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# Leader: Election Disruptors Will Be 'Slapped in the Face'



The Leader said the enemies will face a harsh response if they think of attacking Iran.

The Supreme Leader said on Wednesday that anyone trying to foment unrest around the May 19 presidential election "will surely be slapped in the face". "Those who ignore the country's security will definitely be slapped in the face," Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said in a speech to graduating cadets of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps at Imam Hossein University. Ayatollah Khamenei went on to say that enemies are seeking "to create tension and sedition to disrupt order and security" in Iran. The remarks by the Leader came as Iran will be holding presidential and council elections on Friday. In an indirect reference to billionaire George Soros, The Leader also said a "wealthy American Zionist merchant" tried to interfere in the unrest that followed the 2009 presidential election, an indirect reference to billionaire George

Soros who was involved in colorful revolutions in certain former Soviet republics. Intelligence Minister Mahmoud Alavi said in comments aired on Tuesday night that Candidates must manage their campaigns "in a way that protects national solidarity and integrity while not damaging ethics and values of the society." Elsewhere in his remarks, The Leader warned that the Islamic Republic Iran will retaliate harshly to any act of aggression. "The enemy should know that if they think of attacking Iran, they will face a harsh response," the Leader warned. "The era of hit and run is over and they (the enemy) may be the starter but they cannot be the finisher." Ayatollah Khamenei also highlighted the importance of the "deterrent capability" of Iran as a shield against enemies. The Leader also elaborated on attempts by the

enemy to undermine national security in Iran. "The enemy has put on its agenda three short, medium, and long-term goals. Its short-term goal is to disrupt the country's security and create chaos and sedition." The enemy's objective in the medium-term is to weaken economy and make living conditions for people more difficult, he explained. To protect the country against plots by the ill-wishers, the Leader insisted on implementing the outlines of the "resistance economy" in which "national manufacturing and job creation" have been give due attention. "If that path is taken, definitely the enemy won't achieve its goals." The third goal of the enemy, however, is wider in scope where the prime objective is to eliminate the very (Islamic) establishment by bringing about a change in "behavior", Ayatollah Khamenei said.

## Iran, Austria Hold Business Forum in Tehran

Tehran's chamber of commerce hosted last week Iran-Austria business forum during which the sides negotiated development of partnership in various fields including environment, information technology, pharmaceutical industry, oil, gas, and renovation. The 25-member Austrian busi-

ness team was led by the president of Vienna Chamber of Commerce and Industry. According to Masoud Khansari, the chairman of Tehran's chamber of commerce, the value of trade ties between Iran and Austria is currently about €377 million which will reach around €500 million in near future.

## Philippines Agrees to Study 2 Oilfields in Iran

The National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) and the Philippines' PNOC Exploration Corporation (PNOC EC) signed a tentative agreement last week according to which the Philippine company was awarded the study of two oilfields in Iran. According to the agreement, signed in Tehran by Gholamreza Manouchehri, the deputy

managing director of NIOC, and PNOC EC's board member Pedro A. Aquino, the Philippine firm is to conduct preliminary studies on the Pazanan oil field and phase 3 of the Darkhovin field in southwest Iran. PNOC EC is the upstream oil, gas and coal subsidiary of the state-owned Philippine National Oil Company.

## First Cargo of Crude Oil from South Pars Oil Layer Exported

Iran recently exported its first cargo of crude oil to the tune of 700,000 barrels from the South Pars oil layer, Iranian Offshore Oil Company (IOOC) chief told reporters on the fringes of the oil and gas fair in Tehran, which ran from May 6 to 9. Hamid Bovard said 25,000 barrels of crude is extracted from the South Pars oil layer on a daily basis, IRNA reported. "Now, we are negotiating for the development project of the layer's second phase," Bovard said, adding oil recovery from the field began on March 20, 2017 and a floating refinery is based at the field. He further said the IOOC has a short-term plan for increasing crude output from the Persian Gulf fields, however a 20,000-barrel rise by the end of calendar month of Khordad (June 21, 2017) is easily achievable. South Pars, a supergiant gas field Iran shares with Qatar in Persian Gulf waters, is estimated to contain over 14 billion barrels of oil in its oil layer. The field is also estimated to contain a significant amount of natural gas, accounting for about eight percent of the world's reserves, and approximately 18 billion barrels of condensate.

## Strong Quake Strikes Northeast Iran, Kills Two

A strong earthquake measuring 5.7 on the Richter scale hit a remote farming area in northeastern Iran late on Saturday, killing two people and injuring about 400 others. According to Tehran University's seismological center, the quake hit around 10:30 pm local time. The quake hit in and around the city of Bojnourd in North Khorasan province. The quake occurred at a depth of 12.5 kilometers. The epicenter was just 50 kilometers from Iran's border with Turkmenistan in the town of Pishqaleh, which has a population of about 2,000 people. State news agency IRNA said the region was on an active fault line that extends from Turkmenistan's capital, Ashgabat, into the three Iranian provinces of North, Razavi and South Khorasan. Iran as a whole is extremely prone to quakes. The last huge earthquake to the country was at the historic southeastern city of Bam in 2003. At least 31,000 people were killed in the disaster, which flattened the city. That earthquake was measured at 6.6 magnitude.



Iran is extremely prone to quakes.

# Candidates Face off in Final Presidential Debate

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He accused Jahangiri of buying 340 meters of land in a rich part of Tehran at a very low price through favoritism. Qalibaf severely criticized the economic performance of Rouhani, likening his administration to a tree which has not given fruit in four years and that it will not do so in another four years. He also said those who want to create jobs have lost their confidence to the market due to unfettered imports and smuggling of goods. The Tehran mayor blamed the situation on what he called the "four percent" rich people who enjoy privileges. "The interest of the four percent lies in imports," Qalibaf added. However Rouhani and Jahangiri said the value of goods smuggled into the country has been reduced from a about \$25 billion to about \$12 billion. The Tehran mayor also if he is elected president his government would create five million jobs in four years and that 1.2 million of them would be in villages. On how to reduce sale of raw material and instead

focus on end product for export, Mirsalim, a candidate of the Islamic Coalition Party, said the rise in export of oil from one million bpd to two million is an instance of this. He also said the Rouhani government has been "asleep" over these four years. Mirsalim also called for a reform in the banking system. He also claimed 190 of persons who owe large amounts of money to the banks are "loved" by government officials. Mostafa Hashemitaba, a former vice president, who had already said he would cut cash subsidy to all citizens except the poor ones, warned increase in cash handouts, which currently is about \$12, will lead to more inflation. Warning about increasing the cash subsidy as promised by Qalibaf and Raisi, Hashemitaba said cash handouts by the previous administration resulted a sharp rise in prices. For example, he said, gasoline price increased by eight times and housing three times. Hashemitaba, an engineer, also said creating jobs entails "investment and technology". He added if some factories have gone bankrupt it is because they failed to renovate themselves in terms of technology.

Raisi criticized Rouhani for repeatedly mentioning the performance of the Ahmadinejad administration and said was better that a debate was held between Rouhani and Ahmadinejad. However, Rouhani retorted back by saying "I am ready to hold a debate with you" because most of the persons who held posts in Ahmadinejad's administration are now working in "your campaign headquarters". Raisi also said he is a defender of the working class, farmers, and breadwinner women. He said the society is facing with a flood of laid-off workers and the problems is rooted in lack of liquidity but this does not mean that liquidity has not increased in the current administration. He said the loans have been given to "bad payers" rather than those active in the production sector. The cleric candidate also asked Rouhani: "Why have you been negligent toward the poor for four years." He also said the number of poor people have been increased in these four years. Jahangiri also told Qalibaf that according to the State Inspectorate Organization he as Tehran mayor has given apartments in rich part of Tehran with

extremely low prices to certain municipal directors and when the parliament tried to launch investigation into the matter "you prevented it" through lobbies. He also said why the person who disclosed the issue was "put into solitary confinement" for three years. However, he said, when it was revealed that some directors in the administration were receiving "astronomical salaries" they were dismissed and the extra money that they had received was paid back to the treasury. Rouhani also said establishing an "electronic governance" is the main tool to create economic transparency. He also said his government has taken steps to reform the banking system but more work is needed. Elsewhere in his debate, he told the people, "I promise you to just tell the truth". He added, "Again I promise to remain loyal to my promises." Rouhani also said as he had promised in the 2013 presidential races to resolve the nuclear dispute with the West and lift nuclear-related sanctions against Iran, he again vows to help lift the primary sanctions against Iran if he is reelected president.