

The following is a translation of Radio Farda's half-hour evening news magazine program on July 10, 2007 at 1730 UTC.

TRANSLATION BEGINS HERE

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News with Radio Farda.

[Hooman Saisan]

It is 9:00 o'clock in the evening. Greetings to you dear listeners. Welcome to the evening news magazine of Radio Farda. In the next half hour, I, Hooman Saisan, will be with you in this news magazine along with my colleagues to tell you about the most important news from Iran and the world.

First of all, let's listen to a summary of the most important news up to this hour with my colleague, Mania Mansour.

[Mania Mansour]

Greetings. The Pakistani Army announced on Tuesday that during the army's assault on the Red Mosque in Islamabad, at least 50 religious students and 8 soldiers were killed. According to hospital officials in Islamabad, there were at least 15 soldiers who were injured in this conflict. There were another 50 militants who were arrested by the Pakistani army. The spokesman for the Pakistani Army announced on Tuesday that two-thirds of the mosque had been cleared of militants. On Thursday, the Pakistani Army also reported the death of Abdul Rashid Ghazi, the leader of the Red Mosque militants.

The Israeli Prime Minister repeated his request for direct negotiations with Syria. Ehud Olmert, Prime Minister of Israel, stated in an interview with the TV network Al Arabia that he was ready to talk directly with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Syria keeps insisting that the US should also be present during the talks with Israel.

According to the police in Afghanistan, at least 71 died and close to 35 were injured when a man made a suicide attack man on an ISAF (NATO-led International Security Assistance Forces) convoy in the

southern province of Uruzgan. However, according to ISAF, this incident resulted in the deaths of six civilians and injuries to 20. ISAF called this deadly incident a possible suicide attack and at the same time accused the assailants of disregard for the safety of civilians.

The former head of China's Food and Drug Administration was executed on Tuesday for the crime of corruption. The former head of China's Food and Drug administration was accused of receiving bribes from drug producing companies and approving and authorizing the sale of their products. Some of these medications have caused the death of some patients.

The refugee office of the United Nations declared on Tuesday that in the first six months of the current year at least 367 Somali refugees had been killed while trying to escape by sea to Yemen.

[Hooman Saisan]

Thank you Mania Mansour, who gave you a summary of the most important news. Now, let's talk about what you will hear in this news magazine.

The spokesman for the judiciary branch of the Islamic Republic confirmed the news about the shutdown of the office of the Central Committee of the Office for Consolidating Unity in Tehran.

A conversation with Parvin Bakhtiarnejad, a social researcher in Tehran, regarding an increase in the number of criminal gangs in Iran.

The Islamic Republic's invitation of Sunni groups who are in touch with Iraqi militants. We will have a report from Farideh Rahbar.

And other reports.

In his most recent reaction to the arrest of the members of the Central Committee of the Office for Consolidating Unity, the spokesman for the judiciary branch of the Islamic Republic stated that while he confirmed the shutdown of this office, none of the 16 arrested people were students and called the charges against these people "participation in illegal gatherings."

Mehdi Aminizadeh, a member of the Central Committee of the Office

for Consolidating Unity, stated in a conversation with Farin Asemi, “It is not clear yet which legal authority ordered the arrest of these students.”

[Mania Mansour]

The spokesman for the judiciary branch of the Islamic Republic made the following statement in a weekly press conference about the arrest of the members of the Central Committee of the Office for Consolidating Unity. While confirming the closure of this office, he said none of the 16 arrested individuals were students and called the charges against them “participation in illegal gatherings.” Mehdi Ahmadizadeh, a member of the Central Committee of the Office for Consolidating Unity, told Radio Farda that it was not clear yet which legal authority ordered the arrest of these students.

[Mehdi Ahmadizadeh]

It is not yet clear for us who has jurisdiction over these students. Are they under the control of the police, the Ministry of Information, or other agencies? However, as you can tell from the statements made by the officials, our arrested friends have been arrested by the orders of the Judiciary Forces of the Revolutionary Court and it is not clear yet.

[Mania Mansouri]

Mohammad Nikunesbati, a member of the Central Committee of Tehran’s Office for Consolidating Unity and brother of Ali Nikunesbati, who was arrested yesterday, Monday, in front of Amir Kabir University, gave Radio Farda the latest information regarding his brother.

[Ali Nikunesbati]

The latest action taken was that we went to Evin prison to find out about their situation. We were initially told that they were taken to Eshratyab, but from there they were taken to Evin prison. However, when we went to Evin prison, they did not give us any specific answers and told us to go to the Revolutionary Court. After going there, they would not give us any specific information and would not allow us to see anyone. They would just tell us to come back on a certain day. The last response they gave us was for us to return on Saturday. Unfortunately, these students were the important factors in

the student movement. They thought arresting these students would solve the problem and would end the whole student movement. That is why they decided to give us a vague response and keep them for some time.

[Mania Mansouri]

Six members of the Central Committee of the Office for Consolidating Unity started a peaceful symbolic sit-in in front of Amir Kabir University, due to which they were arrested at that location. There were 10 others who were arrested when police forces assaulted the building belonging to the Office for Consolidating Unity.

The spokesman for the judiciary branch stated that these people were accused of participating in illegal gatherings. Whereas Mehdi Aminizadeh, a member of the Central Committee of the Office for Consolidating Unity, says there were some inconsistencies in the statements made by the spokesman for the judiciary branch.

[Mehdi Aminizadeh]

Unfortunately, these are inconsistencies that existed last year. This year six members of the Central Committee of the Office for Consolidating Unity innocently organized a symbolic, peaceful sit-in across from Amir Kabir University. It was obvious that there was no commotion, conflict, or disturbance. This was a symbolic gathering, which was protesting the continued arrest of the students and also remembering the anniversary of the 18th of Tir. What was worse than that was the assault on the office of the Office for Consolidating Unity, which is located inside a residential building. They continued striking students very hard, continued to arrest them and their situation is unknown now. These types of clashes are an effort to create fear and don't represent anything except creating spiteful attacks on students.

[Mania Mansouri]

Mohammad Ali Dadkhah, jurist and attorney, made the following statement regarding illegal gathering:

[Mohammad Ali Dadkhah]

Illegal gatherings have to meet three criteria in the constitution. They have to either be armed or have taken explicit actions against the

very existence of the Islamic Republic. None of these were noticeable in their actions, except the prosecution may have other reasons. These reasons have to be mentioned in court and after investigating these issues, the court has to make an appropriate decision. In any event, without a fair investigation, any judgment will be devoid of any legal standing.

[Mania Mansouri]

At the same time, Mohammad Nikunesbati, a member of Tehran's Committee of the Office for Consolidating Unity and the brother of Ali Nikunesbati, who was arrested yesterday, Monday, in front of Amir Kabir University, says that the sit-in was a calm sit-in.

[Mohammad Nikunesbati]

The sit-in was very calm and there were approximately six people. Since there were no special issues, there were only these six people. There was no one else. There was no disturbance of the peace or anything else. I truly don't know...

[Mania Mansouri]

The spokesman for the judiciary branch in Iran, Ali Reza Jamshidi, stated in a press conference with reporters today that 16 people were arrested yesterday, none of whom were students. Mehdi Aminizadeh rejects this matter and says that other than a small group, the rest of these people were students. In the meantime, Mohammad Nikunesbati says that no government agency has taken responsibility for the arrest of 16 members of the Office for Consolidating Unity.

[Male Speaker]

Police officers have been interviewed and they said they did not know anything. Whoever had interviewed the police and anyone who was speaking on behalf of the police was told they were not involved at all and did not have any information as to who truly arrested these people. When we went there, we were told that officials from the police department were the ones who arrested them. It is not very clear which government agency is responsible for their arrest.

[Mania Mansouri]

Mohammad Ali Dadkhah, an attorney and jurist who has announced he is ready to represent these students, said Iran had accepted the

Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the month of Ordibehesht of the solar year 1354. Based on this acceptance, Iran has to act accordingly.

[Male Speaker]

[Unintelligible] declaration of the Society for the Defense of Human Rights, regarding defending the rights of students, reporters, and others whose human rights are being violated. Based on this, we consider the arrest and detention of students at the Polytechnic University and the members of the Office for Consolidating Unity inconsistent with the Constitution. Because of these charges, the prosecution in Tehran has to provide them with the services of an attorney within 24 hours. In any event, if they come to the Society for the Defense of Human Rights for their defense, the Society will accept their case.

[Mina Mansouri]

On the other side, an official at the Ministry of Science, whose name has been withheld, told the Iranian Students News Agency that the Ministry of Science was in the process of following up on the condition of the arrested students. However, so far the Ministry has not been able to obtain any news about them. This official said the reason for the lack of knowledge on the part of the Ministry of Science was that these students were arrested outside the University. All of these events happened while six members of the Central Council of the Office for Consolidating Unity were arrested yesterday, Monday, in front of Amir Kabir University.

At the same time, 34 Islamic student associations all over Iran and members of the Society of Academics in Iran have issued a statement regarding the arrest of the members of the Central Committee of the Office for Consolidating Unity. In this statement, they have condemned these arrests and have demanded that the Office of the Society of Academics in Iran and the Office for Consolidating Unity be reopened.

This statement declares that the Islamic societies of Iranian universities have warned that they won't tolerate this shameless assault and the assault on the Office for Consolidating Unity, which has supported the student movement at every stage.

[Mr. Khakzad]

You were listening to the conversation between Farin Asemi and Mehdi Amimizadeh, a member of the Central Committee of the Office for Consolidating Unity, regarding the latest on the situation of the 16 members of the Central Committee of the Office for Consolidating Unity who were arrested yesterday, 17th of the month of Tir. I would like to add that you will hear more reports and discussions concerning this topic in the next segments of Radio Farda.

In the meantime a group of Iranians gathered in front of the United Nations building in Washington, DC to commemorate the anniversary of 18th of Tir. What was noticeable about this gathering was the presence of non-Iranians who were there to support the Iranian student movement. Mahtab Farid will give us a report.

[Mahtab Farid]

Usually there are numerous gatherings, speeches, and other ceremonies to commemorate the anniversary of 18th of Tir, the student movement, in many states and also Washington, DC, the capital of the US. During this year's gathering in Washington, there were a number of young non-Iranian individuals present. A number of young individuals who are studying political science and had heard about the situation in Iran participated in the gatherings for the anniversary of 18th of Tir, to show their support of the student movement in Iran. Sam, a 21 year old student majoring in political science, told Radio Farda that the student movement in Iran had been violently crushed.

[Sam]

"I think that Iranians want and need democracy and what they have over there, it's not, it's not a real democracy. It's not representing the people."

[Mahtab Farid]

Sam added, "Iranians want democracy and the current system is not democracy and it does not represent the people of Iran."

Levana Sarieh, a young Lebanese-American student, said, "It does not seem that human rights and especially the rights of women are

being respected in Iran. So we're very worried about democracy there. If anybody says their opinion or whatever..."

We are worried about the establishment of democracy over there. That is because they are not able to express their opinion. Mahtab Farid from Washington DC for Radio Farda.

[Male Host]

The head of the Public Security Police in Tehran has reported the identification and the elimination of a criminal gang in Tehran. Mohammad Reza Alipour stated on Tuesday, "The head of this dreadful gang, who had 11 to 15 year old children, was himself 22 years old." Hessam Mahdavi discussed this issue with Parvin Bakhtiarnejad, a social researcher, regarding the reasons for an increase in the number of criminal gangs and other social problems in Iran.

[Hessam Mahdavi]

Ms. Bakhtiarnejad, in recent years we have heard a lot of news and reports about the activities of criminal gangs in Iran. Why do you think there is such an increase in these types of social problems?

[Ms. Bakhtiarnejad]

In fact, starting in the 70s, social experts mentioned that the 80s would be a decade of social crisis in Iran. The predictions made in those days and during that decade all indicated that the social problems would turn into an uncontrollable crisis in the 80s. In the 70s there were a lot of things written about this and experts made proper comments. As we can see now, many of these issues, which were simply considered problems, such as child abuse, domestic violence, runaway children, women street walkers, self-burning among women and young people, widespread divorce among families and dozens of other problems, have now turned into a crisis. This is a crisis that after a while might also create some purposeless revolts among people.

[Hessam Mahdavi]

Why do you think the social problems of the 70s of the solar year turned into a crisis in the 80s?

[Ms. Bakhtiarnejad]

They turned into a crisis because they became deeper and more widespread. While in the 70s these criminal gangs, corruption and various social problems were widespread among the poor, with the destruction of the middle class and its descent into poverty and below poverty, these problems became more widespread and more common.

[Hessam Mahdavi]

You stated that while these problems were being mentioned in the 70s of the solar calendar by the media and experts, officials did not devote any efforts to controlling and reducing these problems. Now that these problems have, according to you, turned into a crisis, do officials in charge truly notice this crisis and think about a solution for it?

[Ms. Bakhtiarnejad]

They are treating it seriously now. However, what is important is that we are not able to solve these problems with short-term solutions. If the officials want to solve the problem and get it under control, we need short-term, mid-term, and long-term solutions. What can ultimately save us from these problems and different crises are long-term solutions that we should undertake. Short-term solutions are similar to pain killers and can weaken the severity of that situation for some time.

[Hessam Mahdavi]

We listened to the words of Parvin Bkhtiarnejad, social researcher in Tehran, with regard to the increase in the number of criminal gangs in Iran.

[Female voice]

You are listening to the Evening News Magazine from Radio Farda.

[Mr. Khakzad]

Gholam-Ali Haddad-Adel, the head of the 7th parliament, has said, "According to Islamic thought, there is no difference between men and women."

Criticizing mistakes that were made in the past, Mr. Haddad-Adel said

he would challenge the Western world with regard to women's rights. Mehrangiz Kar, an independent activist in human rights, will review the words of the head of the Islamic Parliament of Iran.

[Mehrangiz Kar]

The head of the 7th parliament has recently emphasized that there was no discrimination in the way Islam thought about men and women. All the reformists, thinkers, and people who think about the establishment of Islam in Muslim countries, are paying attention to the issue of women. On this basis, Mr. Haddad-Adel has challenged the Western world with regard to women's rights. He emphasizes that it was not the Islamic Republic's intention to return to the Stone Age or go backward. We do criticize the past and we don't consider those acts Islamic. At the present time, girls are overtaking boys in Iranian universities and have a large presence in other fields too. Of course, Mr. Haddad-Adel did not say which period of time he meant by "the past." Does "the past" mean even a few weeks ago when a number of women were assaulted for wearing their veil improperly? Or should we have a different understanding about time regarding such incidents? In any event, there are some positive and tolerant points in the speech by the head of the 7th parliament.

First of all, all of those individuals who are in favor of eliminating legal discrimination against women are in agreement with him, that based on Islam's thinking there is no discrimination between men and women. However, all of the defenders of the elimination of legal discrimination against women have witnessed that in the Islamic Republic, since the beginning of the revolution in the solar year 1357, anytime they want to remove a legal discrimination from the legal framework of the country, claimants and those influential opponents who are against the removal of discrimination against women, enter the scene under the Islamic flag. These influential people completely block all avenues for the elimination of discrimination against women with religious leaders, members of the Parliament, or members of the Guardian Council. As a result, there is an expectation that Mr. Haddad-Adel would act faithfully, consistent with his own statements. In a country where, according to him, girls are overtaking boys in university admissions, the foundation for the improvement of women's rights should be the 7th parliament. However, he should not forget that currently there is a plan that is being proposed by the

government, which intends to take back this lead by the women. We now come to the issue of his challenge to the West regarding women's rights. This is a good idea! However, if you approach it logically, there should be a wide-scale and profound revision of the laws of the country in order to make it practical. Until now, Iranian laws have promoted and encouraged violence against women, and some articles of the criminal code of the country approved those acts, such as whoever strikes a woman harder will get a more lenient punishment.

Another example is that in the case of voluntary homicide, the family of the deceased woman has to pay half of the blood-money of a complete individual, meaning a man, to the male killer and then ask for punishment. In cases of involuntary homicide, the blood-money for the woman is automatically half of the blood-money for a man, or the fact that women start bearing criminal responsibilities for their actions at the age of nine, based on the lunar year. Considering these and many such other instances, a challenge should be set aside for now and the government should concentrate on reforming laws to the benefit of women. While Mr. Haddad-Adel certainly knows the framework of the laws of the country, challenging the West in matters of women's rights is void.

[Mr. Khakzad]

You heard Mehrangiz Kar, independent activist in human rights, who had some thoughts about the words of Mr. Gholam-Ali Haddad-Adel, the head of the 7th Islamic parliament, who had stated that according to Islamic thought there was no difference between men and women.

[Female host]

Share your messages and ideas with us by calling 202-828-7208 or 202-828-7238.

[Mr. Khakzad]

According to a report by *Al Hayat* newspaper, the Islamic Republic has invited the leaders of Sunni tribes who are in contact with Iraqi insurgents to visit Tehran. This newspaper reports that a Sunni religious group has declared that in the event Iran continued its interference in Iraq, Iran's interests in the region would be attacked. Farideh Rahbar has a report for us.

[Farideh Rahbar]

Al Hayat newspaper reports that Iran has invited the heads of Sunni tribes in Iraq to travel to Tehran for negotiations with officials of the Islamic Republic. According to the newspaper, this invitation has been extended to those people who have close relations with Sunni insurgents in Iraq. This news has not been officially approved by the heads of the above-mentioned tribes yet. This news by *Al Hayat* newspaper is being published while the Islamic State of Iraq, which is a Sunni insurgent organization in Iraq, has threatened that in the event Iran continues interfering in Iraq's internal affairs, it will attack interests of the Iranian government in the region. A statement released by this organization states that a group of Sunni businessmen in the Persian Gulf who are doing business with Iranian Shiites have been targeted by this organization. In this statement, the Iranian government was given two months to stop its support of Shiite groups in Iraq.

Al Hayat writes that at the same time Nuri Al-Maliki, Prime Minister of Iraq, has also criticized Muqtada al-Sadr, the leader of Shiite insurgents in Iraq. According to this newspaper, in spite of published reports, it is certain that Muqtada al-Sadr is still in Najaf. Some sources had reported on behalf of Nuri Al-Maliki that he had traveled to Tehran. Nuri Al-Maliki had previously asked Iran to refrain from interfering in Iran's internal affairs. *Al Hayat* reports that Iran's invitation of the heads of Sunni tribes was made in coordination with the efforts of the United States and the Iraqi government for opening a dialogue with Iraqi Sunni insurgents.

According to this newspaper, on Tuesday, an Iraqi Security delegation traveled to Saudi Arabia to negotiate with that country's officials. According to the report by *Al Hayat* newspaper, during the many days of discussions that this delegation had with Saudi officials, one of the issues of the negotiations will be Iran's interference in Iraq's internal affairs.

[Mr. Khakzad]

Farideh Rahbar told us about a report by *Al Hayat* newspaper regarding the Islamic Republic's invitation of Sunni tribal leaders who are in contact with Iraqi insurgents.

It is now 9:27:15. You are listening to Radio Farda. One of the living Goddesses from Nepal violated this country's long tradition by traveling to the United States. For that reason, the Kumari Council removed her from her position. You will hear more details in a report by Amine Bozorgmehr.

[Amine Bozorgmehr]

For 800 years, Kumari, also known as a living Goddess, was respected by the citizens of Nepal. Kumari is a ten year old girl who was elected for her physical and mental characteristics and is living in a historic house. Hindus revere her until she matures and someone else takes her place. Kumari always wears heavy makeup and has a third eye placed on her forehead. She would leave the house only for religious ceremonies and had to walk only on a red carpet. There are always three "Kumari"s: Kumari from Kathmandu, Patan, and Bhaktapur. Bhaktapur Kumari is 10 years old. A documentary has been made based on her life, entitled "Living Goddess," which has been shown in the United States. Kumari left her house on an invitation from the film producers and traveled to the US. With her travel, she violated the old custom. During her absence, the City Council announced that they would remove her title of Living Goddess and would look for someone else for this position. Jahuna Bachrachia is Bhaktapur Kumari's cousin:

[Comments in another language]

Jahuna Bachrachia says this decision would not have any effect on Kumari's family, because they did not gain that much. However, Sajani Shakya will be disappointed because she intended to stay a Kumari for two more years. Ms. Bachrachia says there was a misunderstanding of what had happened. The rules for Bhaktapur Kumari are more liberal than the rules for the two other Kumaris. For this reason, her family believed that leaving the country would not create any problems. However, in any event, Shakya's family officially recognized the Kumari Council's decision. This happened while Shakya was visiting several elementary schools and giving various interviews in the United States. She also visited the Washington, DC Zoo. She is currently in India and intends to return to Nepal on Saturday.

[Mr. Khakzad]

You were listening to a report from Amine Bozorgmehr about the trip that the Nepalese Living Goddess took to the US. With this report, our evening news magazine comes to an end. The next segment

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