

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Minister of Communication and Information Technology Muhammad Javad Azari Jahromi said Monday Iran has three satellites that are ready to be launched in due time.

The minister praised Iran's progress in the space industry and said the country al-ways needs to develop the strategic industry to use its capacities in other sectors, including agriculture, meteorology, and transportation. His ministry is awaiting Defense Ministry's go-ahead to launch the satellites, he said.

NEW YORK (Dispatches) -- President Hassan Rouhani has said Iran's strategy is to forge extensive interaction with the world as he arrived here to attend a session of the UN General Assembly.

Rouhani said he would hold meetings with heads of countries, senior clerics of Islamic countries, U.S. media, the Iranian elite living in the United States as well as those from other countries. "We will also hold talks with heads of European, Asian, African and Latin American countries."

### Viewpoint

By Kayhan Int'l Staff Writer

## Saudi Hypocrisy – Could the Leopard Change Its Spots?

P. 2

## Persian Poetry Day Marked in Iran

P. 3

## Iran Wrestlers Pocket 3 Medals in Medved 2017

P. 6

## Certain Western States Still Back Terror Groups in Syria

P. 8

## Saudi Prince Purging Dissent as He Prepares for Throne

RIYADH (AFP) -- With a crackdown on dissenters and a charm offensive to woo the kingdom's swelling youth population, Saudi Arabia's king-in-waiting Mohammed bin Salman is cementing his grip on power, analysts say.

The 32-year-old crown prince, often known as MBS, is set to be the first millennial to occupy the throne in a country where half the population is under 25, though the timing of his ascension remains unknown.

Already viewed as the de facto ruler controlling all the major levers of government, from defense to economy, MBS is seen as stamping out traces of internal dissent before any formal transfer of power from his 81-year-old father King Salman.

Authorities last week arrested around two dozen people, including influential clerics, in what activists decried as a coordinated crackdown.

Analysts say many of those detained are resistant to MBS's aggressive foreign policy that includes the boycott of Persian Gulf neighbor Qatar as well as some of his bold reforms, including privatizing state assets and cutting subsidies.

Saudi officials have instead suggested a foreign plot to overthrow the government, without disclosing details. "In recent years we cannot recall a week in which so many prominent Saudi Arabian figures have been targeted in such a short space of time," said Samah Hadid, a director at Amnesty International.

To analysts, MBS's meteoric rise has seemed almost Shakespearean in its aggression and calculation. In June, he edged out a 58-year-old cousin, Prince Mohammed bin Nayef, to become heir to the throne.

At the time, Saudi television channels showed the bearded MBS kissing the hand of the older prince and kneeling before him in a show of reverence. Western media reports later said that the deposed prince had been placed under house arrest, a claim strongly denied by Saudi authorities.

Foreign diplomats predict MBS could well be in control of Saudi Arabia for at least half a century. "I can't say when the formal ascension of Mohammed bin Salman might happen, but the real transfer of power has already happened — he is effectively ruling Saudi Arabia," Perry Cammack, a fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, told AFP.

"With the (older) generation having now left the scene and his main younger rivals having been removed, Mohammed is primed to enjoy a dominance over Saudi Arabia unseen since the rule of Abdulaziz, who founded the modern Saudi kingdom in the 1930s."

With his youth a novelty in a country accustomed to ageing rulers, MBS has sought to woo young Saudis by putting sports and entertainment on the cutting edge of his reform effort, dubbed Vision 2030, at the risk of riling conservatives. Public cinemas have long been banned inside the kingdom and there are few outlets for leisure activities.

MBS made a rare appearance this month in the football match that saw Saudi Arabia qualify for next year's World Cup. Alone in what appeared to be a bullet-proof royal box, the smiling prince flashed the victory sign — an image embossed on a new government poster for Vision 2030.

"The image perfectly captures two aspects of his power: his appeal to youth and to nationalism," Kristin Diwan, from the AGSI institute in Washington, told AFP. "National pride is replacing the appeal of Islamism. And sports and other forms of entertainment are compensating youth for the weakness of the welfare state."

A slump in oil prices has prompted Saudi Arabia to take steps to reduce the kingdom's generous welfare system after decades of using its vast energy resources to pay generous salaries and benefits. This direct outreach to youth amid Saudi Arabia's transition to a post-oil era marks a clear departure from the past, when previous rulers appeared more inclined to court society's elders out of a deference to age.

But sluggish economic growth and soaring youth unemployment could hinder MBS's outreach. His reform plan seeks to reduce reliance on oil and develop the kingdom's industrial and investment base to generate more private-sector jobs for young Saudis.

But recent reports that the government is rejigging its reform strategy, which has already fallen short in key areas, is a sign that "broader opposition to reform is building," said research firm Capital Economics.

"His own youth, his tendency to centralize power, and his rapid changes to foreign policy have all alienated some of the senior ruling family members, while his changes to the economy have upset some of the merchant families," Jane Kinninmont, from the London-based Chatham House, told AFP. "Building up a youth support base may help MBS compensate for alienating some of the supporters that Saudi princes have traditionally counted on."

MBS, who boasts of close ties to the White House, also appears to be empowering third-generation royals, with several younger princes holding deputy positions in various ministries and regional governments.

A series of full-page ads in Saudi newspapers recently extolled the virtues of the 'charismatic' prince, tackling the unease in some quarters over his youth and perceived inexperience.

"His teachers describe him: He has never been part of a problem," said the ad by a regional men's magazine that profiled MBS, splashed with pictures from his childhood. "Takes initiative and acts older than his age."

## Amid Fears of New Bloodshed: Iraqi PM Orders Suspension of Kurdish Vote



*The Iraqi Kurdistan's head Massoud Barzani waves to loyalists during a rally in Erbil.*

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) -- **Iraq's Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi on Monday formally demanded that the Kurdistan region suspend its plan to hold a referendum on secession after the country's supreme court ordered its suspension.**

The Iraqi supreme court approved Abadi's demand to consider "the breakaway of any region or province from Iraq as unconstitutional," his

office said.

"Holding (the referendum) will lead to dangerous outcomes, resulting in the division of Iraq and threatening civil peace."

A spokesman for the supreme court said it had issued the order to suspend "until it examines the complaints it has received over this plebiscite being unconstitutional."

The court took the decision after

it "reviewed requests to stop the referendum."

A source in parliament said at least three politicians had filed complaints against the poll.

Neighbors Turkey and Iran, as well as the United States and United Nations, have pleaded for the autonomous Kurdish region of northern Iraq to settle its differences with Baghdad through negotiations rather than secession. Israel has been the only regime to back the vote.

Iraqi Kurdish leader Massoud Barzani has said a "yes" vote would not trigger an immediate declaration of independence but rather kick-start "serious discussions" with Baghdad.

He has already rejected a U.S. alternative to the referendum, which asked for a two-year wait and talks with Baghdad.

There was no immediate reaction to Abadi's demand, but Barzani last month claimed that constitutional failures by Baghdad meant it could not use the document against the Kurds.

Britain's defense secretary, Michael Fallon, said on Monday he would try to persuade Barzani at a meeting to call off the controversial vote.

**(Continued on Page 7)**

## Confrontation With U.S.-Backed Forces Possible: Syrian Troops Advance Into Eastern Bank of Euphrates

BEIRUT (Dispatches) -- **Syrian troops battling Daesh crossed to the eastern bank of the Euphrates River in Dayr al-Zawr on Monday, securing their hold on the eastern city but threatening a potential standoff with U.S.-backed militants operating nearby.**

The government forces meanwhile announced that they had secured the airport in Dayr al-Zawr, allowing two military transport aircraft to land. Al-Manar TV, the media arm of Hezbollah, quoted an unnamed general who said the airport is "90% secured."

Hezbollah is fighting alongside President Bashar Assad's forces.

Syrian government forces broke a three-year Daesh siege of parts of Dayr al-Zawr earlier this month and are fighting to drive the Takfiri militants from the city, their last major urban stronghold in Syria. The city is home to nearly 100,000 residents.

Russia, which has provided crucial air support to Assad's forces, announced the crossing of the river, saying in a statement that the troops used a pontoon bridge.

**(Continued on Page 7)**

## U.S. Police Arrest Scores as Protests Continue

ST. LOUIS (AP) -- **A racially mixed crowd of demonstrators locked arms and marched quietly through downtown St. Louis Monday morning to protest the acquittal of a white former police officer in the killing of a black suspect, following another night of unrest and more than 80 arrests.**

The latest action follows three days of peaceful protests and three nights of violence in the city that has been rocked since Friday, when a judge announced he found Jason Stockley not guilty in the 2011 death of Anthony Lamar Smith.

Hundreds of riot police mobilized downtown late Sunday, arresting more than 80 people. The arrests came after demonstrators ignored orders to disperse, police said.

Earlier Sunday, more than 1,000 people had gathered at police headquarters then marched through downtown St. Louis, the posh Central West End, and the trendy Delmar Loop area of nearby University City. Protesters also marched through two shopping malls in a wealthy area of St. Louis County.

Soon afterward, buses brought in additional officers in riot gear, and police scoured downtown deep into the night, making arrests. Later, officers in riot gear gathered alongside a city boulevard chanting "whose street, our

street" — a common refrain used by the protesters — after clearing the street of demonstrators and onlookers.

Mayor Lyda Krewson said at the same Monday news conference that "the days have been calm and the nights have been destructive."

The recent St. Louis protests follow a pattern seen since the August 2014 killing of Michael Brown in nearby Ferguson.

**(Continued on Page 7)**

## Iran Urges IAEA to Resist 'Unacceptable' U.S. Demands

VIENNA (Dispatches) -- **Iran's nuclear chief on Monday accused the United States of seeking to undermine a landmark 2015 deal with major powers, calling on the UN watchdog to resist Washington's "unacceptable demands."**

"The American administration's overtly hostile attitude and actual foot-dragging policies and measures aimed at undermining the nuclear deal... are contrary to the letter and spirit" of the accord, Ali Akbar Salehi said in Vienna.

He hit out at the U.S. envoy to the United Nations, Nikki Haley, for making a "host of unjustifiable, peculiar demands" in talks with IAEA chief Yukiya Amano in Vienna last

month.

These reportedly included that the IAEA inspect military sites in Iran, something which officials in Tehran have rejected.

U.S. Energy Secretary Rick Perry told the Vienna meeting that Washington would "not accept a weakly enforced or inadequately monitored deal."

But Haley's demands are "far beyond the purview of the JCPOA and its collectively negotiated and well-defined provisions," Salehi said, referring to the full name of the deal, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

"We remain confident that the (UN atomic) agency, and for that matter

the director general, will resist such unacceptable demands," Salehi told the International Atomic Energy Agency's annual meeting of member states.

For his part, Amano on Monday repeated in his speech that Iran "is now subject to the world's most robust nuclear verification regime."

U.S. President Donald Trump has called the agreement reducing Tehran's nuclear activities in exchange for sanctions relief "the worst deal ever negotiated."

Trump has to certify in mid-October whether he believes Iran is abiding by the nuclear deal.

**(Continued on Page 7)**