

# NEWS ON IRAN

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*Following the terrorist crime in Oklahoma city, Mr. Massoud Rajavi, President of the National Council of Resistance of Iran, sent a telegram of condolences to the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton.*

## DOMESTIC

### Protests

News services, April 15 - A week after the uprising in Islamshahr, southern Tehran, the mullahs' Chief Justice Mohammad Yazdi spoke for the first time in a press conference on the extent of arrests. He refused to specify how many had been arrested, but indicated that there were not many. In response to the question posed by the Japanese news agency correspondent, Yazdi said Islamshahr's uprising was a natural consequence of local mismanagement. In an attempt to play down the extent of the uprising, he refused to give any figures on the casualties and arrests. In response to a foreign reporter's question as to the number of those killed, Yazdi said: The Coroner's Office report says they did not exceed a few. The Guards Corps shot dead hundreds of people April 4 after protests over price rises turned into a riot in Islamshahr, a working-class town near Tehran.

*Salam*, April 24 - The restrictive management of our radio and television as well as the pressures imposed on the press, have led to the point that the mass media do not have any political impact. They cannot reflect the incidents in Islamshahr as they should, and therefore, they are not able to engage in any thorough examination of its reasons and motives. Had such an incident happened in the United States, the American news media would have reported it so extensively that the public did not need to show any further curiosity.

### Economic conditions

*Omid* weekly, published in Tehran, April 16 - Since April 4, the rent for apartments and old houses in some parts of Tehran has increased between 30 to 50 percent and sometimes 100 percent... In view of such rents, one cannot even dream of ever owning a house in the worst places in the city. A square meter of land costs 50,000 tomans. In a place like the Naft Avenue on Tehran's Mirdamad Blvd., a simple old house is sold for between 80 to 100 thousand tomans.

*Kayhan*, Mar. 13 - Workers' minimum wage determined: In view of the economic situation and government policies in the second program as well as the correlation between wages and productivity... the Supreme Council of Labor has, after several meetings, determined that beginning on March 21, workers' daily minimum wage

be 5333 rials, amounting to the monthly sum of 15,990 tomans. [It should be noted that one of the main reasons for workers strikes in Iran is non-payment of their wages for several months- *News on Iran*]

*Jahan-e-Tehran* newspaper, April 16 - In letters to the editor, people have complained that the Ministry of Post, Telegrams and Telephone, has increased the cost of overseas calls without prior notice. The cost of phone calls to the Netherlands was reportedly increased 40% after the new year.

### Satellite dishes banned

News services, April 17 - Ali Mohammad Besharati, the Interior Minister of the Islamic regime, called on the managers of residential buildings to collect all the satellite dishes otherwise they will face punishment by the law... The Interior Minister said the security forces will investigate all residential houses and centers to round up the satellite dishes.

*Salam*, April 23 - According to the law banning installation of satellite dishes, any form of storage of satellite equipment will face heavy punitive action contrary to the Interior Minister's hollow promises. Article 9 of this law says carrying and possession of satellite reception equipment are forbidden and violators will be penalized by payment of 1 to 5 million rials.

### Plane crash

Reuters, April 18 - An Iranian military plane performing during an army air show crashed south of Tehran on Tuesday and parts of the wreckage hit a schoolyard, injuring one student, Iran's official news agency IRNA reported.

It said the cause of the crash was still unknown but there were unconfirmed reports that the pilot died in the crash... The Iranian armed forces marked Army Day with a military parade in Tehran, Iranian radio reported.

The radio, quoted by the British Broadcasting Corporation, said that armed forces units marched in Tehran's Azadi Square following a ceremony addressed by General Command Headquarters Chief Maj-Gen Hasan Firuzabadi.

### American spies

Reuters, April 19 - Iran said on Wednesday three Americans have been found guilty of spying for the United States and their cases would be reviewed by Iran's supreme court.

Iranian television, monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation, quoted the head of Iran's supreme court Ayatollah Mohammad Mohammadi Gilani as telling reporters in Tehran that the three named Americans had "been found guilty by an Islamic revolution court, and their cases were now under review by the Supreme Court."

### Defections

BBC radio, April 22 - According to reports from Denmark, six members of the Iranian karate team who had traveled to this country for taking part in the international tournaments, refused to return to their country after the conclusion of the games wherein they won the third place. They plan to request political asylum from the Danish government.

Mohammad Reza (one of the defecting athletes) said this is a protest on behalf of all the athletes. We came here for our country, not for the Islamic Republic, but they take advantage of us for other things. In fact, athletes are none but a ploy for their political objectives, and in this way we wish to convey the protest of the athletic community to the world.

## FOREIGN

### International Terrorism

*Iran Zamin*, April 24 - On the fifth anniversary of the assassination of Professor Kazem Rajavi at the hands of the terrorists dispatched from Tehran, Mr. Massoud Rajavi sent a telegram to the President of the Swiss Confederation, calling for the persecution of the culprits and perpetrators of this crime. "In the name of the Iranian people and their just Resistance for peace and democracy, and recalling the sacred principles Kazem gave his life for," he wrote, "I urge you, as the President of the Swiss Confederation, not to spare any efforts in bringing the operatives and perpetrators of his murder to justice. Involvement of the Khomeini regime's terrorist diplomats in Bern and Geneva in this crime is unforgettable. I further urge you to close down the regime's embassy and consulates in your country and order for legal persecution of the mullahs' terrorists." Mr. Rajavi concluded, "Severing trade and diplomatic ties with Iran's rulers will demonstrate that the international community is not indifferent to the crimes of this medieval regime."

Agence France Presse, April 18 - The People's Mojahedin, the Iraq-based armed opposition to the Iranian regime, announced Tuesday that its headquarters in Baghdad had been attacked by "Iranian terrorists," but no one was killed.

In a telephone contact from Paris, one spokesman for the organization said "the regime's terrorists" had fired two RPG-18 anti-tank missiles at 6 a.m. local time at a warehouse annexed to their office.

According to the Mojahedin spokesman, the attack did not leave any casualties. The Mojahedin say this is the 32nd time since 1993 that their offices are being attacked in Iraq. The organization's spokesman blamed the attack on the Iranian embassy in Baghdad and demanded that the Iraqi officials arrest and punish the culprits of this crime.

Agence France Presse, April 21 - Mohammad Mohammadi Rayshahri announced Friday that the Iranian

pilgrims will try as in the previous years, to hold an anti-American rally in Mecca this year.

In Tehran's Friday prayer, Mr. Rayshahri announced, "We intend to hold this demonstration in any case and with God's help we will succeed."

Last year, after several days of clashes between pilgrims and the Saudi authorities who had deployed a large military force to prevent any form of gathering, Iran had to call off the demonstration. This matter created great tension between Riyadh and Tehran.

*The Independent*, April 11 - The European Union is hoping to create what amounts to a fatwa free zone for the author Salman Rushdie.

Foreign ministers agreed yesterday to ask the Iranian government to guarantee not to carry out within the EU the death sentence pronounced on Mr. Rushdie by the late Ayatollah Khomeini....

Radio France International, April 15 - Yazdi, the Iranian Chief Justice, described the European Union's plan on Salman Rushdie "a political act." He said the Iranian position has not changed. No one can change the decree and Europe's objective in this new undertaking is to launch another propaganda campaign in the mass media against the Islamic Republic of Iran, he added.

## FEATURE

### The Beginning of the End

With the price of basic staples incessantly rising, living conditions have become even more unbearable in Iran and both the urban and the rural communities are extremely restless, reports from Iran say. Despite promises to bring the situation under control, the government itself is a major contributor to price rises. Here are some examples.

The Petroleum Ministry doubled the price of gas. Shortly after, with the beginning of the new year, other government institutions followed suit. The Economic Council raised the cost of urban mail by 25%. The Supreme Council for Examination and Determination of Consumption Pattern ratified a plan according to which families who consume up to 44 cubic meters of water per month must pay an additional 25% while those who consume more must pay another 35% for water. The Ministry of Industries published a list of 439 industrial items and their prices. Market prices are lower. In Tehran, the price of a television set is 197,000 tomans in the market while the government has set its price at 205,000. As recent as April 16, bread prices were doubled in Sanandaj, Kurdistan. On April 6, the daily *Ettela'at* reported that potatoes were being sold at 90 tomans per kilo instead of the previous price of 60.

And the public is furious. "People have already given up eating beef and chicken. But they cannot stop consuming potatoes which is the main food for low income families," *Ettela'at* quoted a housewife on April 16. *Salam* referred to the public discontent on April 10: "Arguments over price control have regrettably produced nothing but nervous and mental pressure. The impact will definitely spread throughout the society." The daily blamed the authorities: "Perhaps, they think

the people will quickly get used to the new prices and maintain their calm."

But Islamshahr was a well-known trouble spot where the regime had taken extraordinary security measures to keep the "calm". On the "D" day, however, these measures proved inefficient. The mullahs are running out of time and they know it.

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