

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18

**Terrorist attacks kill over 40**

IRIB reported 42 people were killed, including 37 civilians, and five commanders of Iran's elite Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps and dozens of other people were wounded on Sunday in two bombings in the city of Pishin, in southeastern province of Sistan-Balouchistan bordering Pakistan. The Baluchi Sunni insurgent group Jundallah took responsibility for the bombings.

Iranian officials on Monday said they have evidence of American, British and Pakistani involvement in the terrorist attack. Foreign Ministry late Sunday summoned Pakistan's charge d'affaires.

In a televised message President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad urged Pakistani authorities to hand over the "real people behind the heinous act", who are believed to be stationed in Pakistan.

Pakistani army kills 60 Taliban in S. Waziristan

About 30,000 soldiers took on a ground assault on some 10,000 militants dug in South Waziristan in a ground offensive that was launched on Saturday. By Sunday the Pakistan Army said 60 militants and five soldiers had been killed in 24 hours.

The assault also raises concerns of another refugee crisis in the middle of the winter season.

Geneva talks baseless: Shariatmadari

Kayhan's English daily Hussein Shariatmadari in an editorial expressed his dismay calling the Geneva talks between Iran and the Group 5+1 baseless.

He pointed out that "this encounter which lasted about 40 minutes" cannot be defined as "negotiation." Shariatmadari added that the "so-called reform camp in Iran - whose top priority is to hold talks with the U.S. - moan about not being given the chance to hold such talks in the past!"

He points out that such macro policies under Article 110 of the Constitution can only be decided by the Supreme leader.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 19

**Iran to unveil Mideast's 1st hybrid bus**

Omid Shakeri, vice president of Iranian Fuel Conservation Organization's Research and Technology Center, announced that the first electric hybrid bus will be unveiled next month. The research work was carried out by Isfahan's Industrial University with the support of Iran Khodro.

The first Iranian electric two-seater was unveiled last September.

Larijani in Geneva

Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani arrived in Geneva on Sunday to attend the 121st General Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Parliamentarians from 120 countries are to discuss various issues, including terrorism, human trafficking and organized crime.

Larijani, who was re-elected to the post by the parliamentarians recently, delivered a keynote speech on Monday. The Iranian and Iraqi delegation walked out in protest when the Zionist regime representative took the podium.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20

**Hypermarket's success in Tehran attracts other brand**

According to a Financial Times report on average some 10,000 customers shop daily at the hypermarket, which is located in the middle-class area of western Tehran. Italy's Geox and United Colors of Benetton, Spain's Mango and Hong Kong-based Esprit are to open shops as well.

The UAE-based group Majid al-Futtaim has invested \$60m in the store, which opened in August for a trial period. Hyperstar plans to open 15 branches by 2015 in five cities. Two are due to launch in central Tehran and the southern city of Shiraz next year.

The supermarket mostly uses domestically produced goods, but it provides customers with offers such as "buy two get one free", a new concept in Iran.

S. Arabia, Zionists biggest ME arms buyers

According to a report released by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Saudi Arabia and Israel have the highest military expenditure in the Middle East.

Saudi Arabia which spent \$38.2 billion in 2008 is world's ninth military spender.

SIPRI was founded in 1966 to commemorate 150 years of unbroken peace in Sweden.

U.S.-Iranian scholar gets jail term

A court sentenced Kian Tajbakhsh, who was detained after the June 12 elections, to more than 12 years in jail, his lawyer Houshang Azhari told IRNA.

Flip flop in nuclear talks

Ali Asghar Soltanieh, right, the Iranian ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency, arrived for talks in Vienna with representatives from France, Iran, Russia and the United States.

(Photo by Samuel Kubani/AFP)

Tehran Times Political Desk

Iran expressed pessimism on the proposal when Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani told the Majlis on Saturday afternoon that the West is trying to trick Iran to give away its supply of low enriched uranium (LEU).

"My guess is that Americans have secret dealings with certain countries to take 4.5 percent enriched uranium from us under the pretext of providing nuclear fuel (to us)... we hope Iranian officials will pay necessary attention to this issue," Larijani told ISNA on Saturday.

The October 1 meeting between Iran and Group 5+1 (U.S., Russia, China, France, the UK and Germany) in Geneva had two important implications: facilitation of Monday's inspection of the Fordoo nuclear enrichment site by IAEA, and last week's meeting in IAEA headquarters in Vienna between Iran, Russia, U.S. and France.

International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors are due to arrive on Sunday to have a look at the Fordoo nuclear enrichment plant near Qom on Monday.

The IAEA inspectors have asked Iran for far more than a look. They want engineering drawings and permission to interview scientists. Iran has so far not officially responded but the chief nuclear negotiator, Saeed Jalili told reporters in Tehran after returning from the Geneva that the plant can be inspected within the framework of IAEA regulations

and the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

After three days of deliberations between Iran, Russia, France and U.S. a tentative agreement was reached to ship three-quarters (1,200 kg/2,600 pounds) of Iran's stockpiles of the five percent enriched uranium to Russia for conversion into 20 percent, a form that could be used in Tehran Research Reactor, which makes medical isotopes.

Iran was represented by its Ambassador to IAEA, Ali-Asghar Soltanieh who told reporters on Friday that Iran would require one week to study this proposal and make a decision.

"After final evaluation, I will inform Elbaradei next week as soon as I return to Vienna about the result (of our evaluation)," he noted.

Washington, Moscow, and Paris expressed their support for the arrangement on Friday.

Prior to the meeting, Press TV reported that Iran would not hold direct talks with France in Vienna for failing to deliver its nuclear materials in the past.

Iran media reaction

The nuclear negotiations made first page headlines on Thursday in all the major newspapers in Tehran. Here are some of them:

Tehran mayor Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf's personal Tehran Emrouz Farsi daily's lead: The first nuclear agreement with three world powers / Deal with Russia, nego-

tations with U.S. and conflict with France.

Conservative state-owned Farsi daily Iran: Draft of nuclear agreement with Russia and U.S.

Reformist Etemad and state-owned Ettelaat had the same headlines: Russia in-charge of providing Iran with nuclear fuel.

Kayhan Farsi, which is Iran's official newspaper, in its lead writes that Vienna meeting was without any finalized agreement. The English language Kayhan International's headline: Iran upholds nuclear upper hand.

State-owned Iran Daily writes "ElBaradei presents draft deal: Awaiting affirmative action".

Privately owned Iran News: Soltanieh: Russia responsible for fuel supply to Tehran reactor.

Next step

Nuclear energy agency spokesman Ali Shirzadian said last week it was not "economically feasible" for Iran to further purify low enriched uranium (LEU) itself to yield the 150-300 kg of material that it needs for the reactor, but that it would do so if the Vienna talks "do not bring about Iran's desired result."

The negotiators in Geneva had agreed that their deputies would meet prior to the next high level meeting which was tentatively set for the end of October. The approval of the draft agreement by Iran will pave the way for the next high level meeting between Iran and Group 5+1.

Karzai pressured to accept run-off**Tehran Times Political Desk**

A mid pressure from the U.S. and its allies Hamid Karzai, Afghanistan's president, on Tuesday accepted the results of the international audit which gave him less than the 50 percent threshold he needed for an outright victory. The run-off election date is set for November 7.

Senator John Kerry, a key foreign policy advisor to U.S. President Barack Obama, made a last-minute stop in Kabul on Monday night, en route from Pakistan to convince Karzai to accept the result of the panel.

Earlier Obama made a point to Karzai that he will not make a decision to add on to the 68,000 U.S. troops stationed in Afghanistan until Karzai accepts the election outcome.

After more than nine weeks of waiting the IEC announced Monday that Karzai had won only 49.7 percent instead of 54.6 percent counted earlier. The electoral commission annulled the results of the 447 of the polling stations, invalidating some one third of Karzai's votes.

Karzai's main challenger Abdullah Abdullah called him to offer his congratulations for his decision. Abdullah, who trailed behind Karzai with 27.8 percent, said on Wednesday that he would take part in run-off vote but called for better procedures to avoid fraud.

There are two main questions immediately ahead for Afghanistan's electoral commission. First, how to avoid electoral-rigging during the run-off?

As a measure to ensure free and fair election next month the UN mission in Afghanistan said Wednesday that more than half of the 200 district field coordinators from the government appointed IEC will be replaced.

Kai Edie, the UN special representative in Afghanistan says, "Can we stop fraud? No, we cannot, but we can reduce it." Electoral officials also point out that in November there will be only two candidates instead of 41 in the first round.



Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai (left) formally announces a run-off vote at a press conference, joined by Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Sen. John Kerry.

There are also plans to reduce the number of polling stations from 6,300 to 5,800, eliminating those located in insecure areas.

Logistics will be the second challenge facing the November 7 run-off. The Telegraph daily reported that a fleet of 3,500 trucks will be needed to carry voting materials to the polling stations and 3,000 donkeys to get people to

remote areas.

A large part of the more than 32 million Afghans are eligible to vote, however the turnout for the first round was about 38 percent. Threats from Taliban will certainly be made again. However, this time another hurdle will be the winter climate.

Karzai became the first popularly elected president of Afghanistan in 2004, after he was appointed the interim leader in December 2001 following the American invasion of Afghanistan. In the past few years his popularity plunged due to allegations of corruption and lack of security in the country. Apart from Kabul most of Afghanistan is in the hands of the Taliban or warlords.

Born in 1960 in the city of Kabul Abdullah is an ophthalmologist by training. He has his roots in the Kandahar province and served as a Senator during the last years of Afghanistan's monarchy. He became an advisor and companion to the country's Mujahedeen leader, the late Ahmad Shah Massoud. From 1992-96 he served as spokesperson for the Defense Ministry under President Burhanuddin Rabbani. During the Taliban regime, he served as a caretaker of the Foreign Ministry for the government-in-exile from 1999 until the collapse of the Taliban.

After the overthrow of Taliban in 2001, Abdullah served as a foreign minister in Karzai's cabinet until 2006.

Whoever comes to power after the November 7 run-off will have to deal with the problem of widespread systemic corruption in his administration and security in Afghanistan.



WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21

Swine flu claims 16th victim

One student has died of swine flu, bringing the death toll from H1N1 virus to 16 across the country, the Iranian Deputy Health Minister announced here on Wednesday.

"1,194 persons have been diagnosed with the A flu virus" since the outbreak of the disease in the Islamic Republic on June 22, Hassan Emami-Razavi said.

"Six patients have died of the disease over the last week, bringing the country's total death rate from the disease to 16," Emami-Razavi lamented. He also spoke of the flu pandemic in winter, and recommended that people with H1N1 flu avoid contact with others as much as possible.

Meanwhile the fear of H1N1 virus has prompted nearly 2,500 school closings through out Iraq, in what officials have called overreaction.

Majlis approves food subsidy cuts

Iran's parliament approved the proposal to phase out food subsidies with 154 votes in favor, 14 against and 10 abstentions. Subsidies on products like wheat, rice, sugar and oil will be gradually phased out in five years but the bill excluded medicine subsidies, reported state radio.

On Monday the parliament approved a plan to cut energy subsidies in order to bring the prices closer to the international market.

The bills require Guardian Council's approval before implementation. But reactions to the news have already started. State-owned Jame Jam daily quoted Deputy Energy Minister, Abbas Aliabadi saying the end price of electricity per kilowatt hour is 45 toman and with subsidy it is billed at 7.60 toman. So if subsidies are removed gradually within five years in today's price electricity would be billed at 45 toman/kw hour.

Last year the funds for subsidy was allocated from the FOREX basket of the country. However, Aliabadi pointed out that this year we're not allowed to use FOREX and the Energy Ministry is bound to face budget deficits.



THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22

Iran has not paid Russia in "Frozen" missile deal

AFP citing a Russian government source said that Iran has not yet paid Russia in a controversial contract for advanced S-300 anti-aircraft missiles. The official points out that despite the fact that the contract was signed several years ago Iran has not made payments that are due under the contract.

Iran's 16th Press Festival

Iran's 16th Press Festival opened last week at Tehran's Imam Khomeini Mosalla.

Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad Hosseini and several other Iranian cultural officials attended the opening ceremony of this year's festival, whose motto is Promotion of the Media's Status and Ethics in Journalism.



FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23

Bomber strikes at Pakistan Air Force

A suicide bombing at Pakistan's premier aeronautical manufacturing complex killed seven people on Friday morning, the ninth attack on major government installations this month. Last week's death toll from terrorist attacks was over 150. The attacks are seen as reprisals by the militants for the campaign against them in their tribal heartland of South Waziristan.

Iran's interior minister in Pakistan over Jundallah

Iran's Interior Minister Mostafa Mohammad-Najjar arrived in Pakistan on Friday morning, just days after the terrorist attacks in Sistan-Balouchistan Province. The official is heading a political and security delegation and will be meeting his Pakistani counterpart, Rehman Malik as well as President Asif Ali Zardari, reported Press TV.

Mohammad-Najjar says according to the Iranian intelligence the Pakistani-based terrorist group, Jundallah receives financial, intelligence, and political support from the West.



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24

Gold price soars

Due to the present concerns over the global economic crisis as well as the plummeting U.S. dollar, people are turning towards the financial safety provided by gold.

In the last two months the gold coin (9 carot-Bahar Azadi weighing 8.13 grams) has gained nine percent in value, from 224-254 thousand toman (\$1=988 toman), reports Central Bank of Iran.

CBI Governor, Mahmoud Bahmani was quoted as saying that if the price continues to soar than the government will supply 5 million Bahar Azadi coins in the market to keep the prices stable. Bahmani pointed out that this measure is a waste of resources.

Globally the price of one ounce of gold on Saturday was traded for \$1060 gaining eight dollars in a single day.