

NEWS ON IRAN

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DOMESTIC

U.N. investigator to visit Iran

Radio France International, Feb. 4 - The official news agency of the Islamic Republic of Iran in a report today confirmed that Mr. Maurice Copithorne, the UNHRC's new Special Representative on Iran will enter that country on February 10.

Israeli radio, Feb. 3 - Amnesty International issued an urgent action bulletin about the likelihood of the execution of an agricultural engineer in Iran. He is Ahmad Bakhtari, 41, who according to Amnesty International is going to be sent before the firing squad in eight days.

Labor strikes

Iran Zamin, Feb. 5 - Revolutionary Guards and Bassij forces entered a canned food factory in Behshahr (northern Mazandaran province), to force the workers into ending their strike. The workers resisted such intervention and clashed with the guards, who opened fire on them, seriously wounding two workers. Eye-witnesses said the guards' prevention of the transfer of the wounded to the hospital led to the deaths of the wounded.

The workers' strike in Behshahr's canned food factory began on January 8 to protest low wages and the factory officials' disregard of their repeated grievances.

Economy

Iran Zamin, Feb. 5 - The Iranian regime is unable to provide sufficient chemical fertilizer for the farmers. They have to purchase what they need from free market at 22,000 rials per sac, i.e., 2.5 times the price sold in the co-ops. *Iran* newspaper of Feb. 1 quoted farmers in the central province as saying their share of fertilizers for fall provides only 70% of their need.

IRTV, Jan. 31 - The director of Khorassan Province's textile industry announced that the production of hand-woven carpets had decreased 200% in the first nine months of the current year, compared to the same period last year.

Revolution Anniversary

AFP, Jan. 31 - Iran celebrates the 17th anniversary of its revolution in a gloomy atmosphere caused by economic crisis and internal disputes.

Rafsanjani, who previously described the Iranian revolution as "the greatest incident in World History", now after 17 years, has the important mandate of "showing the world that religion can run a country."

The 17th anniversary of the revolution commences amidst economic crises which have plagued the country for the past three years and caused increasing discontent

among the middle class and the deprived masses, considered as the regime's political base.

FOREIGN

Muslim, printed in Pakistan, Jan. 30 - Pakistani officials said that following the U.S. embargo on Iran, four major companies - Gas de France, France Canada, Petrol Gas, and the Dutch-English Shell company - withdrew their earlier bids for working on the Iranian project of sending gas to Pakistan.

AFP, Feb. 1 - Bahraini officials decided to expel an Iranian diplomat from Manama for activities which countered his diplomatic status.

FEATURE

The National Council of Resistance of Iran held its interim session for two days during the last week of January. The NCR released a statement about the issues discussed in the session. Excerpts follow:

The looming Majlis elections have aggravated the clerical regime's conflicts and internal disputes. Increasingly weakened, the dominant faction is trying to eliminate its rival factions from the scene.

Khamenei and his loyalists find the only way to preserve their dominance in further monopolization of power. By adding to the authority of the Council of Guardians, the ruling faction is making every effort to get rid of, and impose more and more restrictions on, its internal rivals.

Though in dire need of putting up a show of democracy for external consumption, the Khomeini regime has nevertheless been forced to exert pressure and impose restrictions, even on its partners within the government, in the preliminary stage of the elections.

Regardless of the outcome, this elections will ultimately weaken the entire regime and escalate its internal crises. Much of the existing evidence suggests that the election farce will solidify the ruling faction's hold and eliminate or undermine the competing faction in the Majlis. Such a development will exacerbate the conflicts between Khamenei and the mullahs in Qom's seminaries. Even if the dominant faction fails to sweep aside its rivals, the outcome will not ease any of the brewing schisms and feuding within the regime as a whole.

Looking to the Resistance and its growing stature as the source of all of its difficulties and crises, the mullahs have spared no effort in recent months to strike the Resistance with military blows and plot conspiracies against it in the international arena. Especially after the trip to Norway of the Resistance's President-elect, the regime's Ministry of Intelligence spent enormous sums

and devoted tremendous time and energy to accuse the Resistance movement of "violations of human rights." It thus unleashed a major smear campaign through its agents of Ministry of Intelligence disguised as former members of the Mojahedin. It also tried to intimidate the

Resistance's sympathizers and prevent their moral and material support for the movement. These conspiracies display the extent of the regime's desperation and its deadly impasse in the face of the Resistance's remarkable advances in recent months.