

Chronology of Events in Iran, June 2002*

June 1

Iranian Students News Agency director summoned to court. (Islamic Republic News Agency / ISNA)

Abolfazl Fateh, the managing director of the Iranian Students News Agency (ISNA) appeared before Bench 1410 of Tehran's General Court. ISNA's managing director reported to the court because of the complaints filed by the Islamic Azad University of Tabriz, Mehdi Khaz'ali [the son of conservative cleric Ayatollah Khaz'ali], and Araki, the representative of Khuzestan Province at the Assembly of Experts.

Analysis: "Young Iranian runaways hit dead end of prostitution and drug abuse". (Agence France-Presse / AFP)

A growing number of Iranian youth are running away from home, with many falling into prostitution. "Fifty to 60 girls are rounded-up in Tehran everyday after having fled from their homes", sociology professor Majid Abhari said. The number of young runaways has increased by some 12 percent since 2000, added Abhari, who helped set-up two centers in Tehran, named Reyhaneh and Green House, to shelter these troubled youth. He believes Tehran is home to "around 84,000 prostitutes", explaining that many young runaway girls take up this profession in order to survive. "Investigators say there are around 200 to 250 brothels in Tehran... the number of prostitutes rises every year by 10 to 15 percent. They are generally girls aged between 16 to 18", he said. "Recently, two HIV positive girls, aged 16 and 17, contaminated 1,100 people in two months on the run", he added. Another sociologist, Davar Shikhavand explained that a large number of girls run away from home because they are mistreated by their parents. "Many suffer sexual abuse from their father or brothers, and out of fear of being beaten, they do not dare to speak about it", he said, adding that "many boys between the age of 11 and 15 are victims of pedophilia", a subject that is largely taboo in this strict Islamic society. He explained that many young runaway boys and girls are brought into sexual abuse networks run by foreigners, adding that authorities had identified 15 such networks in Tehran. In all "a minimum of 20,000 people have run away from home", he said. Many of the young people also turn to drug addiction. It is estimated that two million drug addicts count among Iran's 60 million population. The bulk are young people, since 70 percent of the country's population is under the age of 30. In 2001, 193,000 drug addicts were detained and then freed after being fined and whipped.

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This, as well as the clerics' use of more repressive methods against young Iranians accused of corruption, has fueled frustrations. Roadblocks manned by Basij volunteers, an Islamic police force answerable only to supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, have sprung up again on the streets of Tehran, after having faded out over the last two years. They target "juvenile delinquents", or unmarried couples spending time together under "un-Islamic conditions". This has meant more arrests, with 120 youth detained in Tehran last week.

June 3

Violent groups hinder reforms in Esfahan, says MP. (Iranian newspaper *Norooz*)

A Majlis deputy for Esfahan said that the activities of violent groups escalated in that city. Akram Mosavvari-Manesh said: "Some violent groups are planning to escalate their activities in Esfahan in order to reduce Esfahan's role in the process of reforms... The best strategy for dealing with these forces is separating them from the people and following up [the cases involving] their actions via the law."

Information minister expresses concern about Shi'a-Sunni tension in Iran. (Islamic Republic News Agency / IRNA)

Iranian officials are worried about escalation of differences among Shi'i and Sunnis - the two main religious branches of Islam - the Information Minister said and invited all Muslims to unite against "foreign threats". He lashed out at what he called "suspicious moves to escalate differences among Shi'i and Sunni" in Iran, saying they were provoked by the enemies in order to make the country insecure.

June 9

Tehran court sentences prostitutes. (AFP)

An Iranian criminal court handed down prison sentences over the weekend to seven prostitutes and madams, with three of them still facing the death penalty in one of the biggest prostitution cases since the 1979 Islamic revolution, a judiciary source said. A madam, named Fahime, who managed the country's largest sex ring dubbed the "Nest of Devils" that boasted 30 brothels across Iran -- was sentenced to 10 years in prison, 75 lashes and a fine of 1.5 million riyals (861 dollars). Two women in their fifties, were found guilty of "illegitimate sexual relations" and possession of alcohol. The duo were handed 10- year prison terms and punished with between 160 and 205 lashes, as well as light fines. The three women still face the charge of "corruption on this earth" before Tehran's Revolutionary Court. That charge carries the death sentence.

Four other women from the prostitution ring were sentenced to five-year prison terms, as well as undisclosed fines and a number of lashes. Seven others were sentenced with between 75 and 100 lashings, while five more were banished to internal exile for four months in the city of Nehbandan, where they must report to the police weekly. About 30 women were acquitted. In contrast, the court gave three males implicated in the ring fines only of three-million rials and punishments of 75 lashes.

More than 60 people, including three unnamed senior officials, went on trial in the case on June 2. They were arrested earlier after a crackdown on the various branches of the "nest of devils" in Tehran and the provinces. Members of the ring also "lured young girls and women" and smuggled them to "Turkey, France, Britain, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and other Persian Gulf countries".

Officials say Iran has 300,000 prostitutes. (AFP)

Iran has some 300,000 prostitutes and their number will increase rapidly if poor living conditions persist in the country, a senior welfare official was quoted. Hadi Motamedi said that inadequate resources existed to help them to get off the streets. A total of 1.7 million women in Iran had no homes and one million received no social benefits, he added.

June 10

Vigilante "pressure groups" disturbed reformist meeting in Hamedan. (Iranian newspaper *Iran*)

A planned speech session by two members of Second Khordad activists, Latif Safari and Hoseyn Loqmanian, ended in fighting. The meeting was scheduled to take place in the Mo'tazedi mosque of Kermanshah [western region of Iran] in order to discuss a topic entitled: "Reforms, successes and frustrations". The mosque is located in a busy downtown district of Kermanshah. The meeting went ahead as planned but 300 opponents of the Second Khordad Front stormed the building by chanting slogans. After half an hour, special guards of the Law-Enforcement Force arrived to quell the tension. At this stage, the guards closed the gates of the mosque to stop the people leaving or entering the meeting. The reports indicate that a number of the persons who disturbed the meeting were arrested by the guards. During the ensuing clashes Latif Safari, the managing editor of the banned daily *Neshat*, was injured in the neck by the assailants. The Law-Enforcement Force removed him and his colleagues from the mosque. At least 17 people were left injured as a result of the fighting. This report was confirmed by an informed official in the governorate of Kermanshah Province. The special guards of the Law-Enforcement Force fired tear-gas to disperse the crowd in the area. The commander of the Kermanshah Province's Law-Enforcement Force, Sardar Hamed, accompanied by the director of the Information Ministry and a number of other responsible authorities, arrived in the mosque in the wake of the fighting.

Jomhuri-ye Eslami comment on the same news (June 11): A number of knife-wielding thugs have attacked and wounded several Hezbollahi individuals in Kermanshah. The incident took place during a speech by 2 Khordad members, Latif Safari and [Hoseyn] Loqmanian, in Kermanshah's Mo'tazedi Mosque. The attack occurred after the victims started chanting "Hosayn's [third Shi'i imam] martyrdom is our pride". At that point the victims who had put up with sneers and smirks from Latif Safari and his supporters, most of whom were from Eslamabad-e Gahrab [Safari's constituency], and had apparently been brought to the venue for that purpose, were attacked by these groups with chairs and knives. As a result, one of the Hezbollahi youth, Mehdi Siyahkamari, was stabbed in the stomach and rushed to hospital with few others who were also injured. Three of the attackers - who were part of Latif

Safari's entourage - were arrested after the attack. One of them is called Dariush Safari.

Aftab-e Yazd comment on the same news (June 12): The Majlis deputy from Hamedan, Hoseyn Loqmanian, warned that pressure groups have resumed their activities and are threatening reformers. Loqmanian said: "A particular organized group attacked the gathering in the mosque. It seems that the organizers of the group have felt that their existence is threatened. They have, therefore, taken action by re-activating the pressure groups. By encouraging these pressure groups to resort to acts of violence, the organizers are hoping to realize their own objectives... Over the past seven months no pro-reform group or individual has been permitted to deliver any speech in public. In view of the fact that similar events have recently occurred in other cities such as Arak, it is necessary that the Ministries of Information and Interior should take action to identify the perpetrators of these events." Loqmanian said: "When a deputy of the Majlis criticizes any official of the judiciary even slightly, he is sent to prison. But members of these pressure groups assault the citizens in public thoroughfares and even enter the people's houses by force. Nevertheless they get away with it without the slightest response of the judiciary."

June 11

Iran detains people calling for seizure of parts of Kazakhstan. (Kazakh Commercial TV)

A religious movement calling for the expansion of Iranian territory is winning popularity in Iran. This movement explains this by ordinances made by the country's historical personalities. The Iranian law-enforcement agencies have already detained several people who called for the seizure of parts of the Kazakh land, referring to ancient semi-mythic philosopher Zarathustra and other lesser-known Sufis. According to the latter, the duty of the present Iranians is not to lose the Scythian steppes. Iranian police explained that such an interpretation is a call, which is banned by the law, to start a war and all the members of such movements will be seriously punished.

Homes of Khatami's aides suspiciously burgled. (Iranian newspaper *Norooz*)

Deputy Governor-General of Tehran for political and security affairs announced that an investigation into suspicious cases of burglary of homes of political personalities and offices of some organizations close to the reformist camp is on the agenda of the Governor-General's office. In the previous week, the home of Mohsen Safa'i-Farahani, an MP for Tehran, has been burgled for the second time in one year. Investigation by the police has proved that it was not an ordinary case of burglary and that it should be handled by organizations beyond the Law Enforcement Force. Before this case, the home of Mohammad Salamati, the Secretary-General of the Islamic Revolution's Mojahedin Organization and the [office] of Journalists Guild were suspiciously burgled.

June 12

Book by jailed activist, banned by court but popular in the market. (Iranian newspaper *Norooz*)

It was reported that the latest book by [jailed journalist] Akbar Ganji, which was confiscated based on a court order, was reprinted by offset printing and sold in the black market at a higher price [than the original authorized version]. The manager of Tarh-e Now publishing house, the publisher of this book, was planning to file a complaint against those who have published the unauthorized version.

New head of reformist Islamic Iran Solidarity Party elected. (IRNA)

Ebrahim Asgharzadeh has been elected as the new Secretary-General of the [Islamic Iran] Solidarity Party [replacing Mohammad Reza Rah-Chamani]. In the party's election, he gained two votes more than Mohammad Reza Rah-Chamani and was chosen as the new Secretary-General. Mohammad Reza Khabbaz was chosen as the head of the party's supreme council. Asgharzadeh, a member of the Central Council of the Solidarity Party and a Tehran city councillor, Khabbaz, a Majlis deputy for Kashmar and Bardaskan, and Rah-Chamani is the head of the Welfare Organization. In the election, Mostafa Kavakabian and Shahrbanu Amani were elected as the deputy heads of the Solidarity Party's Supreme Council.

June 13

Editor banned from journalism. (Iranian newspaper *Iran*)

Managing director of the Persian daily *Bahar*, Sa'id Purazizi, was banned from press activities and fined 500,000 rials for allegedly "inciting public opinion, insulting senior officials, undermining the state" and other press violations. His lawyer, Gholamali Riahi, said his client can appeal the verdict within 20 days at an appeals court.

Khatami's local Election HQ chief jailed for conducting "secret survey". (IRNA)

The head of President Seyyed Mohammad Khatami's election headquarters in Takab [in West Azarbayjan Province] and member of that city's Islamic Council was sent to prison. In the month beginning 21 December, Branch No. 2 of Takab's Public Court sentenced Seyyed Ali Khaledian to six months imprisonment on the charges of libel and publication of lies, following a complaint lodged by the city's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, education department and Red Crescent Society. He said: "On the request of the former Governor-General of West Azarbayjan Province, Seyyed Mahmud Mirlowhi, I had conducted a secret survey of the general situation in Takab. But my investigation fell into the hands of Khatami's opponents in the executive organs instead of at the province's governorate." Khaledian said: "Takab's public courts sentenced me on the basis of this secret survey, and the verdict has also been upheld by the appeals court of West Azarbayjan Province."

June 14

Cleric escapes assassination attempt. (Iranian newspaper *Jaam-e Jam* and IPR Strategic Information Database)

A cleric charged with holding the weekly prayers in the southern Iranian city of Fasa escaped an assassination attempt by a member of an opposition group. The cleric, only identified as Yaqouby, was "attacked by a member of the Mehdi Hashemi gang," who "intended to kill the new Friday prayer leader of Fasa" in the southern Fars province. Yaqouby survived the assassination attempt. No further details on the incident, nor the reason for the attack, were provided. Mehdi Hashemi, a relative of senior dissident cleric Ayatollah Hossein-Ali Montazeri, was executed in the 1980s for allegedly plotting against the Tehran regime.

Court summons editor of daily *Hambastegi*. (IRNA)

The judge of court bench number 1410 at the special judicial complex for the state employees, has summoned Gholam Heydar Ebrahimbai-Salami, the managing editor of daily *Hambastegi* [affiliated to the pro-reform party *Hambastegi* or *Solidarity*]. The report was released by the public relations department of *Hambastegi* newspaper, but it did not mention when the managing editor should present himself to the court. The managing editor of daily *Hambastegi* must answer 27 cases of complaints filed against the newspaper by the Guardian Council, the Voice and Vision Organization of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Law-Enforcement Force, the Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization, the Islamic Azad University, the Ansar-e Hezbollah, the daily *Kayhan* and several other plaintiffs. Gholam Heydar Ebrahimbai-Salami is also a Majlis deputy, representing the people of Khaf and Rashtkhar.

June 16

Iranian lawmaker sentenced to 40 lashes, gets reprieve. (Associated Press / AP)

An Iranian lawmaker sentenced to 40 lashes for slandering Oil Ministry officials has received a reprieve with news that the complaint against him has been withdrawn. Akbar Alami told parliament that a court had sentenced him on June 9 to receive 40 lashes after he had criticized the Oil Minister in late 2001. But the Oil Ministry said it had withdrawn the complaint, which it filed in May. The ministry had accused Alami of making unfair accusations, spreading rumors and publishing lies.

Women threaten to leave reformist faction. (Iranian newspaper *Aftab-e Yazd*)

Differences of opinion between Rajabali Mazru'i, the Majlis deputy for Esfahan, and members of the Majlis Women's Faction reached their peak. Rajabali Mazru'i protested to Fatemeh Haqiqatju when she asked the Minister of Science why women were not given managerial posts. He said that this was against regulations. The members of the Women's Faction have described this action by Mazru'i as suspicious and have announced that if he doesn't resign as spokesman of the [Islamic Iran] Participation [Front] faction, all the female members of the faction will resign. Fatemeh Khatami, a member of the Women's Faction, told the Young Journalists Club: "We have reached the conclusion that some individuals who are known to be related to the 2 Khordad Front intend to block the development of women and their

rights being secured... Many times deputies have questioned ministers in the Majlis about why a particular person has or has not been given a particular position. However, whenever we have wanted to ask a minister why women are not appointed to high positions, the gentlemen have become upset and given a warning about a breach of the regulations. We see this action by Mr Mazru'i to be in line with those same efforts to deny women their rights."

Guardian Council cancels planned by-election in Kurdish constituency. (ISNA)

The [by-]election in Sonqor and Kolia'i constituency was discussed by the Guardian Council and, whereas the law had not been observed, the by-election in that constituency was stopped according to Article 11 of the law for supervising Majlis elections. Announcing this, Ali Reza Omrani, the official in charge of Election Supervision and Inspection Office of the Guardian Council in Kermanshah Province: "Qualifications are assessed by the Interior Ministry and local governors' offices based on inquiries made to four sources. The executive board [affiliated to the Interior Ministry] of Sonqor and Kolia'i constituency has approved the qualification of all the candidates by ignoring these inquiries." Saying that at least two of the candidates have penal records based on these inquiries, Omrani added that the executive board of Sonqor and Kolia'i constituency had approved the qualification of all the candidates without any inquiries or documents. He said: "The chairman of the executive board of Sonqor and Kolia'i constituency has said the qualification of all the candidates have been approved because there was not enough time to receive the replies to the inquiries."

Deputy chief justice opposes use of torture. (AFP)

Iran's deputy chief justice Hadi Marvi said he was "opposed" to the use of torture, one week after the Council of Guardians, rejected a parliament bill banning the practice. "We are opposed to the use of torture. The fact that those who commit such condemnable practices against... (prisoners) are being punished proves it", he said.

June 19

Managing-editor of weekly sentenced to 20 lashes. (Iranian newspaper *Norooz*)

The managing-editor of weekly *Seda-ye Orumiyeh*, Mohammad Reza Khadem-Shams, was sentenced to 20 lashes. The five plaintiffs in the case against the weekly were the Basij Resistance Forces of the province, the Medical University, the Office of Documents and the former managing-director of the province's Mines and Industries. Regarding the complaints filed by the Basij Resistance Forces, the preliminary court sentenced him to six months imprisonment and 20 lashes. The appeal court, however, reduced the sentence to a suspended term of 20 lashes.

June 21

Dissident jailed after complaint by Law-Enforcement Force. (ISNA)

Ali Afshari's father said that one month ago, the 1410th branch of the judicial complex of government employees held a session to investigate the complaint made

by the Law-Enforcement Force and that in accordance with the preliminary verdict of which Ali Afshari's lawyer was informed, he was given a one-year prison sentence. According to the preliminary verdict issued by the 1410th branch of the Tehran court, on the basis of the complaint made by the Director-General of the Legal Affairs Office of the Law-Enforcement Force of the Islamic Republic of Iran and because of the complaint made on 6 Aban 1378 [28 October 1999], an investigation was carried out and the court held a session on 30 Ordibehesht 1381 [20 May 2002], Ali Afshari was given a one-year prison sentence. The trial was aimed at investigating a complaint made by the Law-Enforcement Force about a report published by *Neshat* and *Azad* newspapers on 2 Aban 1378 [24 October 1999], saying that the [then] commander of the Law-Enforcement Force of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Hedayatollah Lotfian, had requested to go to the Office for Fostering Unity's camp in Esfahan and that the university students had laid down certain pre-conditions, namely that Lotfian had to appear in plain clothes and that he had to resign his post as the commander [of the Law-Enforcement Force]. However, *Neshat* newspaper wrote that Lotfian did not look favourably upon those pre-conditions and, consequently, the university students refused to receive him. The Law-Enforcement Force also made a complaint about one of the clauses of the statement issued at the end of the meeting. Due to Hedayatollah Lotfian's claim that it was not true to say that he had requested to go to the Office for Fostering Unity's camp, as well as one of the clauses of the aforementioned statement, the acting judge at the 1410th branch of the Tehran Public Court decided that the charges of disseminating falsehood to agitate the people and making false accusations against the Law-Enforcement Force of the Islamic Republic - which are dealt with in Article 698 of the Islamic penal law - had been proven and he passed a one-year prison sentence to Ali Afshari.

June 22

Head of prisons comments on number of prisoners, most common charges. (IRNA)

Head of the Prisons Organization Seyed Morteza Bakhtiari said that there are 167,000 prisoners at Iranian prisons, including 5,856 females and 2,110 juveniles. Bakhtiari told reporters that prisoners related to drugs, who are 98,000, reserve the highest number of the prisoners followed by those arrested on charges of theft and financial crimes.

June 23

Iran raises age of marriage without parent consent, child marriage remains legal. (Reuters)

Iranian authorities approved a law to raise the age at which girls can get married without their parents' consent to 13 from 9 and for boys to 15 from 14. The decision by Iran's Expediency Council arbitration body watered down a bill passed by the Majlis in 2000 which tried to raise the age of consent to 15 for girls and 18 for boys to cut teenage marriages. That bill was vetoed by the Guardian Council, a 12-man body dominated by conservative clerics whose job it is to ensure legislation conforms to

Islamic Sharia law. Iran's clerical establishment has promoted marriage as a means to combat what it calls "immorality" amongst youth. The Expediency Council is charged with arbitrating in disputes between parliament and the Guardian Council. The arbitration body ruling does not change the age at which children can get married – 9 for girls and 14 boys - but says girls below the age of 13 and boys younger than 15 need their parents' permission and the approval of a "righteous court".

Baghdad, Tehran set timetable for repatriation of refugees. (AFP)

Iraq and Iran have set a timetable for the "voluntary repatriation" of Iraqi and Iranian refugees hosted by either country, the Iraqi Foreign Ministry said. The timetable was agreed during a meeting in Baghdad this week of a joint commission on humanitarian affairs. The agreement provides for drawing up lists of the refugees hosted by each of the two countries since their 1980-1988 war who wish to return home. A first batch of 138 Iranian refugees are due to return home from Iraq on July 13, and a group of 295 Iraqi refugees will be repatriated from Iran soon. Iranian Deputy Interior Minister Hassan Ali Ebrahimi said in January there were 220,000 registered Iraqi refugees in Iran, but that the total number of refugees was "close to 300,000" -- a figure below more common estimates of 400,000 to 450,000. Ebrahimi said there were some 20,000 Iranian refugees in Iraq, "1,600 of whom have asked to be repatriated."

June 24

Iranian secret service agents give information to Danish counterparts - ask for political asylum. (Arabic news site Al-Bawaba News)

Four Iranian secret service agents reportedly asked for political asylum in Denmark. It said the four arrived separately in the European country after leaving the Republic of Iran in March 2002 and travelling through Ankara in Turkey and Frankfurt in Germany. They had diplomatic passports, and were giving the Danish secret service (PET) information about links between Iranian groups living in Denmark and the Iranian secret services, citing a former Iranian secret service agent living in Denmark under a false name. The report added that the Iranian officers also provided details of three death sentences ordered by the Iranian government against the son of the late Shah of Iran, Reza Pahlavi, Allreza Nurizared, a journalist living in London, and the unnamed creator of an Internet site for Iranian exiles.

Reformist party launches new journal to replace its banned weekly. (Iranian newspaper *Norooz*).

Islamic Revolution Mojahedin Organization filed an application to the Ministry of [Culture and Islamic] Guidance for a permit for publishing a weekly. The matter is being followed up. This political organization lost its only journal after the cancellation of publication permit [banning] of *Asr-e Ma* [weekly].

Iran clergy furious at "anti-Islamic" remarks of pro-Khatami journalist. (AFP)

Iran's conservative Shiite clergy are furious at "anti-Islamic" remarks of an intellectual reformist journalist close to President Mohammad Khatami. Top clerics from Iran's holy city of Qom, south of Tehran, are calling on the conservative-led judiciary to take action against Hashem Aghajari, whom they accuse of launching "suspicious and

unprecedented attacks against religion and the clergy." In a speech last week in Hamedan, Aghajari, a member of the pro-reform radical leftist Organisation of the Mujahedeen of the Islamic Revolution (OMIR), called for a religious reformation in Iran. Aghajari, who called for a "religious renewal" of Shiite Islam, said that Islam is in dire need of a structural shake-up and that Moslems "should not blindly" follow religious leaders. The reformist journalist based his speech on the thoughts of an Iranian intellectual and philosopher, Ali Shariati, who died in the 1970s in Damascus and who said Islam must be "reformed like Christianity" and that the clergy should be put aside "as a mediator between God and mankind."

Aghajari's broaching of a traditionally taboo subject sparked a verbal war between the reformist and conservative factions through the media of the press, in government and the parliament. "Today, in our country, there are remarks hostile to Islam and we are not doing anything," said Ayatollah Ali Meshkini, a member of the influential conservative clergy in Qom. President Khatami, himself a mid-ranking cleric, also criticised Aghajari's remarks. "Why do certain people try to weaken the clergy under the banner of intellectualism while the true revolutionaries reinforce the regime and the clergy?" Khatami said. The speaker of Iran's reform-led parliament, Mehdi Karubi, said in a closed-door meeting of the chamber that statements such as Aghajari's were an "attack against national solidarity." He also called on the judiciary and Koranic schools to stay away from such polemics. Aghajari, in a letter to Karubi, backed off, reiterating his "allegiance to the clergy" and notably Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. "I am sorry and ask for forgiveness..... if my speech saddened the clergy and questioned their incontestable role in the reformist movement," the journalist said in his letter.

June 27

Students begin hunger strike to secure freedom of jailed colleagues. (Iranian newspaper *Aftab-e Yazd*).

Five Central Council members of Office for Fostering Unity (Students of Allameh University) staged a sit-in outside the judiciary building in the afternoon to request the release of their imprisoned colleagues [who were arrested in a police raid on their hostel three years ago]. The students Sa'id Razavi-Faqih, Reza Ameri-Nasab, Abdollah Mo'meni, Mehdi Aminizadeh and Davar Nazar-Ardebili, after an hour of consultation with one another, held a sit-in in front of the main judiciary building in central Tehran. In a letter to the judiciary, they said: "The Central Council members of Office for Fostering Unity have started a sit-in with hunger strike outside the judiciary building, requesting investigation into the fate of student political prisoners and their release as soon as possible."

Iranian Students News Agency report on the same news (June 28): Two deputies of the Islamic Majlis, Ali Akbar Musavi-Kho'ini and Reza Yusefian, visited the strikers to brief them on the investigation into the circumstances of their imprisoned colleagues. The leader of the students, Abdollah Mo'meni said: "At midnight last night a team of plain-clothed officials, who described themselves as members of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps' Ansar Brigade, accompanied by several security officers and policemen from Jami-129 Police Station, came to speak to us. They told

us that we should leave the area because of some security concerns. We discussed the matter among us and decided to stay until we received a specific reply from the judiciary to our request... After an hour of discussion, the police forced us to leave the place. They took us to Jami-129 Police Station, where we undertook to present ourselves to the police at the station, should the judicial authorities file a written lawsuit against us. We finally left the police station at 03:00 this morning.”

June 28

Iranian opposition leader reportedly killed in Pakistan. (Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press news agency)

Unknown people killed an opposition leader of the Government of Iran, Nur Mohammad, in Quetta in the afternoon. Six unknown people entered his home and shot Nur Mohammad. Nur Mohammad belonged to the Baluch tribe who was an opponent of the government of Iran. In addition to this he was accused of dealing in narcotics, too. He was credited in Afghanistan at the time of the Taleban. He had lived, in addition to Quetta and Karachi in Pakistan, in Kandahar and other regions of Afghanistan, too. He had returned to Pakistan from Kandahar a few weeks ago.

June 30

Increased security measures in Tehran criticised. (Iranian news site Iran News)

According to Colonel Sadduqi of the Iranian police, the purpose of the Special Patrol Units currently on the lookout in the streets of the capital is to prevent a variety of crimes and violations such as armed robbery, street disturbances, loud music and all other visible legal infractions, conformant to the existing statutes of the nation.

Provincial publication faces court case following complaint by MP. (IRNA)

A court in the West Azarbayjan Province summoned the managing director of a bi-weekly for the contents of his publication. Reza Monsaref, the editor of the bi-weekly *Avay-e Maku* (Call of Maku), said that he had been given one week to attend the court for interrogation. The court summoned Monsaref based on a suit brought by the parliamentary representative for the northwestern Maku and Chaldoran constituency [conservative Majlis Deputy Mohammad Abbaspur], who was angered by the articles published in the bi-weekly, the editor said. Monsaref was already summoned to the same court by the Islamic Republic of Iran Police (IRIP).

MP calls for end to discrimination against women in job sector. (IRNA)

Member of Majlis women's fraction, Tahereh Rezazadeh called for removing the current discrimination between employed women and men. She asserted that the female Iranian employees, who are working under conditions similar to men, are paid less. Rezazadeh, who represents Shiraz in the parliament, told: "Women are not entitled to fringe benefits on marriage, parenthood and the demise of spouse." Referring to the general expectation that such discriminations would be removed after 23 May 1997 [Khatami's election], she said: "I believe that five years is not enough for getting rid of such discrimination and inequality." Pointing to women from the

community's upper class, she said that women who have managed to adapt to the ruling system due to their close relations with senior state officials don't represent women from various walks of life. She added: "Women should avail the opportunities. The urban and rural councils provide the proper grounds where women might get involved with group and political activities." She recalled that a 30-per cent quota for women's election at urban and rural councils might be taken up by the Majlis.

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