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Bahman 22
is golden
opportunity for
unity: Rohani

Tehran Times Political Desk
TEHRAN — Hassan Rohani, the Expediency Council Strategic Research Center director, says Bahman 22 is a golden opportunity that should be utilized to foster unity and heal the wounds opened after the post-election incidents.

The remarks by Rohani came as Iranians are preparing to mark the 22 Bahman rallies which fall on Thursday, February 11.



ROHANI

If all groupings utilize the opportunity on Bahman 22nd, then an atmosphere of unity can prevail in the country, Rohani told the Mehr News Agency in an interview published Tuesday.

Rohani said both the supporters of the administration and critics should take part in the Bahman 22nd rallies and chant revolutionary slogans.

Rohani went on to say that one of the most important gifts of the Islamic Revolution in 1979 was political independence.

Commenting on the June 12 presidential election, he said from a certain perspective the fact that some people protested the result of the election shows that they care about their votes and will come to the scene and demand a re-run if they have doubts about the result of an election.

Rohani said constructive criticism is not only allowed but it is a political and social duty.

The former National Security Council chief said that in a country with Islamic democracy, criticism and protest are allowed. It is not possible to have democracy without criticism, he noted.

He said protesting against the result of an election is a right but confronting the system and breaking the law are not justified.

He said it is not in the interest of the country to accuse certain revolutionary figures, who protested the result of the election, of having links with Mossad or the CIA.

"When they link certain people to CIA, it means that the CIA managed this country for 8 years and we did not realize," he noted.

London urges
Tehran to
maintain ties

(Contd. from p. 1)

Gass said it was "entirely untrue" that Britain or its embassy in Tehran were interfering in Iran's domestic affairs.

Iranian media reported last month that dozens of Iranian members of parliament had proposed cutting relations with Britain. ISNA quoted Boroujerdi at the time as saying the proposal was hasty.

In late December, Iran summoned Gass and Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki threatened Britain with a "slap in the mouth" if it did not stop interfering in Iranian affairs.

Even if the parliament voted to cut or scale back relations with Britain, such a move must be approved by a powerful legislative body, the Guardian Council.

Soltanieh: Window for
nuclear negotiations still open



SOLTANIEH

Iran's envoy to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said Monday that the window for nuclear negotiations is still open.

Referring to the possibility of new international sanctions against his country, Ali-Asghar Soltanieh told CNN's Christiane Amanpour, "If they (other countries) come to the conclusion that they had better have a cooperative environment or approach rather than the language of threat, and they are ready to come to the negotiating table, our proposal is still on the table."

But he said the new enrichment program, at the Natanz plant, begins on Tuesday.

"As (of) tomorrow, the steps will start in fact under the full scope,

safeguards, and the supervision of the (IAEA) inspectors." Soltanieh's interview with CNN came hours after President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said Iran will begin enriching uranium up to 20 percent, compared to 3.5 percent now.

Soltanieh said Iran had decided to advance its enrichment program because it had been waiting months for international action.

"For nine months, we have hesitated to do so because we wanted to give the opportunity for the others. We think the framework of the IAEA (is) to have some sort of international cooperation to open a new chapter of cooperation, rather than confrontation."

He said Iran will produce enough nuclear fuel for Tehran's research reactor, which he said is roughly about 116 or 120 kilograms.

The research reactor will produce medical isotopes. Until now, only a few countries were known to have the technology for such work.

Soltanieh insisted Iran does have the expertise to move forward with its nuclear program.

"We have in fact the infrastructure and the technology know-how. We have already been able to manufacture the fuel rods," he added.

"Of course, it is the first experience... but we have proved that we will be able to do it. And this is, in fact, the confidence that Iranian scientists have got."

(Source: CNN)

Iran knows the location of U.S. missile
defense shields in region

Tehran Times Political Desk

TEHRAN — Iran is fully aware of the locations of the U.S. missile defense shields in the region, Brigadier General Ahmad Miqani said on Tuesday.

The missile shields have been based around Iran for some time now, Miqani told reporters.

He said the establishment of the missile shields is part of the plan to promote Iranophobia among regional nations, adding that the U.S. is seeking to undermine the unity of the Islamic ummah (community).

Since the U.S. is in the middle of an economic crisis, it is trying to sell arms to Persian Gulf littoral states in order to recover from the economic meltdown, he stated.

The U.S. is also seeking to stabilize its military presence in the region so that it can pursue its evil interests, he added.

Tensions between the U.S. and Iran rose on February



MIQANI

1 after the Obama administration quietly increased the capability of land and sea-based missile defenses in several Persian Gulf nations.

At the end of January, administration officials said that the U.S. was speeding up arms sales to a number of Persian Gulf Arab states and that it had also deployed warships capable of knocking down hostile missiles in flight to the region.

Two senior defense officials told Fox News on February 1 that missile-defense systems, including sea-based Aegis destroyers and Patriot missiles, are being sent to the Persian Gulf region. One official said the build-up was "previewed in the president's strategy on missile defense last year."

The moves, which include the sales of anti-missile systems to Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, and Kuwait, seem to be designed to pressure Iran.

Interior minister visits eastern borders

Tehran Times Political Desk

ZAHEDAN — Interior Minister Mostafa Mohammad Najjar visited Iran's eastern borders in Sistan-Baluchestan province on Tuesday to lay the groundwork for the start of a number of infrastructure projects.

The interior minister was accompanied by the deputy interior minister for security affairs and the border police commander.

The visit came at a time when efforts

to curb illicit drug smuggling in the border areas have intensified, culminating in the seizure of a quantity of illegal drugs on Monday.

Najjar called for more efforts to fight the smuggling of illicit drugs.

To halt the transit of drugs and passage to kidnappers and hooligans, Iran has started building a fence along its border with Pakistan.

In talks with reporters at Zahedan

airport, the minister said some 106 million dollars have been allocated for the border fence project in the next year's budget which he hoped to be endorsed by the Majlis.

To cope with the drug trade and unemployment in the province the government had drawn up plans to start some infrastructure projects.

"We are seeking to implement them (projects)," the minister said.

Littoral states agree to fight
oil pollution in Caspian Sea

Tehran Times Political Desk

TEHRAN — The Caspian Sea littoral states have eventually reached agreement on a cooperation protocol to fight oil pollution in the largest lake in the world.

The protocol, one of the attached protocols of Tehran Convention, has been discussed and approved by the five Caspian littoral states in a meeting in Moscow and it will be presented in Kazakhstan's capital Astana late in summer for final ratification, Saeed Izadian of Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization said on Tuesday.

Tehran Convention is the first regional cooperation agreement for the protection of the Caspian Sea environment, which was ratified by the five littoral states in 2003 in Tehran after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Izadian explained.

The convention has eight protocols, four of which have been ratified by the littoral states so far, he said.

The four protocols include the protocol on the protection against pollution from land resources, oil pollution, the protocol on the conservation of biodiversity and the protocol on environmental impact assessment (EIA) in trans-boundary context, he added.

Tehran Convention aims at protecting the Caspian Sea environment from all sources of pollution and protecting, preserving and restoring the marine environment. The convention includes provisions on sustainable and rational use of the bio diversity of the Caspian Sea, as well as environmental monitoring, research and development.

Bahman 22 should be marked with
loyalty to revolution: Rafsanjani

Tehran Times Political Desk

TEHRAN — Expediency Council Chairman Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani said on Tuesday that Bahman 22 should be marked by unity and loyalty to the Islamic Revolution.

In a meeting with the secretary general of the Muslim Political Prisoners Association and a number of key members, Rafsanjani said the nation is indebted to those held in prison during the reign of the Pahlavi regime.

"Those who courageously fought the repressive and despotic Pahlavi regime and were captured, imprisoned and tortured... should be honored during the Ten-Day Dawn (celebrations)," Rafsanjani noted.

He went on to say that the Bahman 22 belongs to the entire nation, adding that criticism and expression of different views are essential for progress and will help correct defects.

A scrupulous analysis of the events and exchange of different views and ideas provide the foundation for advancing the goals of the Islamic Revolution, Rafsanjani observed.

The Expediency Council chairman also cautioned against extremist actions and lack of tolerance ahead of the Bahman 22 rallies.

There should not be an atmosphere in the society in which every thoughtless criticism and malicious slander are expressed by extremists, he added.

In addition, Rafsanjani observed that one of the core missions of the Islamic Revolution, is to promote Islam, thus it should be presented in a manner that serves as a model for the future generations.

IAEA obligated to supply nuclear fuel

(Contd. from p. 1)

On Monday Ali Asghar Soltanieh, the Iranian envoy to the International Atomic Energy Agency, formally notified the UN body of Tehran's decision to enrich its low-enriched uranium stockpile to 20 percent

under the supervision of IAEA inspectors.

Earlier, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had ordered the AEOI to begin the production of higher enriched uranium for the medical reactor.

Iran officially requested the IAEA on June

2, 2009 to supply nuclear fuel for the Tehran research reactor, then Iran put forward the proposal for a simultaneous exchange of fuel in two stages on Iran's soil, but Tehran has not received any official response to its logical and technical proposal yet.



Persian Press Review

The column 'Persian Press Review' features the headlines and leading articles carried by Farsi dailies.

Tuesday's headlines

ETEMAAD: Defamation and insult should be stopped, says Mohammad Khatami (former president)

IRAN: 20% enrichment starts today (Tuesday), announces director of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran

ABRAR: Budget bill proposed for the next year (starting March 21) is unrealistic and inflationary

KAYHAN: Iranian nation will stun the world on Bahman 22 (February 11), states Supreme Leader

KHORASAN: Senior MPs criticize the way the annual budget bill drawn up, president responds

ASRAR: Hambastegi Party (Solidarity Party) invites people to participate in Bahman 22 rallies

ETELAAT: Maintaining national unity is the main need

TEHRAN-E EMROOZ: Qalibaf (Tehran mayor) criticizes extremism

JAHAN-E SANAAT: End to cheap energy: price of water and electricity to double, price of gasoline to increase 2.5 times

FARHIKHTEGAN: Tehran mayor: Why have works been halted for a year?

FARHANG-E ASHTI: Majlis speaker slams the way the annual budget bill being worked out

Leading articles



'JAM-E JAM' in its editorial has analyzed the Late Imam Khomeini's unique personality.

Imam had a personality beyond factionalism, so every political or ideological group that has attempted to narrow down Imam's ideas to its own group's limited frame of thinking has failed. Fortunately, no one can distort Imam's ideals and viewpoints, since his books and remarks are available.



'RESALAT' in its editorial has predicted that the Bahman 22 rallies this year will be

unique in regard to the post-election events. The writer has highlighted the Supreme Leader's recent remarks about the massive participation in the rallies on Thursday especially the Leader's insistence that this year's marches will be a display of national unity and cohesion.



'MARDOMSALRI' in its editorial described Imam Khomeini's matchless personality which

made him a unique leader. Imam's uncontested leadership was not just due to his characteristics such as bravery, decisiveness, and honesty, but that he had fully recognized people's cultural, psychological and religious needs and took steps in this line.



'KAYHAN' in its editorial has delighted in Ahmadinejad's recent order for the start of the

20% nuclear enrichment. The Western powers never thought to hear the news of 20% enrichment on Iran's soil so soon, because they had imagined that the administration had been weakened after the June presidential election and could not make a major decision regarding the nuclear issue. Now they have understood that Iranian officials' remarks about the country's capability to produce higher enriched uranium have not been a braggadocio.



'ETEMAAD' in its editorial has highlighted the role of national unity which led to the Islamic

Revolution and its dynamism. In the Ten-Day Dawn (ten-day celebrations to mark the victory of the revolution), Iranians should display their unity, the key to the success of the revolution. Now that the country has encountered some political crises, all officials should try to restore unity in the society. Officials should take moderate lines and should try not to do anything which shatters the unity. Every move which damages unity is a disloyalty to Islam, the revolution, and the country. If government officials seek to restore unity, they should try to win back people's trust and support. If officials seek to restore public confidence, they should prove their truthfulness in practice. Officials should not shout impractical slogans anymore. If people see that the officials are honest and truthful and are determined to solve the problems, they will put up with all hardships. But people can not tolerate false claims and remarks at all.



'DONYA-E EQTESAD' in its editorial has examined the annual budget bill proposed by

the administration. A brief glance at the annual budget bill reveals the fact that most of the income and cost forecasts are unrealistic. Undoubtedly such a bill in practice will lead to budget deficit and will entail changes and amendments to the budget plan and cuts in the development funds. For instance, the administration has envisaged an income of \$7.5 billion from selling the shares of the state-run companies, but considering the administration's record in this regard, the realization of such an amount seems a remote possibility.