

**MEDIA MONITOR**

**10 injured in Iran after quake hits Azerbaijan border area**

**MEHR** TEHRAN — A strong earthquake, whose epicenter was in the Qabala district in the Republic of Azerbaijan, shook the Iranian cities of Parsabad, Bileh Savar and Germit in the northwestern Iranian province of Ardabil on Friday. The earthquake took place at 9:19 local time and measured 5.7 points on the Richter scale in its epicenter, deep 10 kilometers down the surface of the earth, the Mehr news agency reported. Ten people were injured as they had hurried away in search of a safe place. Also a number of houses with poor construction standards were damaged.



**'Post-JCPOA affairs no less important than JCPOA itself'**

**IRNA** TEHRAN — The issues to come up after the JCPOA (the Iran nuclear deal) are no less than the JCPOA itself, the leader of the Friday prayer of Tehran has said. Ahmad Khatami urged Iranian officials to be careful during the implementation of the JCPOA in order to avoid foul play by the other side of the deal, IRNA reported. He further underlined that due to its sensitivity, the JCPOA has to be reviewed and passed into law by the Majlis before the government can adopt it.



Americans have said the deal has given Washington a chance to infiltrate Iran, Khatami said, cautioning Iranian officials to be careful about U.S. schemes.

**'Involvement of diverse political tastes needed to run the country'**

**ISNA** TEHRAN — Government spokesman Mohammad Baqer Nobakht has urged participation by all political tastes in handling the administrative affairs of Iran. Addressing a national conference by provincial leaders of the Moderation and Development Party, Nobakht, himself the secretary general of the party, urged prioritizing national interests over political gains, ISNA reported Friday. "No political current can lead the country on the path to development single-handedly," he asserted.



**Rouhani cautions minister over auto industry remarks**

**KHABARONLINE** TEHRAN — President Hassan Rouhani has cautioned Minister of Industry, Mine, and Trade Mohammad Reza Nematzadeh over comments directed at a campaign against the Iranian auto industry, says Hassan Fereydoon, a senior aide to Rouhani. The caution followed Nematzadeh's last week remarks against a campaign that has called for banning Iranian-made cars for high price and low quality, the Khabaronline news website reported Friday. "We should act with respect toward critics," Rouhani told Nematzadeh. Nematzadeh had accused the supporters of the campaign of following "an act of treason, a move against the revolution, haram, and against national interests".



**Tehran condemns Yemen bomb blasts**

**ASRIRAN** TEHRAN — The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson has condemned two bomb blasts that targeted a Shia mosque in the Yemeni capital Sana'a, killing at least 28 people late Wednesday. Marzieh Afkham regretted that the people of Yemen are the target of inhumane attacks by both Saudi Arabia and terrorist groups, the Asriran news website reported Thursday. "Today, no region in Yemen has remained immune from war and vindictive attacks and an all-out pressure has been placed on the country's Muslim people to force them to surrender to the aggressors," she said.



**Tehran, Kabul keen on comprehensive cooperation**

**TABNAK** TEHRAN — Iranian Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli in separate meetings with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and his Afghan counterpart Noor-ul Haq Ulumi in Kabul reviewed bilateral relations. "The Islamic Republic of Iran regards the security of Afghanistan as its own security," Rahmani Fazli told his Afghan counterpart, Tabnak reported Friday. Ghani called for more joint efforts in promoting international security, repatriation of Afghan refugees, and fight against terrorism, drug smuggling, and human trafficking.



# Leader wants Majlis to examine nuclear deal

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"I have no recommendation to give to the Majlis about the way to examine [the JCPOA] and whether they should approve or reject it, and it is the representatives of the nation who should decide," he said in a meeting with members of the Assembly of Experts. The Majlis "should not be bypassed" in the review of the nuclear deal, the Leader noted. He also said that keeping the framework of the sanctions regime runs contrary to the reason for nuclear talks, "because the objective of the talks was removal of sanctions". "If we gave concessions in the talks..., they were mainly to remove the sanctions, otherwise what was the necessity to attend the talks and we could continue our job and reach 50000 to 60000 centrifuges from the current 19000 ones in a short period of time and continue 20 percent enrichment and expedite research and development," the Leader explained. The Leader noted that if the sanc-



**The Leader says sanctions should be removed and not suspended.**

tions are not to be removed, then there will be "no deal". Pointing to some of U.S. officials' com-

ments regarding suspending sanctions instead of lifting them, he said the sanctions should be removed and not suspended.

Elsewhere, the Leader described some of the U.S. officials' comments as totally "irrelevant" to the issue of nuclear agreement.

Ayatollah Khamenei urged Iranian officials to counter statements by U.S. officials who say "the structure of the sanctions must remain intact."

"Do not say that Americans are making these remarks to reassure their domestic rivals," he said. "Of course, I believe that the domestic struggle in the U.S. is real."

He added, "But, what is officially stated deserves to get a response. If it is not answered, then the statements of the other party become consolidated."

Elsewhere in his remarks, the Leader said the U.S. policy in the Middle East region is undermining resistance forces and finding dominance over Syria and Iraq.

Commenting on the policies of the resistance economy, the Leader called on the government to prepare a comprehensive plan to implement the resistance economy.

## Austria, Iran share economic, political interests: Fischer

**TEHRANTIMES Political Desk** Austrian President Heinz Fischer has said that Tehran and Vienna share numerous political and economic interests, calling on the two countries to help boost ties in both fields.

Fischer made the remarks in Vienna ahead of his visit to Iran next week.

"We have always left our country's doors open for Iran and favor comprehensive, broad bilateral Tehran-Vienna relations and cooperation," he said.

The Austrian president added that during a meeting with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani in the United Nations last year, he had told his Iranian counterpart that in case the nuclear agreement with the West was finalized, he would be the first European



president to visit Iran.

Fischer meanwhile reiterated that Rouhani had earlier invited him to visit Iran, but the visit could not

have taken place before the signing of the nuclear agreement due to EU policies.

Fischer said that prior to the signing of the nuclear agreement, Israel had several times criticized him for meeting Iranian officials.

In the face of such criticism, he said, "I used to tell them that the objective of my meetings with the Iranian officials was interactions on many issues, including the Middle East status."

Fischer meanwhile said the Austrian vice president for Jewish affairs is opposed to his Iran visit because he says Iran sponsor terrorism in the world.

"But everyone should know that that is a strategic mistake that needs to be corrected," said Fischer.

## Iran submits peace plan to Syria's Assad: official

Iran submitted last month a peace plan to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to try and end his country's four-year war, a senior Iranian official said on Thursday.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian however told a news conference in Damascus that any initiative to end the conflict would have to recognize "the pivotal role of Assad."

The peace plan was submitted to Assad by Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif during a visit to Damascus on August 12, he said.

Assad "welcomed it as a constructive political initiative from Iran, and the two sides agree to follow up on these preliminary ideas via the two foreign ministers," Amir-Abdollahian said.

Speaking at a joint news conference with Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister Faisal Moqdad, he said Iran was optimistic about the "success" of the peace plan.

Amir-Abdollahian, whose country is a key ally of Assad's government, gave no further details.

But he stressed that for any peace initiative to bear fruit, Assad must be

part of the solution.

"Any successful plan to find a solution to the Syrian crisis must take into consideration the central role of the Syrian people in deciding their future and fate, and the role of the government and of Assad are essential and pivotal in the potential solution," he said.

The Beirut-based Al-Mayadeen television channel said Iran's initiative includes a call for "an immediate ceasefire", the formation of a "unity government" and "constitutional amendments".

According to Al-Mayadeen, Tehran's initiative also stipulates that elections

must be held in Syria and monitored by international observers.

The UN Security Council adopted last month a new push for peace in Syria, which Iran welcomed and which Russia, another key ally of the Syrian regime, has endorsed.

That peace push proposed by the UN's Syria envoy Staffan de Mistura is expected to be implemented later this month.

Amir-Abdollahian said he would brief de Mistura, whom he met in Beirut on Wednesday, on the Iranian plan. (Source: AFP)

## Three more Senate Democrats back Iran nuclear deal

Support for the Iran nuclear deal rose in the U.S. Senate on Thursday as three more Democratic senators, Cory Booker, Mark Warner and Heidi Heitkamp, said they would back the agreement, Reuters reported.

"My decision is about seeking diplomacy rather than conflict," Heitkamp said in a statement.

Heitkamp said she believes rejecting the deal is not an option because that would reduce America's standing.

"On balance, I have determined this international agreement is an improvement over the status quo," Warner said, according to the Los Angeles Times.

They brought the list of senators supporting the deal to 37, all Democrats or independents who caucus with them.

President Barack Obama won a foreign policy victory on Wednesday when Maryland's Barbara Mikulski became the 34th senator to back the nuclear deal. Thirty-four Senate votes guarantee that Congress cannot override an Obama veto of a resolution of disapproval against the agreement.

Deal backers are now trying to muster the 41 votes to block a disapproval resolution in the Senate and keep Obama from having to use his veto power. Lawmakers must vote on a resolution by Sept. 17.

Seven Senate Democrats remained undecided: Michael Bennet of Colorado, Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut, Maria Cantwell of Washington, Ben Cardin of Maryland, Joe Manchin of West Virginia, Gary Peters of Michigan and Ron Wyden of Oregon.

A Republican senator who is undecided, Maine's Susan Collins, is expected to announce her position after Congress returns on Tuesday from its August recess.



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## Basij conducts major defense drills in Tehran

Tens of thousands of Iran's Basij volunteer forces participated in massive defense maneuvers held in the capital city of Tehran to boost the country's security and counter enemy threats.

Several commanders of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) as well as government officials observed the exercises.

The drills, code-named Tharallah, started at around 8:30 a.m. local time (0400 GMT) on Wednesday at Velayat Park - formerly a large military garrison - in Tehran, and as many as 50,000 members of the Basiji volunteer force from 250 battalions participated in them.

Thousands of Basiji members marched at the site, followed by ten gyroplanes, twenty paramotors and a motorized flying kite performing aerobatic demonstrations.

A Mil Mi-17 helicopter also conducted a number of airborne operations, namely parachuting, airdropping, rappelling as well as surveillance.



The Tharallah exercises, which was meant to enhance Iran's deterrence power and improve its defense and security preparedness, wrapped up later on Thursday.

Iran has over the recent years conducted numerous military drills to enhance the defense capabilities of its armed forces and test modern military tactics and equipment.

The Islamic Republic has repeatedly underscored that its military might poses no threat to other countries, reiterating that its defense doctrine is based on deterrence.

(Source: Press TV)

## Larijani expects heated Majlis debate on nuclear deal

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"There are people who have found serious and major faults with the agreement," he said.

Among the grievances are the "snapback mechanism" that would allow the West to re-impose sanctions on Iran if it violates the deal and the strict surveillance regime put in place to ensure compliance.

"The sanctions can return," he said, but "for us

this is not possible. We cannot go back to the situation that we were in."

"Once you remove the core of the Arak reactor, you cannot put it back. That is impossible," he said. The Arak reactor will be redesigned under the deal to address concerns about its enrichment capabilities.

"Overall it was a good deal because Iran also

achieved some of its goals," he said.

The opposition-controlled U.S. House of Representatives will vote on the Iran deal next week and it will then move on to the Senate.

The United States along with Britain, China, France, Russia and Germany - the P5 plus one - clinched the deal with Iran in July after more than three years of negotiations.