

## Happy Nowruz

Iranian New Year

1387

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## Ahmadi-nejad is violating Constitution



IranTimes: The Council of Guardians has issued an unprecedented order disciplining President Ahmadinejad for violating the law and trying to accrue more presidential power. The 12-man council has never before told any president that an action taken was an unconstitutional grab of power. The Council of Guardians routinely rules on whether legislation enacted by the Majlis is in accord with the Constitution and Islamic law. It has the right to veto legislation. It is also tasked with supervising elections. But the Constitution gives it no authority over the president. Nonetheless, the council told the president Saturday that he had acted illegally. At issue was the president's long-time effort to kill off 36 independent Supreme Councils that oversee much government business and instead have their business run by cabinet committees. The Majlis did not approve of Ahmadinejad's

edict of a few months ago dis-establishing the Supreme Councils. It passed legislation placing the councils in the statute books. The Guardian Council reviewed that legislation, determined parts of it violated the Constitution and sent it back to the Majlis. The Majlis has three options: revising the bill to meet the council's objections; appealing over the Guardian Council's head to the Expediency Council; or simply giving up and dropping the legislation. But before the Majlis could act, Ahmadinejad issued a decree abolishing the Supreme Councils and setting up the cabinet committees he wanted to run things. The Council of Guardians said that order "lacks legal justification." It explained that the president must await the completion of action, giving the Majlis time to decide which of its three options it will exercise. The action by the Guardians was especially noteworthy because it was the second time in a month that Ahmadinejad had been told he had exceeded his authority. A few weeks ago, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenehi responded to a letter from Majlis Speaker Gholam-Ali Haddad-Adel by saying Ahmadinejad had no authority to tell Haddad-Adel that some legislation was unconstitutional and that the president must carry out legislation approved by the Majlis and Council of Guardians. It appeared to some that it has now become open-season on Ahmadinejad, who is dis-

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## Russia says it will own part of Bushehr plant

IranTimes: Russia announced that it has almost finished setting up a joint venture with Iran to manage the Bushehr nuclear power plant—something the Islamic Republic has never before mentioned. Sergey Shmatko, chief executive of Atomstroyeksport, the Russian state-owned firm building the power plant, simply mentioned in passing that he hoped the joint venture would be fully established within three months. Iran has never said anything about Russia being a part owner of the plant's operating company. It has always spoken of the plant as a wholly Iranian operation. Iran has sent about 700 people to Russia in recent years to be trained in plant maintenance and operations and has always portrayed the plan as one in which Iran would wholly and exclusively handle operations. But Shmatko said, "We agreed on setting up a joint venture with regard to operations under the current contract. After the commissioning of the Bushehr plant, the joint venture will begin to coordinate its safe operations and maintenance." Shmatko did not say if the joint venture was something new, but implied it was not since he said it was provided for in the current contract. On the other hand, the fact that it was still being negotiated suggested it had not received much attention until now. Shmatko said he believed the JV concept would alleviate foreign concerns about the safe operation of the plant. He did not say whether he had confidence in the ability of the 700 Iranian trainees to operate it safely, but some Arabs across the Persian Gulf have expressed fears. Shmatko ducked questions about when the plant would start operating, saying that date "depends on very many factors." The original 1995 contract with Russia for building Bushehr provided for the plant to start operations in 2000. Since then, there has been one delay after another. For example, in October 2003, Russia said the plant would start up in



2006. In February 2005, it said the start would be early in 2007. In September 2006, it said operations would begin in November 2007. What was originally to be a five-year construction project has now passed the 13-year mark without the end-date yet clear. Shmatko said, "The design stage is practically over, but there remains a lot of assembly work to do." He said more supplies still remained to be delivered. A "very essential" point was "hot operational testing." He mentioned the case of a nuclear plant Russia is now building in China. He said the start of operations there was seriously delayed when such testing unearthed a large number of problems. Shmatko said his firm would need to boost the number of people working at Bushehr by two-thirds in the coming months. "We now have new problems on the construction site," he said. "Earlier, they had to do with [delayed] equipment supplies, but this does not pose a significant problem now. Yet, there remains the problem of personnel. There is a considerable staff deficit." He said there are now 1,500 people working at the site, and that another 1,000 would need to be added in the coming months. He didn't say if they would all be Russians or a mix of Russians and Iranians.

## U.S. speeds issue of Green Cards

IranTimes: By Grace Nasri: U.S. immigration has eased the initial requirements for FBI background checks of immigrants seeking to get green cards. According to a memo released February 11 on the website of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services agency, if an application for a residence visa has been pending for more than six months and the only missing information is a

name check by the FBI, immigration officers are now authorized to approve the application. The memo, written by the agency's associate director for domestic operations, Michael Aytes, stated that "in the unlikely event" the FBI name check later turns up negative information after a green card has been granted, authorities can void the

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## Regime is spending big on sex change operations

IranTimes: Iran has allocated nearly \$650,000 this year to help people who believe they are "trapped" in a body of the wrong sex, to get sex changes. Hasti, an 18-year-old woman, formerly known as the boy Nasser, underwent a sex change operation at a Tehran clinic earlier this month. Speaking from her recovery room at the clinic, she said, "I realized that I had a problem

psychoanalysis to make sure she qualified for the operation. In May 2007, a panel of doctors granted Hasti permission for the surgery. Hasti's mother, Masumeh, said, "It was very difficult. I would go pray all night, 'God, please don't let this happen, let him remain a boy.'" Hasti's parents finally agreed after her father set one condition: she must wear the chador. Hasti applied to Iran's State Welfare Organization for financial assistance and the agency agreed to pay more than 35 million rials (\$3,700) toward the surgery. Iran authorized such operations in 1984 under a decree issued by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Mohammad-Mehdi Karimi-nia, a cleric who wrote a thesis on the rights and duties of transsexuals, said the government considers transsexuals to be people who are "trapped" in a body of the wrong sex. In Iran—where homosexuality is punishable by death—the regime has allotted 6 billion rials (\$645,000) this year to help pay for sex-change operations. Hasti's surgery, which involved removing the male genitals and creating a vagina from a section of intestine, lasted nine hours. Her doctor, Bahram Mir-Jalali, is one of about 10 sexchange surgeons in Iran. He says he has performed more than 460 operations over the past 12 years. Bernard Reed, founder of the Gender Identity Research and Education Society in Surry, England, said, "It's extremely enlightened thinking, and it's most welcome. Would you see President Bush or Tony Blair making such a statement?" Now Hasti wears the chador as a sign of her femininity. She said, "I prefer going out with the chador in the heat of the summer rather than being considered a homosexual. I've liberated myself from society, from people's perception of me."



and that I needed to solve it through an operation. Even if lots of negative things are said about the regime, they also do things that are good." Hasti said she knew she was a female from a young age. At 14, Hasti was expelled from an all-boys school in Mashhad and arrested several times because the way she dressed and behaved were deemed "im-moral." Hasti told the Bloomberg news service she thought at first she was a homosexual, but after reading an article in a local magazine about transsexuals, she began researching the topic on the Internet. "Before that I thought I'm a homosexual, but fortunately I got more information and realized it wasn't the case," Hasti said. Hasti worked at her uncle's clothing shop and then a candle factory to save money for the sex-change operation. At the age of 15, she began 14 months of medical examination and

## One God, One Message, One Religion

### Which Religion?

Even though the religious customs are different, worshipping 'GOD ALONE' is the basis and essence of all religions

### Unity of All Religions

Quran 42:13

He decreed for you the same religion decreed for Noah, and what we inspired to you, and what we decreed for Abraham, Moses, and Jesus: "You shall uphold this one religion, and do not divide it."

John 20:17

Jesus said to her, "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Instead go to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God'."

Deuteronomy 6:4-5

Hear, O Israel: "The Lord our God, the Lord is One. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength."

Yasna 34:7

Therefore I wish You alone to be my shelter and helper through truth and righteousness.

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