

# NEWS ON IRAN

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## DOMESTIC

### The Society

#### Strikes in north, central Iran

*Iran Zamin*, Dec. 4 - Owing to the deteriorating economic conditions which have resulted in intolerable social pressures, workers in Qa'emshahr's textile factory (northern Iran) and Isfahan's Pars and Khaam-baaft textile and Aali brick factories (central Iran) have gone on strike.

Workers at Qa'emshahr textile factory have staged a strike since Saturday, November 25, to protest lack of a raise in their wages.

#### Pars textiles

Workers at Pars textile factory in Isfahan have gone on strike since last Thursday, November 23. After the factory was transferred to the private sector, workers and employees went on strike and chanted antigovernment slogans. Originally, 33% of the factory's shares were to be given to the workers. The regime, however, has refused to do so.

#### Khaam-baaft textiles

Workers at Isfahan's Khaam-baaft textile factory have also staged a strike over the non-payment of their wages and benefits. With more than 250 workers, the factory is facing serious shortage of raw materials.

#### Aali brick factory

Workers at Isfahan's Aali brick factory have begun a strike for the non-payment of their wages. The factory was hit by a strike last month for the same reason. With more than 200 workers, the factory faces serious cash flow problems, lack of sufficient capital to obtain raw materials and shortage of funds to pay the workers wages and benefits.

#### Clamping down on government employees

Tehran radio, Dec. 5 - In a message this morning to government employees, Rafsanjani stressed that "the guardians of the system must... deal decisively with those who do not conform to norms of Islamic behavior."

#### High school students mobilized

Tehran radio, Dec. 5 - The Majlis adopted a law according to which "the Guards Corps' Bassij Resistance force will set up units of strugglers and pioneers of the students' Bassij in high schools and junior high schools to train and incorporate high school students across the country in the 20-million-strong army... for an all out defense of the Islamic Revolution."

#### Beggars facing jail terms

*Iran Zamin*, Dec. 4 - The new penal law passed by the Majlis in late November stipulates that the punishment for begging in the streets is one to three months imprisonment. There are reportedly some 100,000 beggars across the country.

#### Homes razed again

*Iran Zamin*, Dec. 4 - Reports say that Tehran's municipality has again begun demolishing people's homes in Shahr-e Ray, south of Tehran. On November 27, Protesting residents clashed with local security forces, during which a number of people were shot and killed. A homeowner, Mohammad Reza Jafari, 70, who refused to leave his house, was killed when the municipality agents razed the building. Previously, another resident, Hossein Vaseqi, 61, was killed under the rubble when the municipality demolished his house.

#### More money for suppression

*Jomhuri Islami*, Dec. 2 - The Interior Minister Ali-Mohammad Besharati announced that the budget for the State Security Forces will increase by 56% next year. This year's budget was 650 billion rials (\$371.5 million). Next year it will be 2,000 billion rials (\$1.429 bn.). The budget for the Ministry's intelligence department will rise by some 12%.

#### No bogus parties, please!

*Salaam*, Dec. 2 - If the government intends to set up a number of political parties, it would be better off by not doing so at all. It is the people who must form the parties who would in turn form the government by getting elected to the parliament, not the other way around with the government setting up bogus parties.

#### Insulting leader may cause execution

AFP, Nov. 30 - Iran's parliament adopted a new law which stipulates that those who "insult" Khomeini or Khamenei may possibly face execution. The law has also determined a two to ten-year prison term for members of "any association with more than two members formed in or out of Iran with the aim of undermining the country's security." In addition, anyone who engages in "anti-regime propaganda" will be sentenced to three months to one year in prison.

#### Rajavi: New law unprecedented

NCR Secretariat, Nov. 30 - NCR President Massoud Rajavi described the new repressive law, adopted after the nationwide maneuvers in recent weeks by the Bassij forces and the Guards Corps, as reflecting the height of the clerical regime's fear of spreading popular protests

and uprisings which pave the way for the move by the National Liberation Army of Iran.

Rajavi said: The adoption of this law illustrates that recent repressive fatwas by the regime's leader, Khamenei, and calls by other officials to hooligans, organized under the name of the Bassij, to roam the streets to persecute, harass and assault the citizenry, especially women and teenagers, have failed to curb the spread of protest actions.

### The Economy

#### New budget: Open admission of failure

AFP, Nov. 28 - Rafsanjani presented the 1375 fiscal year budget (March 1996 to March 1997) to the parliament. When taking into account the official inflation rate of 56.3%, this year's budget shows a 28% decline. While the budget for food subsidies remained the same, the defense budget increased by 30.7% relative to last year's. Rafsanjani also said that the U.S. trade ban has caused some problems for the regime.

#### Prices raging out of control

*Salaam*, Dec. 10 - A reader: When a dollar sold for 5,000 rials, I bought a pair of tires for 180,000 rials (\$36). But now that a dollar is worth 3,000 rials, the price for a pair of tires has increased to 400,000 rials (\$134).

#### Fire guts shopping mall

AP, Dec. 7 - Fire engulfed a downtown Tehran shopping mall, gutting clothing stores and trapping about 50 attendants inside. Three firemen were injured as they struggled to control the blaze. Most people trapped in the building were rescued. However, firemen were still searching for a janitor believed trapped under the debris. One of the injured firemen was in critical condition. The mall housed 200 clothing stores. Some 150 shops were gutted, and the damage was estimated to be in excess of 1 billion rials (\$330,000).

## FOREIGN

#### Iran intelligence chief sought

AP, Dec. 9 - Germany's chief federal prosecutor's office is investigating Iran's Intelligence Minister Ali Fallahian for murder, and a warrant for his arrest is expected soon. Rolf Hannich, spokesman for the chief federal prosecutor's office in Karlsruhe, confirmed that the investigation against Fallahian was opened several days ago, but provided no other details.

Fallahian is suspected of ordering the assassination of four Iranian opposition members in Berlin in 1992. An Iranian and four pro-Iranian Lebanese Shiite Muslims have been on trial in Berlin since October 1993, charged with the killings.

Prosecutors have long alleged that the Iranian, Kazem Darabi, was a secret agent directed by Fallahian to

organize the assassinations. Evidence gathered since the trial started in Berlin has further hardened the case against Fallahian.

#### Bonn should sever ties with mullahs

AFP, Dec. 10 - NCR President Massoud Rajavi called on Germany on Sunday to sever its diplomatic and economic ties with Iran.

Reacting to an announcement by the chief federal prosecutor's office in Karlsruhe concerning the opening of investigation on the Iranian Intelligence Minister, Ali Fallahian, Rajavi said: "Now that the German Judiciary has affirmed the direct role of one of the mullahs' highest-ranking officials in the Berlin assassinations, Bonn should expeditiously sever its diplomatic and economic ties with the Iranian regime."

Rajavi also called on the U.N. Security Council "to institute concrete and practical punishments, including an oil and arms embargo, against Tehran, in view of the direct role of the religious, terrorist dictatorship ruling Iran in exporting terrorism."

#### Jordan expels Mullahs' diplomat

AP, Dec. 9 - Jordan on Saturday asked a senior diplomat at the Iranian Embassy to leave the country, government sources said. One source said Saeid Bateni, a deputy chief of mission at the Iranian Embassy, was declared "*persona non grata* due to activities that are not in line with diplomatic norms."

Bateni and other embassy officials were not immediately available for comment. Jordanian officials, all of whom spoke on condition of anonymity, claimed Bateni's activities suggested he might be planning sabotage in the kingdom.

One official said Bateni visited the southern Nabatean city of Petra two weeks ago to inquire about the itineraries of Israeli tourists.

#### No to UN investigator?

Tehran radio, Dec. 8 - The head of the Judiciary, Mohammad Yazdi, speaking at the Friday prayers: "The Special Rapporteur, Mr. [Reynaldo] Galindo Pohl, came here a couple of times and prepared reports most of which were contrary to the realities. He was told if you want to come here as a tool of a certain policy, this would not constitute human rights, but rather politics. Afterwards, he was not going to come and did not come. Now, Mr. Maurice Danby Copithorne has been chosen. There were discussion as to whether he would be allowed to come to Iran or not. Within my jurisdiction, I declared that he could come, see the realities and report them as they are. But if he intends to come here as a tool of a policy of others, No, he cannot come."

#### Sham trial

*Vart Land*, Dec. 8 - Previously, the British Parliamentary Human Rights Group and other human rights groups had declared that the trial of three women accused of murdering the Iranian Christian priests did not conform to accepted international standards.

Now the British Foreign Ministry has joined them. Jeremy Hanley, MP, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, said: "A representative of the European Union Presidency attended two of the four sessions of the trial... But despite the fact that the trial was held in public it is not possible to say that justice was done. We are concerned that certain aspects of the procedure did not conform to generally accepted international standards. Examples are the publicity given to the apparent confessions made by the accused before the trial, and the impression that it was stage-managed."

**Trade ban vote scheduled**

Reuters, Dec. 7 - The Senate Banking Committee scheduled a meeting for next Tuesday to act on legislation tightening U.S. oil sanctions against Iran.

The bill, sponsored by Chairman Alfonse D'Amato (R-NY), would block non-U.S. companies that do energy related business with Iran from bidding on U.S. government contracts.

The United States in June banned trade and investment links between American companies and Iran in retaliation for Iranian opposition to the Middle East peace process and an alleged widespread Iranian threat to U.S. interests globally.