

ALGERIA TODAY

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VENEZUELA'S PRESIDENT, MR. HUGO CHAVEZ, VISITS ALGERIA



Venezuelan President, Mr. Hugo Rafael Chavez Frias, arrived May 16th, in Algiers for a two-day working visit to strengthen the friendship and cooperation between the two countries. This is President Chavez's third visit to Algeria since 2000.

Friendship between Venezuela and Algeria, "is deep and sincere" said President Chavez, speaking to reporters, he stated: "I am here to listen to President Bouteflika and discuss with him many questions, notably our bilateral relations. I have noticed a convergence of views on all the examined questions,"

At the end of the visit, the Venezuelan President said that his talks with President Bouteflika had "marked a new and important stage" in their relationship.

The two countries concluded an agreement in maritime transport and a memorandum of understanding on the exchanges between their respective diplomatic institutes.

The signature of the two cooperation agreements constitute an "extremely important basis" in the

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ALGERIA AGREES WITH PARIS CLUB TO BUY BACK \$8 BILLION DEBT AHEAD OF SCHEDULE

Algeria agreed to buy back its entire Paris Club \$8 billion debt ahead of schedule, taking significant steps to reduce its foreign debt with the 19-member group of creditor nations.

The Paris Club said in a statement that Algeria's debt buyback "reflects the strong financial recovery" of the nation in recent years. The Paris Club deal should halve Algeria's total outstanding foreign debt, which had already fallen to about \$16 billion as of March 31st, from more than \$21 billion in 2004.

The reduction of the country's foreign debts became a policy priority since President Bouteflika took office in 1999.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTER, MR. MOHAMMED BEDJAOU, SATISFIED WITH FIRST ALGERIA-EU ASSOCIATION MEETING

The Algeria-EU Association Council held its first meeting on May 16th in Brussels to revive institutional cooperation. The meeting focused on political, economic, and energy cooperation, as well as on lifting tariff barriers from September 1st, 2005, with the goal of establishing a free-trade zone by 2017.

According to the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Mohammed Bedjaoui, this formal meeting inaugurates EU-Algerian institutional cooperation, was marked by "cordiality, frankness and friendship," and has helped to "set up a constructive and realistic agenda."

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ALGERIA ELECTED TO UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Algeria was elected in the first round, by 168 votes out of 191, to the new United Nations Human Rights Council, on May 9th, 2006. Algeria's election shows UN member states confidence in its human rights policy.



STRONGER BILATERAL COOPERATION BETWEEN ALGERIA & MAURITANIA

At President Bouteflika's invitation, Mauritania's Chairman of the Military Council for Justice and Democracy (MCJD), Colonel Ely Ould Mohamed Vall, made an official two-day visit to Algeria on May 6th. The two leaders held one-on-one talks on bilateral cooperation and regional and African issues in an effort to strengthen relations between the two countries.

Colonel Vall stressed that Mauritania wants to reinforce partnership investments with Algeria in sectors such as energy and mining, fisheries, land transport, hydrocarbons, and human resources development. Following his meeting with President Bouteflika, the Mauritanian leader said that the two countries have a "convergence of views" on all issues.

31 NEW & REVISED LAWS, PART OF JUSTICE REFORM IN ALGERIA

Algeria's Justice Minister, Mr. Tayeb Belaiz, announced on April 25th in the region of Boumerdes that "31 new and revised laws have been worked out in the framework of justice reform." During a meeting with his sector's officials in the Boumerdes province, the minister stressed that "most of the laws are new and were not known in the judicial environment" and that they show the people's aspiration for a modern and democratic state, attached to its origins and its culture."

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Minister Bedjaoui expressed his satisfaction with the outcome of the first meeting, stating that both parties had displayed "a level of true confidence and cooperation." He told a news conference held in the wake of the first EU-Algeria Association Council meeting, that the question of the conditions of visas attribution is a "priority" for Algeria and was examined with the EU delegation.

At the end of the meeting of the Association Council, the European Union expressed its "support" and its "satisfaction" with the positive development of the political and economic reforms initiated in Algeria. Austrian Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs and President of the Council, Mrs. Ursula Plassnik, declared that the association agreement "will pave the way for new prospects, and explore their potential."



ALGERIA, NIGER COOPERATE AGAINST TERRORISM & SMUGGLING

Algeria and Niger "are determined" to increase their cooperation, notably in the fight against terrorism, smuggling and illegal migration, Niger's Interior and Decentralization Minister, Mr. Mounkaila Modi, stressed during a working visit to Algeria, April 22nd. Mr. Modi indicated to *Algérie Presse Service*, that the two countries renewed their appreciation of current cooperation levels during the second session of the bilateral border committee, which assessed and examined the commitment of both countries to lead an efficient fight against terrorism, smuggling and illegal migration."

At the end of the session, both ministers expressed the commitment of their countries to make the border area a space for "peace and security," and a zone for "progress and shared prosperity in a mutual interest."

MINISTER OF ENERGY & MINING, CHAKIB KHELIL PRESIDES OVER US-ALGERIA ENERGY FORUM IN WASHINGTON D.C.



Representatives from Algeria and the United States took part in an energy forum Tuesday, May 16th in Washington D.C. in an effort to attract more US investors to Algeria's more lucrative sectors and benefit both countries. The Algerian Minister of Energy and Mining, Mr. Chakib Khelil, presided over the forum, which was titled, *The 2006 US-Algeria Energy Forum: New Opportunities in the Energy Sector*.

The forum exposed other energy domains in Algeria. The Algerian delegation aimed to highlight partnership opportunities in Algeria's energy sector, as well as the need for training and new technology.

Minister Khelil told *Algérie Presse Service* that the forum focused on strengthening US-Algeria relations and particularly increased cooperation in different sectors, such as renewable energies, petrochemicals, oil services, desalination, transfer of technologies and the exchange of expertise.

On the importance of bilateral cooperation in the oil and gas sector, Minister Khelil said that the volume of Algerian exports to the USA was over \$11 billion in 2005.

US TOURISM GROUP INVESTS \$500 MILLION ON JIJEL COAST

After a third visit to Algeria this year, managers of the American tourist group *Panorama* announced their intention to invest in the region of El Aouana, about 20 km from the city of Jijel, and build a tourist resort.



Panorama representatives said that they would cover the technical and financial aspects of this project estimated to cost \$500 million. The resort will offer hotels, bungalows, restaurants and stores, while simultaneously creating about 15,000 jobs during the high tourist season.

AFRICAN UNION MEETS IN ALGERIA'S CAPITAL TO DRAFT CODE OF CONDUCT

Experts and representatives from the African Union's member states started a three-day meeting on May 18th at the Algeria-based African Center for Studies and Research on Terrorism (ACSRCT). According to the agenda, the participants drew up a code of conduct for the center's contact points in the member states to enable it to carry out its mission. They specified the duties and means of communication in the fight against terrorism, in particular.



US PROFESSOR PAUL GORDON LAUREN IN ALGERIA

Trip to Algeria allows professor to "seek the truth and then honestly report the facts."

Historian and Political Science Professor at the University of Montana, Mr. Paul Gordon Lauren, held a press conference in Algiers on April 26th, after visiting Algeria for the first time. He said that since more non-Algerians have recounted Algeria's official history in books, he had felt that he had limited knowledge of the country's history. He told reporters that this visit gave him the opportunity to fully grasp the country's background and to "seek the truth and then honestly report the facts," in particular during the French colonization period.

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As a historian, Professor Lauren explained that he felt that it was his duty to visit Algeria and talk to people who had lived through certain events. Professor Lauren visited the cities of Algiers and Constantine, and went to the Moudjahidin Museum. He said that since he now has a better understanding of Algeria, he will present the country and its history in a different manner in his university classes.

ROMAN HISTORY STILL PRESERVED***Cherchell Mosaics relay the ancient city's reputation***

Ms. Sabah Ferdi, a specialist in mosaic, iconography and ancient mythology, and the official representative of the city of Tipaza's archaeological department, publicly presented her book, "The African Roman Mosaics: Culture and Nature in Cherchell," on April 27th.



The book focuses on the Cherchell site, which, according to Ms. Ferdi, is known for its exemplary corpus of 195 displays of mosaics whose iconographic diversity highlight the ancient city's reputation.

**ALGERIA
READY FOR WORLD
TOURISM**

The Eighth International Tourism Show in Algeria was inaugurated on May 15th by Minister of Tourism, Mr. Noureddine Moussa, as "an event of great importance" because the government wants to see a revival and more development in Algeria's tourism sector. He said that an "intensification of efforts" in tourism would efficiently contribute to social and economic development.

**NATIONAL WOMEN'S SOCCER TEAM
WINS FIRST ARAB CHAMPIONSHIP**

Algeria's national women's soccer team won the first Arab championship by defeating the Moroccan team, 1-0, on April 29th, in Alexandria, Egypt. Lilya Boumerrar scored the goal during the last five minutes of the game. The team had qualified for the finals after its 12-0 victory over Lebanon.

President Bouteflika congratulated the team, saying that this victory honors women's participation in sports.

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framework of exchanges, according to Mr. Abdelkader Messahel, the Minister Delegate for African and Maghreb Affairs. He added that they are significant "for future exchanges between our two countries." Algeria and Venezuela also agreed to strengthen political consultation amongst OPEC member states and to work towards stabilizing oil prices in the international market at a level which will secure the oil producing countries' purchasing power and development needs.

In their joint final statement, Algeria and Venezuela emphasized the role played by the energy sector in their national development. The statement also stressed the need to exchange expertise within the framework of the Conference of Energy Ministers of African, Latin-America, and Caribbean countries [AFROLAC] - a group which held its first session in Algeria in 2004.

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