

NEWS ON IRAN

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Domestic Suppression

Ettela'at, July 12 - Two security forces precincts will commence their activities in the Security Forces Week. In the meantime, more than 60 precincts and disciplinary districts will be opened throughout the country.

Israeli radio, July 16- Interior Minister of the Islamic Republic, Ali Mohammad Besharati announced that the government's aim in issuing new passports in an expensive \$10-million project is to combat and step up control of the movements of the regime's opponents.

[Tehran radio announced July 2 that the events of the Security Forces Week included urban maneuvers to combat "symbols of Western culture," "smuggling of weapons" and drives to change passports and automobile license plates.]

Anti-Narcotics Official Hanged

Agence France Presse, July 22 - A former Iranian military official, in charge of combating drug trafficking in northeastern Iran was hanged for the possession of drugs and efforts to smuggle them. Col. Kazem Farzaneh was arrested and imprisoned two years ago.

Labor

Voice of Mojahed, July 19 - The Khomeini regime decided to dismiss 30,000 employees of the Health Ministry. The decision was reached yesterday in the Supreme Directorate Council headed by Rafsanjani. The General Secretary for administrative and employment affairs said that according to the Council's ratification, some 30,000 unnecessary jobs will be eliminated.

Kayhan, July 12 - Some 600 female workers have lost their lives in job accidents, over the past four years, revealed Nafiseh Fayazbakhsh, Majlis deputy, in an interview with *Kayhan*.

She said women suffered more accidents at work. They had 39 accidents from March to June 1993, and 70 more accidents in the following eight months.

Women's Rights

Tehran radio, July 16 - Bassiji women in the Eastern Azarbaijan Province will participate in military maneuvers. Commander of the Revolutionary Guards Corps Bassij resistance forces announced: This four-day maneuver will start today with the participation of 17,000 members of the Bassij. Seven women's battalions will be participating as reserve.

This is the first maneuver where Bassij women participate as reserve forces to prepare for countering possible natural disasters, bombardment of cities, and help in any other situation as needed.

Reuters, July 21, Geneva - A United Nations decision-making body, acting on objections by China and Iran, barred 11 activist groups on Friday from attending a world conference on women's issues in Beijing.

The ECOSOC dismissed objections to another eight Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and gave them

permission to join the Fourth World Conference on Women in September.

Spain's delegation to ECOSOC, speaking for the European Union, said the EU was "disassociating" itself from the decision to bar the 11 groups, a diplomatic step that registers protest without blocking a measure.

"The reason for excluding these NGOs was not based on the criterion approved by the General Assembly but rather on political considerations," a Spanish delegate told the ECOSOC meeting in Geneva.

The United States, Canada, Japan and several European countries joined Spain in questioning whether the 11 groups were left out because of their political beliefs.

CENTURY'S BIGGEST THEFT

One of the hottest news of Iran these days is an embezzlement case domestically called "the biggest theft of the century." Four years after the "billion-dollar" crime,* the perpetrators, including the brother of the head of *Bonyad-e Mostaz'afan* (Foundation for the Poor), the biggest business conglomerate which manages much of the Iran's industry and services, are finally put on trial. Beyond embezzlement, their charge is bankrupting the country's economy by illegal exchange of foreign currency. The trial has also become the battle ground for the regime's rival factions.

In the Friday prayer sermon of Qom on July 21, Ali Meshkini, chair of the clerical Assembly of Experts, called the fraud, "an unprecedented crime and treason" which "is not the work of one or two people."

In another part of his speech, Meshkini assailed the judiciary officials and warned them against "showing leniency" in this case and advised them to beware of getting involved. "If you show leniency at this stage, people will accuse the Judiciary of complicity in this treachery."

In the meantime, Mohammad Yazdi, the Chief Justice, used the podium of Tehran's Friday Prayer to defend the criminals and put down the fraud's significance: "The only thing missing was a 65-billion rial item, which has been already found. And the only reason we are conducting this trial is because the crime had been committed by a band and had extremely adverse impact. The case is being examined to determine the legal infringements and the punishments."

On July 22, while Mohsen Rafiqdoust, himself, had been summoned to the court to testify about the large checks he had contributed to those charged, the mullahs' leader, Ali Khamenei, appointed a board of trustees to run the affairs of the Foundation for the Poor, in a face saving gesture to limit Rafiqdoust's authorities. The Iranian Resistance sources in Iran have reported, however, that Rafiqdoust has welcomed Khamenei's measure as a step towards "resolving and answering the problems." The sources also said that the members of the newly appointed board of trustees are all members of a group called *Motalefeh* which acts as a Mafia-type band within the

regime. Khamenei's measure is therefore considered as a ploy to curb the fury of a nation, 70-80% of whom are living below the poverty line.

* The dollar exchange rate was 1200 rials at the time.