.S. China has also long maintained it will never allow first use of its atomic weapons. China "always abides by the principle of no first use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances", Ren said, and will "unconditionally not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states." The U.S. military wants to revamp its nuclear arsenal and develop new low-yield atomic weapons, largely in response to Russian actions in recent years, the Pentagon said. Moscow on Saturday denounced the "bellicose" and "anti-Russian" nature of the new U.S. nuclear policy, warning it would take necessary measures to ensure its own security.

Zangeneh: Trump's Hostility Scares Investors

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Iran's oil minister lashed out at the United States on Sunday, saying that hostile comments by President Donald Trump had torpedoed new oil and gas contracts for the Islamic Republic. "Trump is trying to destabilize market conditions for those who want to work in Iran," Bijan Zangeneh told a press conference. "For the past year, every three or four months, he has destabilized the market. One cannot say that this is not without effect," he said. The agreement in July 2015 of a nuclear deal between Iran and world powers sparked keen interest among international investors keen to focus on the country's petroleum riches. But Trump's arrival in the White House a year ago, and his regular denunciations of the deal with Iran and the country in general, cooled

their ardor. Zangeneh revealed that Tehran was currently negotiating with "more than 20 foreign companies" to develop its oil and gas fields. "But I dare not name the projects that are near to being agreed. If I do so, from tomorrow there will be pressure for them not to sign contracts with us," he said. Some countries "both at the international and regional level" are exerting pressure on European and Asian firms not to agree contracts with Iran, Zangeneh added, without naming them. However, he did say he was optimistic about a \$5-billion (four-billion-euro) contract signed last July with the French group Total, which heads a consortium with China's CNPC to develop a gas field. "I consider that Total is very

serious... I hope it will implement the accord and I think that in a short period of time, it will sign agreements with subcontractors," Zangeneh said. He added that Iran had planned measures "if the deal ever runs into trouble" because of pressure from the United States. The minister also said Iran can swiftly increase production of crude if OPEC decides to scrap limits on global output when the group meets next in June. Iran Can Boost The Persian Gulf nation can raise daily production by at least 100,000 barrels within "five or six days" if the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries decides that crude prices are high enough to justify abandoning its oil-cuts accord with other producers, he said. (Continued on Page 7)