

Iraqi MPs To Visit

BAGHDAD, Iraq, July 1—Iraqi Parliament Speaker Mahmoud Al-Mashhadani is to visit Tehran on Monday.

Announcing his upcoming visit during a meeting with Iranian Ambassador to Baghdad Hassan Kazemi-Qomi, Al-Mashhadani said he will head a 30-member delegation during the visit for consolidating bilateral parliamentary cooperation, IRNA reported.

He noted that his visit is upon the invitation of his Iranian counterpart, Gholamali Haddad-Adel, adding that he will be accompanied by a number of commission heads of Iraq's parliament and a team of news reporters.

He further said his visit to Tehran will be his first since his election in April and shows the significance Iraq attaches to its ties with Iran.

The speaker said that heads of different factions in the Iraqi Parliament, including the Shiite coalition, Kurds and Sunnis will also be accompanying him.

"The Iraqi side is determined to hold talks with senior Iranian officials on all issues of mutual

interest," he said.

Pointing to the escalation of tensions in Iraq, Al-Mashhadani stressed that the Iraqi people's expectations of Muslim figures have increased and Iraqi officials were under pressure to remove the nation's concerns.

The Iranian ambassador, during the meeting, submitted Haddad-Adel's invitation for Al-Mashhadani to visit Iran, and expressed Tehran's support for the political process that led to the establishment of a popular government in Iraq.

Kazemi-Qomi voiced his country's readiness to boost cooperation with Iraq in all fields.

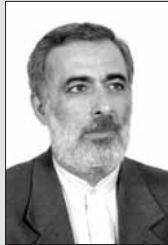
"Tehran would be the venue for the 7th Conference of Asian Parliaments for Peace which will open on August 21," he said.

Meshaal, MP Review Palestinian Developments

DAMASCUS, Syria, July 1—A parliamentary met with the head of Hamas Political Bureau Khaled Meshaal here on Saturday and reviewed latest developments in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Hossein Sheikhholeslam, Majlis representative in the committee supporting the Islamic Revolution of the Palestinian nation, condemned the savage attacks of the Zionist Israeli regime on Palestinians, ISNA reported.

"The infrastructure and economy of Palestine



Hossein Sheikhholeslam

have been destroyed and a number of innocent civilians martyred," he said.



Khaled Meshaal

The MP added that several Palestinian officials and activists, including eleven ministers and law-

makers, have been abducted by the Israelis.

Sheikhholeslam hailed the resistance of the Palestinian nation against the pressures and assaults of the Israelis, stressing the support of Iranian Parliament to the government and nation of the occupied Palestine.

"These attacks are carried out upon the confirmation of the US government to damage the economic ability of the elected government of Palestine," he said, hoping for the success of Palestinians through their resistance.

Imam's Grandson in Damascus

DAMASCUS, Syria, July 1—Grandson of the late Imam Khomeini, Seyyed Hassan Khomeini, arrived in Syria late Friday for a three-day visit.

Mohammad Nasif, political assistant of Syrian vice president, and Iranian ambassador to

Syria, Mohammad Hassan Akhtari, welcomed Seyyed Hassan Khomeini upon his arrival at Damascus airport, IRNA reported.

Khomeini's grandson is scheduled to meet Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad. Imam's grandson will

visit Syria's holy shrines, including those of Hazrat Zeinab (SA), the prophet's granddaughter, and Hazrat Roqayyeh (SA), the daughter of Imam Hossein (AS).

Khomeini is also expected to visit the tomb of Hafez Al-Assad, the former Syrian president, in

the Syrian city of Qardahah as well as Halab.

Halab has many historical and valuable sites and is regarded Syria's cultural and commercial capital.

Seyyed Hassan Khomeini will then travel to Jordan next Tuesday. Hassan Khomeini



Former Chief of 'Iran' Summoned

Daily Awaiting Investigation

TEHRAN, July 1—Former managing director of the Persian daily 'Iran' has been summoned to Tehran Penal Court's Branch 76 on Sunday to face charges related to his tenure.

Presiding Judge Mohammad Saremi said the court will review accusations against Abdolrasoul Vessal in an open session, ISNA reported.

Asked about the daily's continuing suspension, he said the dossier was received by the court last

week and is awaiting investigation.

On May 23, 'Iran' was closed down temporarily by the Press Supervisory Board after its Friday supplement 'Iran Jomeh' printed a provocative cartoon and article that were considered offensive to the Turkish-speaking people of east and west Azarbaijan provinces.

Last week, Tehran's Prosecutor Saeed Mortazavi in a letter to culture minister referred to the verdict issued by the court in charge of the

dossier and declared that the daily can be reopened. The newspaper has not so far resumed its activities because of the board's objection.

Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad Hossein Saffar-Harandi said recently that the ban on the daily will be lifted "at an appropriate occasion".

He pointed out that members of parliament and Azari people have written letters to the government calling for reopening the newspaper.

Judicial Delegates Meet Swiss Counterparts

VIENNA, Austria, July 1—An Iranian judicial delegation met with judicial officials of Switzerland on Friday to exchange views and experiences that may be mutually beneficial, IRNA reported.

Alireza Avaei, who is chief of Tehran's Justice Department, headed the Iranian

delegation that met with human rights officials of the Swiss Foreign Ministry, the attorney general of Bern and a number of Swiss authorities.

The delegation explained recent developments and reforms undertaken in the Iranian judicial system. They also visited a Swiss prison.

Militants Blow Up Pak-Iran Railroad

QUETTA, Pakistan, July 1—Suspected tribal militants, fighting for greater political and economic autonomy, blew up a railroad line linking southwestern Pakistan to Iran early on Saturday, a railway official said.

Four bombs exploded at the railroad track near the town of Noshki in southern Balochistan province several hours before the train bound for the Iranian border town of Zahedan was due to pass. Noshki is 60 miles (100 km) southwest of Quetta, capital of Baluchistan.

"The train was stopped shortly after it left Quetta. No one was hurt in the blast," Mohammad Mushtaq, a senior railway official in Quetta, told Reuters.

He said a fifth bomb remained unexploded and efforts were being made to defuse it.

"No one claimed responsibility for the blasts, but the government has previously blamed Baloch militants for such attacks. Balochistan, bordering Iran and Afghanistan, is the largest but the poorest of Pakistan's four

provinces and has the country's largest gas and oil reserves.

Baloch militants regularly blow up railroad links, gas pipelines and power pylons, and launch attacks on government buildings and army bases to press for their demands for more benefits from oil and gas exploration. The simmering revolt escalated in December when rebels fired rockets during a visit by Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf to the town of Kohlu.

Last Week

Road Mishaps Claim 112 Lives



Of the 663 accidents last week, 73 resulted in death and 590 in injuries. (Fars File Photo)

TEHRAN, July 1—A senior police official Hadi Hashemi said on Saturday 112 people were killed and 899 injured in car accidents across the country last week.

This is while 68 were killed and 818 injured in accidents during the previous week.

Superintendent of Highway Police Brigadier General Hashemi also told IRNA that of the 663 accidents last week, 73 resulted in death and 590 in

injuries. The official blamed diversion to the left (22%), over-speeding (19.5%), disregard of other vehicles' right to cross (18.5%), sleepiness and fatigue (20.4%) and other factors (19.1%) for the road mishaps.

Hashemi added that the vehicles involved in the accidents were sedans and pickups (52.3%), motorcycles (27.5%), lorries (12%), pedestrians (5.7%) and other vehicles (2.5%).

Syria Detains Bomb Suspects

DAMASCUS, Syria, July 1—Syria detained several Iranian Arab rebels who are suspected of carrying out bomb attacks in Iran, a human rights group said, voicing concern over their fate if they are handed over to Damascus's regional ally Tehran.

"The Syrian authorities have arrested several officials of the Avhaz Arab People's Democratic-Popular Front living in exile in Damascus, including the movement's spokesman Taher Ali Mazraa," the chairman of the Syrian Organization for Human Rights, Mohammad Al-Hassani, told AFP.

"We demand the release of the Avhazi citizens and call on the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to assume its responsibilities by intervening

with the Syrian authorities to prevent the prisoners being delivered up to Iran."

The UN agency already expressed concern on June 6 for the safety of four Iranian Arab exiles previously detained in Syria, after one refugee who had qualified for resettlement in Europe was forcibly repatriated by Damascus.

In late May, Iran said that Syria and neighboring Turkey had arrested several individuals suspected of involvement in a recent bombing campaign in the Arab-majority southwestern city of Avhaz and that it was seeking their extradition.

Avhaz was rocked by ethnic riots in April 2005 and a string of car bombings in the run-up to the June 2005 presidential election, followed by more bomb attacks in October last year and January this year.

Persian Press Watch

Bourse

HAMBASTEGI: Recent Saudi economic developments show its bourse is improving after several months of decline along with investment risks in the oil kingdom. Saudi monetary officials have recently announced that privatization of bourse sector and relocation of the huge stock market to King Abdullah District in Riyadh should be seen as another development for improving the conditions of the bourse. Most managers involved in some way in the decline of the Saudi stock market that sent shock waves across the country and the region have now lost their jobs. The main causes behind the decline in the bourse were negligence towards the basic principles of investment by newcomers and huge long-term loans offered by banks. A glance at the Saudi bourses shows similarities with Iranian stock markets. The negative impact of the abrupt decline in bourse indexes in Iran was worse than that seen in Saudi Arabia. To help give a boost to the jittery stock market it is incumbent that the government curb its role in it and make more space for private enterprise.

Turning Point

ABRAR: Recent operations by Palestinian resistance fighters should be regarded a turning point in the history of their anti-Israeli campaign in the occupied territories. These operations resulted in the capture of an Israeli soldier and death of a number of Zionist military personnel. Although the Zionists claim that they killed the Palestinian fighters, it is not yet known how they justify the abduction of the Israeli soldier. The kidnappers have emphasized that they will only release the soldier in exchange for the freedom of Palestinian women and children held in Israeli dungeons. Role of organizations that claim to be supporters of human rights is noteworthy here. For instance, human rights organizations should have at least issued statements condemning the abduction of Palestinian women and children before the Palestinians attempted to kidnap the Israeli soldier. The bottom line is that the role of human rights organizations is quite vague when it comes to supporting human rights around the world.

Mixed Reactions

ASR-E EQTESAD: After 50 prominent professors of economics issued an open letter to President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the government, Majlis, experts and the press showed a mixed reaction. Majlis Speaker Gholamali Haddad-Adel asked the government to respond to the issues raised by the group. On the other hand, two members of the so-called Majlis economic faction, Mohammad Khoshchereh and Elias Naderan who themselves were signatories of the rare letter began to criticize it. Economic journal and broadsheets wrote articles in favor of and against the missive. However, what is noteworthy is the manner in which the government spokesman, Gholamhossein Elham, reacted. Although Elham asserted that the government would seek the advice of economists before responding, he also said that the letter has been politicized. This is while signatories of the critical letter do not have any political affiliations. Even if they have, they are from different factions.

Import Constraints

DONYA-YE EQTESAD: It so happens that at times even the most important decisions have little influence on the conditions of a society. But sometimes even a small policy shift can have considerable and unexpected effects. For example, many decisions by the government in the field of communications did not help the key sector to improve. It was for this same reason and changing government policies that importers of communication equipment normally faced hurdles in the past four years. Furthermore, the government decision to increase tariffs on imported cellular phones was another blow. However, after telecommunication experts and officials argued that high tariffs undermine both the interest of the government and consumers, it seems that the government has decided to revise its decision to boost the highly controversial cell phone import tariffs. It was evident from the outset that the government decision to raise the stakes and make imports more expensive would not be helpful.