

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said building schools by philanthropists across the country is becoming institutionalized as a culture. See Page 2



Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan will set up three joint border centers to control smuggling of drugs and chemicals needed for the production of heroin, a senior Afghan official said on Monday. See Page 2



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## US Backs Off On Arms Claims



13

There is no evidence to support claims that weapons used by Iraqi insurgents are provided by Iran and the US is padding back on the allegation, the Los Angeles Times has reported.

## Africa Warned About Food Prices



14

The African Development Bank warned on Sunday that the near doubling of prices of some staple food crops in recent months had serious implications for Africa, particularly the poorest nations.

## Iran 2nd at Turkey Taekwondo



15

The Iranian side finished runner-up at the World Junior Taekwondo Championship events in Izmir, Turkey. Iranian contenders snatched two golds and a silver medal to take the second spot on the table in the seventh round of World

## Film on Imam Sadr Planned



16

An Iranian director is to film a biopic about Imam Musa Sadr, the Iranian-born Lebanese philosopher and Shiite religious leader.

# UK Ambassador Summoned



Iran's Foreign Ministry summoned British ambassador in Tehran to protest a UK court verdict for removing the notorious Mujahideen Khalq Organization from the list of terrorist groups.

Geoffery Adams was questioned by Deputy Foreign Minister for European Affairs Mehdi Safari about the British court's surprising decision.

Expressing Iran's strong criticism of the ruling, Safari said, "The UK appeal court's measure shows the British double standards regarding terrorism, which discredits the government that claims to be fighting a war on terror."

He referred to the number of crimes committed by MKO during the last three decades in Iran, including bombing and killing of civilians and officials, noting that the court's ruling was a politically-motivated act.

The Iranian senior diplomat called on the British government to obstruct the ruling in order to prevent the consequences of the illegal decision on the two countries' relations.

He called the British ambassador to convey Iran's harsh criticism to his country's officials. Adams, for his part, stressed that the stand of the UK government toward the terrorist nature of the MKO has not changed.

"We still recognize this group (MKO) as a terrorist organization," he said.

02 >

## Perspective

### Name of the Game

By Seyyed Mohiyeddin Sajedi

Even before the end of Emile Lahoud's tenure as president of Lebanon, it was clear that "a gentleman's agreement" would help overcome the power vacuum and heal the rift between internal and external parties. This depends on a change in regional equations and the relations of influential powers with each other.

The French plan, launched before the end of Lahoud's tenure and lingered till the final days of 2007, merely set guidelines for the domestic parties involved in the crisis. It actually paved the way for the continuation of the vacuum in a way that no change would take place in internal equations.

The only element common to the French and Arab plans was that Fouad Siniora's government would remain in power without approving any important ratification, the opposition will not attempt to change the status quo and both the sides know their limitations in case of a crisis.

In the meantime, the role of what America calls the axis of moderation, comprising of the six member-states of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council, plus Egypt, Jordan and Israel, became more distinct. The crux of the matter is that Hezbollah is viewed as a source of nuisance vis-à-vis the implementation of American plans not only in Lebanon but also in the entire region and its destruction or weakened status can affect the position of Iran in the region.

After Israel escaped from Lebanon in May 2000 and its defeat in the 33-day war in 2006, the balance of power in Lebanon tilted toward the resistance movement, namely Hezbollah and its allies. In order to confront this situation, about a year ago, the US dispatched one of its army commanders to Beirut to monitor militia operations and pave the grounds for another tumult.



## Afghanistan Appreciates Iran Role

Afghanistan's ambassador in Tehran has thanked Iran for helping restore peace and security to his country.

3

## China Quake Toll Exceeds 8,000

A massive earthquake struck central China on Monday, killing over 8,000 people in a single county and trapping nearly 900 students under the rubble of their school, the state media reported.

The official Xinhua News Agency said 80 percent of the buildings had collapsed in Beichuan county in Sichuan province after the 7.8-magnitude quake.

AP reported that 8,533 people had died in Beichuan, which has a population of 160,000, raising fears the overall death toll could increase sharply. Another 10,000 people were believed to be hurt.

Foreign Ministry Spokesman Mohammad Ali Hosseini expressed Iran's condolences to the Chinese people and government over the tragedy. On behalf of the Iranian nation and government, Hosseini sympathized with the relatives of the tragic incident and hoped for the recovery of the wounded.

The earthquake sent thousands of people rushing out of buildings and into the streets hundreds of miles away in Beijing and Shanghai. The tremor was felt as far away as Pakistan, Vietnam and Thailand.

Rescuers had recovered at least 50 bodies from the debris of the school building in Juyuan township, about 60 miles from the epicenter. Xinhua did not say if any student had been pulled out alive.

An unknown number of students also were reported buried after buildings collapsed at five other schools in Deyang city in Sichuan, Xinhua reported.

It said its reporters saw buried teenagers struggling to break loose from underneath the rubble of the three-story building in Juyuan "while others were crying out for help".

The earthquake comes less than three months before the start of the Beijing Summer Olympics, when China hopes to use to showcase its rise in the world.

Shanghai's main index inched up Monday, but the advance was capped by worries over inflation and potential damage from the earthquake.

Analysts said that shares of companies located in the Sichuan region may fall in coming sessions due to the quake. It struck in the middle of the afternoon when classes and office towers were full, about 60 miles north-west of Chengdu. There were several smaller aftershocks, the US Geological Survey said on its website.

02 >

10 >

