

Majlis vote results released in Tehran

TEHRAN - Iran's Interior Ministry has officially announced the final results of the Friday runoff parliamentary elections in Tehran constituency.

The deputy head of Iran's Election Headquarters, Hassan Ali Nouri, on Saturday announced the final results of the vote count in the Tehran constituency.

Twenty-five candidates from Tehran constituency won their way into the Majlis during the second round of elections held on Friday.

Bijan Nobaveh, Ismail Kowsari, Ahmad Tavakoli, and Ali Motahari are the four top candidates of the list.

The runoff election was held in 33 constituencies across the country on Friday with 130 candidates competing for the remaining 65 seats of the 290-member parliament.

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Iran welcomes railroad link to China

TEHRAN - Iran's Minister of Road and Urban Development Ali Nikzad says Tehran welcomes a proposal by the Tajik government to connect the Iranian rail network to the city of Kashgar in China via Tajikistan and Afghanistan.

In a meeting with the visiting Tajik Minister of Transportation and Communications Nizam Hakim Oaf on Sunday, Nikzad said the 392 kilometers (km) long rail corridor will connect Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and China.

"It will increase trade exchange and export volume, reduce transit costs among these countries and facilitate the transport of cargo and passengers in the region," he added.

Leader urges more reading areas



TEHRAN - Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei has urged Iranian officials to create more reading areas in the country.

Ayatollah Khamenei made the comments during an address to book publishers present at the 25th Tehran International Book Fair.

The Leader said reading areas should be increased in parallel with the number of international book fair visitors, Press TV reported.

Ayatollah Khamenei further called on the officials to remove any obstacles to publishing books such as lowering the cost of paper.

"The government should

pave the way for the translation of good Iranian books in the fields of religion, history, literature and science into various languages and for their presentation to the world," the Leader said.

The 25th Tehran International Book Fair, which kicked off on May 2 and will run until May 12, hosts domestic and international publishers at the capital city's Grand Prayer Grounds.

The Tehran International Book Fair is considered the most significant event of its kind in Asia and the Middle East and a significant venue for publishers and book lovers to exchange opinions and experiences.

Iran's envoy to IAEA:

Iran sees no justification for closing Fordow

TEHRAN - Iran's Ambassador to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) says the country will never suspend uranium enrichment and sees no reason to close the Fordow nuclear site.

Ali Asghar Soltanieh said Friday that Iran will not close the underground nuclear site as the country sees "no justification" for doing so, Reuters reported.

"Fordow is a safe place. We have spent a lot of money and time to have a safe place... When you have a safe place, secure place under IAEA control, then why do you tell me that I should close it?"

The Fordow nuclear facility, Iran's second site for en-

riching uranium, is located south of Tehran.

Asked about the possibility of Iran agreeing to stop uranium enrichment activities in the forthcoming negotiations with the P5+1 - including the US, Britain, France, China, and Russia, plus Germany - Soltanieh said, "One thing is clear: the enrichment in Iran will never be suspended."

"Neither sanctions, nor military actions, nor terror against our scientists will stop the enrichment," he emphasized.

Iran and P5+1 held the first round of new multifaceted talks in Turkish port city, Istanbul, on April 14 following a 15-month hiatus, after

which both sides expressed satisfaction over the general atmosphere of negotiations.

The two sides have agreed to hold the second round of their new talks in Iraq's capital city, Baghdad, on May 23.

The US and European Union accuse Iran of pursuing military goals under the cover of its nuclear energy program and have imposed international and unilateral sanctions against the country.

Tehran refutes their claims noting that as a committed member of IAEA and a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty it is entitled to the peaceful application of the nuclear energy.

Foreign Ministry Spokesman:

Iran will not break under psywar

TEHRAN - Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Ramin Mehmanparast says Tehran will defend its nuclear rights and will not retreat one iota from its stance in the upcoming talks with the P5+1.

Mehmanparast said Western officials visiting regional states ahead of the second round of talks between Iran and the P5+1 - Britain, China, France, Russia, and the US plus Germany - in the Iraqi capital are psychological war tactics to pressure Tehran.

"Such issues will have no effect on the resolve and demands of the Iranian nation and their representatives [in the upcoming Baghdad talks]," Mehmanparast told IRNA.

"Respecting the rights of

other nations must be a principle and by eliminating injustice many tensions can be defused," he added.

Mehmanparast stressed Iran is determined to see a just world order and would spare no effort to see this goal materialize. The latest round of talks between Iran and the five members of the P5+1 group was held in the Turkish city of Istanbul on April 14. Both sides hailed the discussions as constructive.

The two sides agreed to hold the next round of talks in Baghdad on May 23, 2012.

Tehran and the P5+1 previously held two rounds of talks, one in Geneva, Switzerland in December 2010 and another in Istanbul in January 2011.

Majlis Speaker:

Human rights bodies must pay heed to Israeli crimes

TEHRAN - Iran's Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani has called on international human rights bodies to stop supporting dictators in the region and pay heed to the crimes committed by the Israeli regime.

"Oppressed Palestinian prisoners have launched an intifada of hunger strikes due to the inhumane and brutal pressure by the Zionist regime (Israel)," said Larijani during an open session of the Majlis on Sunday.

He expressed the Majlis' support for the Palestinian strikers and added that international human rights bodies

had better pay at least some little attention to Israel's crimes so their fake gesture of advocating human rights finds some manifestation, IRNA reported.

About 1,500 to 2,500 Palestinian prisoners began an open-ended hunger strike on April 17, the Palestinian Prisoners Day, in Israeli prisons to protest against Israel's administrative detention rules, use of solitary confinement, denial of family visits, and maltreatment of sick detainees, according to the rights group.

According to the Palestinian Council of Human Rights Organizations, the Israeli

Prison Service has collectively punished hunger strikers by denying them family visits, conducting cell and body searches, subjecting them to isolation, fines, and the confiscation of personal belongings.

The Iranian Majlis speaker also pointed to the popular uprisings in Egypt and Bahrain and said, "The US and some of its allies in the region apparently have not yet become aware that revolutions have taken place in the region."

Larijani added that Iranian lawmakers support the popular uprisings of the Egyptian and Bahraini people.

Iran petrochem exports not declining

TEHRAN - Despite Western sanctions against Iran's oil and gas industries, the country's deputy oil minister says the export of Iranian petrochemical products to European countries is as usual.

Abdolhossein Bayat, who is also managing director of the National Petrochemical Company (NPC), said Sunday that the diversification and identification of new markets for petrochemical products has turned into a strategy for Iran's Oil Ministry.

The official went on to say that the NPC has focused its efforts on finding new markets for Iranian petrochemical products over the past two years and new markets have been found, Press TV reported.

He said new markets are chosen according to the buyer behavior and price of petrochemical products.

"Iran currently has no prob-



lem exporting petrochemical products," Bayat added, stressing that exports to European countries have not fallen.

Iran exported a total of 18.2 million tons of petrochemical and polymer products, worth about USD 14.2 billion, to more than 60 countries in the last Iranian calendar year (ended March 19, 2012).

During the same period, the country stood second in the world in terms of exporting methanol to Europe.

In terms of value, 22 percent of Iran's petrochemical exports went to China, 13 percent to India, 18.5 percent to the Middle East, 18 percent to the Far East, 23 percent to Southeast Asia, and 5 percent to Europe.

Iran holds Persian Gulf Concert

TEHRAN - Tehran Academic Orchestra and Tehran Symphony Orchestra have held Persian Gulf Concert in Tehran to commemorate the national Persian Gulf Day.

Led by Amin Salemi, Tehran Academic Orchestra started its May 2 and 3 programs with the performances of two traditional vocalists and two pop stars. Nima Masiha, Hamid Khazaei, Mani Rahnama and Salar Aqili were the concert vocalists who also participated in the event held in Milad Tower.

Meanwhile, Tehran Symphony Orchestra led by World-renowned Iranian composer and conductor Shahdad Rohani also performed the Persian Gulf

Symphony in Vahdat Hall.

While historical documents show that the waterway has always been referred to as the 'Persian Gulf,' certain Arab states have mounted efforts to remove 'Persian' from the name of the waterway.

Iran has designated April 30 as the national Persian Gulf Day to highlight the fact that the waterway has been referred to by the historians and ancient texts as 'Persian' since the Achaemenid Empire was established in what is now modern Iran. National Persian Gulf Day marks the anniversary of the expulsion of Portuguese military forces from the Strait of Hormoz in 1622, during the reign of Safavid king Shah Abbas I (1587-1629).

Toronto to exhibit 'Six Weeks of Iranian Art'

TEHRAN - The Canadian capital of Toronto is slated to host an exhibition of Iranian arts, featuring the work of internationally renowned and award-winning Iranian artists.

The second edition of the Iranian festival titled Six Weeks of Iranian Art is to be held in Toronto's Queen Gallery this fall. The event is scheduled to showcase the Iranian cultural heritage through featuring Persian visual arts, plays, music and films created by the artists in Iran and Canada, Press TV reported.

The festival will present four visual arts exhibitions

including the remarkable works of the renowned art master Mohsen Vaziri-Moghaddam.

Four musical performances including the Levon Haftvan ensemble as well as a selection of the best Iranian short films and documentaries, including that of the award winning director Seyfollah Samadian will be also presented at the festival.

Holding several screenplay reading and story-telling workshops are among other programs of the event.

The Six Weeks of Iranian Art is to kick off on September 21, 2012.

Hollande beats Sarkozy in run-off presidential election

TEHRAN - Francois Hollande, Nicolas Sarkozy's Socialist rival in the French run-off presidential election, declares victory, saying that the electorate opted for "change" in choosing him over the incumbent president.

According to exit polls, Hollande has secured around 51 percent of the vote against some 49 percent garnered by Sarkozy in the run-off, which was held on Sunday, Press TV reported.

"I bear the full responsibility for this defeat," Sarkozy said after the result was made public.

Hollande's jubilant supporters have gathered in front of the Socialist Party's headquarters in Paris and come together in his hometown of Tulle in southwestern France as the news of the result spreads across the country just ahead of official announcement.

"French people, on the 6th of May, have chosen change,"



the victor told his advocates in Tulle.

About 46 million people were eligible to vote in the second round.

The run-off was held after Hollande inconclusively won the first round on April 22 with 28.63 percent of the ballots against Sarkozy's 27.18 percent.

He is the first Socialist politician to win the presidential election after 17 years of

right-wing dominance over the country's politics. He now has to face the country's rising unemployment and stagnant economy, for which Sarkozy has been under fire.

Hollande has also criticized the austerity plans implemented by Sarkozy's government, saying austerity can no longer be the only option for Europe, and pledged to bring growth and prosperity back to the continent.

South Pars phase 12 output to reach 25 cu.m

TEHRAN - Iran will produce 25 million cubic meters of natural gas per day after the development of the first stage of Phase 12 of South Pars gas field, says the project manager.

The last platform of this phase will be made operational in the second half of the next year, IRNA quoted Rasoul Fallahnejad as saying on Saturday.

He added that 150 kilome-

ters of the three 32-inch pipelines has been built and tested in this phase.

Fallahnejad said Phase 12 of the South Pars gas field, as the largest phase of the project, would produce 84 million cubic meters of natural gas per day, which is equivalent to 15 percent of the national need.

South Pars gas and oil field covers an area of 9,700 square kilometers, 3,700

square kilometers of which are in the Iranian territorial waters in the Persian Gulf. The remaining 6,000 square kilometers, i.e. North Dome, are in Qatari territorial waters.

The Iranian gas field has 14 trillion cubic meters of natural gas, about eight percent of the world's reserves, and more than 18 billion barrels of LNG resources.

'Separation' wins Italian festival

TEHRAN - Iranian filmmaker Asghar Farhadi's Academy Award-winning film Nader and Simin: A Separation has won at the David di Donatello Awards in Italy.

Internationally-acclaimed Iranian drama was awarded for the Best Foreign Language film at the 2012 David di Donatello Awards, which is considered the Italian equivalent to the Academy Award, Press TV reported.

Farhadi's prize-magnet drama went up against the renowned cinematic creations such as Martin Scorsese's Hugo, Terrence Malick's Tree of Life, George Clooney's Ides of March

as the other nominees in this section.

The Iranian drama also turned heads, winning the Best Foreign Film Award of the 2012 edition of annual Independent Spirit Awards as well as the 2012 César Awards.

A Separation also received Best Picture, Best Film Not in the English Language, Best Ensemble and Best Original Screenplay awards of the 9th International Cinephile Society (ICS).

Farhadi's award-sweeper movie has hit the Canadian, Brazilian, American, European movie theaters so far, as scheduled earlier.

Prominent Iranian filmmaker, actor Iraj Qaderi dies



TEHRAN - Veteran Iranian filmmaker and actor Iraj Qaderi, after a long battle with lung cancer, has passed away at the age of 77 in Tehran.

The producer and screenwriter was hospitalized in early April due to his critical condition.

Qaderi started his cinematic career as an actor in the pioneer Iranian-Armenian filmmaker Samuel Khachikian's movie Crossroads of Coincidence (Chaharrahe Havades) (1955).

Qaderi, with over 50 years of experience in film industry, has appeared in over 41 movies and directed over 71 films. I Want to Live (1994), Sam and Narges (2001), Aquarium (2003), The Trial (2007) are some of his remarkable directorial works.

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