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'Tolou' Set for February Launch

>> Anti-Sedition Rally

A group of people in the holy city of Qom held a rally on Wednesday against what they said were "Sedition and insults by radicals of the Islamic Republic's fundamental values". See Page 2

Japanese Nuclear Plant



03

Iran's top nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili who is visiting Japan, toured the city of Hiroshima and the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa Nuclear Power Plant, the largest peaceful nuclear facility in the world.

Fischer as Consultant



04

Joschka Fischer, the former Green Party leader, German foreign minister and Princeton professor, is aware of the irony in his latest career move: strategic consultant for a transnational pipeline.

Israeli Threat



09

Israel has threatened another massive war against the Gaza Strip, as the impoverished enclave continues to suffer in the aftermath of the devastating January offensive.

New Head



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Iran's Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution on Tuesday evening fired Mir Hossein Mousavi from his post as head of the Academy of Arts.

Shiites in unusually large numbers were converging on the shrine of Imam Hussein (AS), the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the Third Imam of Shiites, in Karbala (Iraq) to mourn his martyrdom anniversary.

Mourning Imam Hussein

The Imam's martyrdom on the 10th of the lunar month of Muharram, known as Ashura, falls on Dec. 27. On that day and on Dec. 26 (Saturday) mourning ceremonies are held by millions of his black-clad followers and disciples throughout the world.

Imam Hussein (AS) and his 72 companions were martyred in the deserts of Karbala for refusing to take an oath of allegiance to Yazid, the tyrant ruler of the time. Iran Daily expresses its heartfelt condolences to Muslims on this sad occasion.

Our next issue will be on the news-stands on Dec. 28.



Iran is to launch a new national satellite called Tolou (sunrise) in February.

The new generation national satellite called Tolou will be launched during the Ten-Day Dawn Ceremonies commemorating the victory of the 1979 Islamic Revolution. IRIB quoted Defense Minister Ahmad Vahidi as saying on Wednesday.

The satellite has been designed and built by Iranian scientists at the Electronics Industries Co. (Sa-Iran).

The Shiraz based firm has been a key player in meeting Iran's radar and defense needs.

"Achievements made by the Defense Ministry in the electronics field has both increased Iran's deterrent power and ended the monopoly of some countries in this complex sector," he noted.

According to the minister, Iran's armed forces can now pinpoint enemies' software and hardware movements with the use of modern equipment.

In February, Tehran successfully launched a lightweight telecommunications satellite, its first home-made satellite called Omid (hope), into space via an Iranian satellite carrier known as Safir 2.

In November the head of the Aerospace Industries Organization (AIO), Mehdi Farahi, said Iran will launch its second research satellite-- called Mesbah (Lantern) -- in 2011.

President Predicts Fall of Capitalism

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said on Wednesday that the capitalist system in the western world "will collapse" sooner rather than later.

Addressing a group of local officials in Shiraz, he said the world needs a new and workable order.

"It is visible that any thought built on military power will collapse."

According to the president the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979 changed the balance of power and "global equations",

IRNA reported.

Referring to the Middle East as the "most important region" in the world, he said Iran is an influential player in the region.

Underlining the need for meaningful economic development in the southern Fars province, he called on provincial officials to make extra efforts to that end.

Stressing the role and significance of administration of justice, the President vowed the government would support any efforts to solve the existing problems facing the people in the province.

Senator, 5 Civilians Killed in Afghanistan

An Afghan senator was killed when he drove through a police ambush set for Taliban militants in northern Afghanistan on Wednesday, officials said.

Mohammad Younus--also known as Shirin Agha, or Dear Sir--was going home in the early hours when he was shot dead in Puli Khumri, capital of troubled northern Baghlan province, Mohammad Akbar Barikzai told AFP.

Barikzai said Younus, a member of Afghanistan's upper house of parliament representing Baghlan, failed to stop at a police checkpoint set up as part of a planned ambush of Taliban militants.

"They continued to drive after being ordered by police to stop so the police opened fire," an interior ministry statement said.

"Unfortunately the senator and his driver were killed and a third person accompanying them was wounded," it said.

President Hamid Karzai ordered an "immediate" investigation into Younus's killing, his office said.

The Afghan senate called his death a "huge loss for the parliament".

The security situation in northern Afghanistan has deteriorated this year with government authority consistently challenged by Taliban-linked insurgents.

Around 113,000 international troops under US and NATO command are battling the intensifying insurgency, with a new strategy aiming to hand over more authority to Afghan security forces.

In the past four years, direct fire or suicide attacks have killed one senator and 10 other MPs.

Wednesday's incident is the first in which Afghan police have killed a senator accidentally.

In southern Afghanistan, a bomb attached to a parked motorcycle ripped through a crowded bazaar, killing three civilians and wounding five in the Nad Ali district of Helmand province, a provincial spokesman said.

Two civilians were killed and three wounded when their vehicle struck a roadside bomb in Takhta Pull district of neighboring Kandahar province, the interior ministry said.

In the west, two Taliban militants were killed when the bomb they were planting on a road exploded in Gulistan district, Farah province, provincial police chief Faqir Ahmad Askar told AFP.

World Leaders Invited To MDG Summit

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called on world leaders to attend a summit next September in New York to boost efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

07

Iranians Design Nanostructured Gates

Iranian researchers at Shiraz University designed nanostructured gates that can be used in quantum computers. Quantum calculations help solve equations...

08

Brown to Testify Before Iraq Inquiry

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown won't testify before his country's investigation of the Iraq war until after the next general election, the committee behind the inquiry said Wednesday.

The Iraq Inquiry, which is investigating the 2003 US-led invasion, said Brown and other senior ministers wouldn't be quizzed until after the election in an effort to keep proceedings clear of party politics, AP reported.

"The committee believes that only after the general election can these ministers give their evidence fully without the hearings being used as a platform for political advantage," it said in a statement.

A general election--which is widely expected to sweep Brown's ruling Labour Party out of office--must be held some time before the middle of 2010.

Brown set up the official inquiry following the withdrawal of British forces from Iraq earlier this year.

> Not Apportioning Blame

British critics of the invasion had long demanded an investigation into whether the war, which has been extremely unpopular in Britain, was illegal. Many were disappointed when it was announced that the inquiry had no power to apportion blame or establish criminal or civil liability. The easygoing tone of questioning has also been criticized.

Its mandate is limited to offering recommendations on how to prevent a repeat of the mistakes that dogged the invasion and its bloody aftermath.

02

Hamas Studying Israeli Response to Prisoner Swap

A German mediator gave Hamas on Wednesday an Israeli response to a proposed swap freeing hundreds of jailed Palestinians for a captured soldier, and the resistance group said it would need days to review the new draft.

Signaling a possible breakthrough, a Hamas official said he expected the group to send a delegation from the Gaza Strip to Damascus by Thursday to meet exiled Hamas leaders. Such rare conferences are reserved by Hamas for important policymaking, Reuters reported.

Israel kept a lid on which of the Hamas demands it may meet to recover Gilad Shalit, an army conscript who has become a cause celebre during 3-1/2 years' captivity in Hamas-ruled Gaza.

Security cabinet minister Eli Yishai reiterated Israel's misgivings over a prisoner amnesty likely to boost Hamas, which spurs peace with the Jewish regime and is in a power struggle with western-backed Palestinian Authority Chief Mahmoud Abbas.

"We always say 'not at any price' because otherwise our enemies would exploit it. But on the other hand, we have to make every possible effort," Yishai told Israel's Army Radio.

"Where is the middle ground? I think any further (public) words about this would be excessive."

Under the proposed exchange, about 1,000 of the nearly 11,000 Palestinians held in Israeli prisons would be released.

Officials familiar with the negotiations said Israel had ruled out releasing a handful of top Palestinian fighters serving life sentences for orchestrating lethal attacks.

02

