



## Spotlight on Iran



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### Highlights of the week

- ✓ Iran accuses West of responsibility for failure of nuclear talks in Baghdad
- ✓ Ali Larijani re-elected for Majles speaker
- ✓ Surprise and criticism in Iran over Ahmed Shafik's qualification for the second round of the Egyptian presidential elections
- ✓ "Emigrant Olympiad": 62 percent of Iranian medalists in science Olympiads move to Western countries

#### Iran accuses West of responsibility for failure of nuclear talks in Baghdad

At the conclusion of the second round of talks between Iran and the G5+1 countries, which ended in Baghdad last week without any progress, the Iranian media accused the West of responsibility for the failure of the talks, claiming that the Western countries went back on promises they had made during the talks in Istanbul.

During the talks, which lasted two days, Iran did not agree to Western demands to suspend the enrichment of uranium to 20 percent in exchange for guarantees that it will receive nuclear fuel in the future, and for the suspension of some of the sanctions. The Iranian delegation created an atmosphere of crisis on the first day of the talks, and claimed that the six powers did an about-face from the position they had initially expressed during the previous round of talks in Istanbul, according to which they would offer gestures in exchange for Iran making concessions on its nuclear program. The Iranian media, which reported on the crisis in the talks, accused the Western countries of responsibility for the dead end, and argued that they did not provide clear answers to the Iranian proposal. Fars News Agency said that the representatives of the West

are unwilling to take risks, their interest being to waste time. According to Fars, the West's lack of ability to consent to Iran's proposals is proof that there is no agreement between the G5+1 countries, particularly when it comes to the issue of continuing the sanctions imposed on Iran. Mehr News Agency accused the United States of being largely responsible for the dead end reached in the talks, and claimed that the statements made by representatives of the West during the talks are similar to those made by Israel's Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu (Fars; Mehr, May 24). IRNA News Agency also accused the West of responsibility for the failure of the talks, arguing that the proposal delivered by Western representatives to Iran during the talks is not up to date and lacks balance (IRNA, May 24).

The two sides agreed to meet once again despite their differences of opinion. In the afternoon of the first day of the talks, the Iranian media reported that the talks continued in a more positive atmosphere, and that the Western representatives agreed to discuss lifting the sanctions, having reached the conclusion that it would be better to engage in trust-building measures towards Iran (Fars, May 24). At the end of this latest round of talks, the two parties agreed to hold another round in Moscow on June 18-19. Speaking at a press conference held at the conclusion of the talks, Sa'id Jalili, Iran's chief negotiator, said that Iran had insisted on its right to continue the enrichment of uranium and carry out a full nuclear fuel cycle. He noted once again that Iran had met its obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and that it was the end of the line for the Western strategy of pressure. He added, however, that there is a possibility of reaching a compromise on the enrichment of uranium to 20 percent.



Photo : Hossein Zohrevand

FARS NEWS AGENCY

**Sa'id Jalili in Karbala in the aftermath of the talks in Baghdad**

As the talks came to an end, Fars News Agency summed up the achievements made by Iran in this most recent round. Fars had praise for the way that the Iranian negotiators conducted the talks, saying that it produced a number of important achievements: Iran was able to expand the talks to include regional issues that reflect its regional and international status; it managed to change the negotiation tactics employed by the West from ones based on exerting pressure on Iran to ones based on willingness to cooperate with it; Iran influenced the choice of location and agenda for the talks; it went from being a country that suffers accusations to being a country that demands its rights; and was able to force Western countries to take its rights into consideration and offer it concessions on various issues rather than just demanding concessions from it. According to Fars, the talks reflect Iran's growing bargaining ability and the rise of its regional status, and reinforce the recognition by Iran's domestic public opinion of the achievements made by the negotiators and of their ability to guarantee the rights of their country (Fars, May 26).

In comments and commentary published after the talks in Baghdad came to an end, the Iranian media expressed a variety of viewpoints on their results and implications. Perhaps the most defiant was Hossein Shariatmadari, the editor-in-chief of the daily Keyhan, who called on the authorities of Iran not to take part in the next round of talks in Moscow. An editorial published by the daily said that the Western countries are taking advantage of the talks to guarantee their own political needs amid the crisis that is currently gripping the West, and that they are only interested in taking part in the negotiations to buy some time rather than find a solution to the problems vis-à-vis Iran. By continuing the talks in their current incarnation, which is not based on reciprocity between Iran and the West, Iran would be showing itself willing to play in the enemy's court.

Shariatmadari said that, during the talks in Istanbul, the Western countries had agreed for the first time to compromise on their "red lines" and recognize Iran's right to enrich uranium. The Baghdad talks, however, did not reflect a strategic change in the policy pursued by the West, which once again brought up illegal demands with regard to the suspension of uranium enrichment to 20 percent but did not offer anything in exchange. The representatives of the West did not agree to discuss lifting the sanctions imposed on Iran under U.N. Security Council resolutions, or lifting the unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States. It is unclear, therefore, what reason Iran could have to continue the negotiations.

According to Shariatmadari, the only purpose that the United States and its allies have in holding the negotiations is to guarantee their own interests: controlling the prices of oil, preventing further damage to their economy, and minimizing the effect of the "Islamic revolutions" in the region and the decline in the status of the United States and its allies. Judging by the way that the rounds of talks between Iran and the West have been held so far, it should be assumed that the talks in Moscow will once again bring no achievements as far as Iran is concerned, and that Iran's participation in the talks will only serve its enemies' needs in conducting the negotiations. It would be better, therefore, for Iran not to take part in the talks (Keyhan, May 26).

The conservative daily Jomhuri-ye Eslami also expressed an aggressive approach towards the Western countries and accused them of yielding to the demands brought up by Israel and the "Zionist lobby". An editorial titled "Why did the talks reach a dead end?" argued that the West, led by the United States, is not willing to recognize Iran's nuclear rights and continues to demand the cessation of uranium enrichment, to which Iran is entitled under the NPT.

The meetings held by top Israeli officials with the negotiators on behalf of the G5+1 countries, including Catherine Ashton, the E.U. representative for foreign affairs, as well as with representatives on behalf of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), also contributed to the failure of the talks. According to Jomhuri-ye Eslami, the Zionist lobby in America and Europe was able to influence the talks and prevent them from succeeding. It is the influence of the Zionists in Washington that led to the resolutions passed by the U.S. House of Representatives against Iran in the days leading up to the round of talks. When the U.S. negotiator flew to Tel-Aviv at the end of the Baghdad talks, it became evident that the "Zionist regime" is working in various ways to achieve its objectives with regard to the talks, and that Zionist circles have the most influence on formulating the West's policy towards Iran.

The daily said that, in the current state of affairs, the future of the next round of talks is perfectly clear. The objective of the Zionists is to completely prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear technology, and the West is taking action to realize the Zionists' demands. As long as the Western countries remain under Zionist control, Iran cannot hope for any kind of change in the position of the West, and the talks will come to a dead end (Jomhuri-ye Eslami, May 26).

The daily *Siyasat-e Rooz* also accused the Western countries of trying to waste time. The inhumane sanctions imposed on Iran are the last weapon that the West has in its possession, the daily argued, and if Iran is wise enough to deal with it in the appropriate manner, the West will face humiliation and serious problems. The West, which is concerned that its plans may fail in light of the determination and national will of the Iranians, pins its hopes on continuing the psychological warfare campaign and the pressure on Iran. The Western countries are interested in continuing the talks with Iran to buy time, which would allow them to continue the campaign against it in the hope of eventually forcing it to agree to concessions. The daily called on the negotiators on behalf of Iran to conduct the talks in such a manner as not to allow the West to continue wasting time (*Siyasat-e Rooz*, May 25).

The dailies *Shargh* and *Tehran Emrooz*, on the other hand, said that the talks in Baghdad cannot be defined as a failure. An article written by the top political commentator Prof. Sadeq Zibakalam and published in the reformist daily *Shargh*, titled "The excellent mark of the Iranian diplomats", said that the talks should be viewed as a success for Iran, since they have led to a turning point in the relations between Iran and the West. The Iranian negotiators, Sa'id Jalili and Ali Bagheri, were able to prove to the West that Iran is serious in its intention to reach an agreement and a compromise. However, they needed to prove that Iran, too, has "red lines" from which it will not back down. The negotiators had to maintain a balance between Iran's "red lines" and the need to continue negotiating with the West, and from that point of view they did their job properly. During the talks, the two sides proved that they mean serious business and that they are not interested in stalling. According to Zibakalam, scheduling another round of talks in three weeks is a sign that the West has understood that Iran is serious in its intention to reach an agreement on the nuclear issue (*Shargh*, May 26).

*Tehran Emrooz*, a daily affiliated with Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, the mayor of Tehran, also argued that the talks cannot be defined as a failure, since the decision to hold another round of talks in Moscow is proof that, while reaching an agreement is difficult, there is seriousness and hope exhibited by both sides. It is impossible to reach a comprehensive agreement at the end of a single, short round, said an editorial published by the daily, since of all international issues, the nuclear program is one of the most complicated. And yet, the talks have given rise to an opportunity to reach an agreement, and there is willingness on the part of both sides to achieve actual results. To solve the nuclear problem, the Western countries need to take into account the

economic, political, legal, and regional aspects, and also take into account Tehran's dissatisfaction with how they treated Iran in the past. The rounds of talks in Istanbul and Baghdad are a sign that the West now understands that better than ever before. It was the assessment of Tehran Emrooz that the next round of talks in Moscow, whose positions are closer to those held by Iran, may lead to a turning point and mark the beginning of the end of the nuclear issue (Tehran Emrooz, May 26).

The Asr-e Iran website also expressed its hope that Iran and the West will achieve some progress in the next round of talks. An editorial published by the website as the talks in Baghdad came to an end said that, when it comes to technological progress with the nuclear program, time is on Iran's side, since it can improve the enrichment of uranium and the production of nuclear fuel as far as quantity and quality are concerned. One must keep in mind, however, that an economy affected by sanctions does not serve the interests of Iran. The art of diplomacy is finding the right balance between the nuclear needs and the economic needs, the website said (Asr-e Iran, May 25).

### **Ali Larijani re-elected as Majles speaker**

Ali Larijani, the chairman of the eighth Majles, was elected this week for the position of speaker of the ninth Majles, which held its first post-election session this week. In a vote that took place on Monday, May 28, Larijani defeated Gholam-Ali Haddad Adel, who had formerly served as speaker of the seventh Majles. Larijani won the support of 173 out of the 275 Majles members who took part in the voting, compared to 100 Majles members who supported Haddad Adel's candidacy. At this point Larijani has been elected as a provisional speaker, pending the completion of a number of proceedings intended to finally approve the election of Majles members. Mohammad-Reza Bahonar and Mohammad Hassan Abu-Torabi Fard were elected as deputy Majles speakers, having already held the same positions in the previous Majles.



**The winner and the loser: Larijani (right) and Haddad Adel (left)**

Ever since the latest Majles elections, it was widely speculated that Haddad Adel would succeed in defeating Larijani in the race for the leader of the legislative authority. In the past several days, however, it became clear that Larijani was able to gain the support of the majority of Majles members affiliated with the United Osulgarayan Front, while his rival mostly had the support of Majles members belonging to the Steadfast Front (Jebhe-ye Paydari), affiliated with the radical right wing of the conservative bloc.

After being elected, Larijani thanked the Majles members for the trust they placed in him and to Haddad Adel for taking part in the elections for the leadership of the legislative authority, saying that his participation in the elections was proof of the democratic nature of the Majles. He stressed the need for keeping the Majles independent from the other government branches and for the Majles to be willing to cooperate with them, act in accordance with the instructions of the Supreme Leader, and protect the rights of the people. In his speech, Larijani discussed the domestic and foreign issues facing Iran, first and foremost the nuclear negotiations, the developments in the Arab world, and the economic problems. He said that the Majles will take action to thwart the efforts made by the enemies of Iran to weaken its economy, and solve the economic problems, mainly inflation and unemployment (ISNA, May 28). Now that Larijani, one of President Ahmadinejad's main political rivals, has been elected as speaker of the Majles, it can be expected that the strong differences of opinion between the Majles and the government that have been seen in recent years will continue.

The race for the post of Majles speaker has once again brought the internal disagreements in the conservative camp to the surface. During the days leading up to the vote, the conservative members of the Majles held several meetings to mobilize support for each of the two candidates. The reformist daily E'temad said last weekend that the race for the leadership of the Majles is proof that the efforts to achieve unity in the conservative camp failed. The serious differences of opinion between supporters of the government and the Majles as well as the split between the United Osulgarayan Front and the Steadfast Front once again manifested themselves in the fight for the leadership of the Majles. In the assessment of E'temad, Larijani has the support of the core group of the traditional conservative faction, while Haddad Adel mostly has the support of the Steadfast Front. An editorial published by the daily said that the conservatives had better find a way to define their political identity instead of wasting energy on a unity that will never be achieved. The differences of opinion in the conservative camp are so numerous that the term 'Osulgarayan' cannot be used to define all the members of the conservative faction (E'temad, May 26).

Following Larijani's election as speaker, Raja News, a website affiliated with the Steadfast Front which supported Haddad Adel's candidacy, raised doubts about the integrity of the voting process, and wondered how it is that Haddad Adel, whose candidacy for speaker of the Majles was supported by 132 Majles members this weekend, eventually gained as little as 100 votes (Raja News, May 28). On the other hand, Asr-e Iran, a website affiliated with President Ahmadinejad's opponents in the conservative camp, criticized Haddad Adel's decision to run even after the balance of power between the two candidates became clear, and even at the cost of a deep split in the conservative camp. It would have been better, the website said, for Haddad Adel to carry on with the cultural work in which he has been engaged for the past several years. Having been elected to the Majles, he is expected to fulfill his position as an active Majles member even now that he has lost the race for Majles speaker (Asr-e Iran, May 28).

Meanwhile, a number of media outlets affiliated with the reformist opposition have reported this week that the Revolutionary Guards supported Haddad Adel's candidacy for the leadership of the Majles. The report, whose reliability could not be verified, said that the Supreme Leader's representative to the Khatam-ol-Anbiyaa' headquarters, the construction corporation of the Revolutionary Guards, recently expressed his support for Haddad Adel's candidacy and warned that Larijani's term as Majles speaker must not continue since he allegedly works in cooperation with President Ahmadinejad and

Ali-Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, the chairman of the Expediency Discernment Council, to persuade the Supreme Leader to hold negotiations with the United States. The Digarban website said that the absence of Mohammad-Ali Ja'fari, the commander of the Revolutionary Guards, from the opening session of the new Majles may be a sign that the Revolutionary Guards are not content with the performance of the Majles, headed by Larijani (Digarban, May 28). Last week, Majles member Ali Motahari sparked a controversy after claiming that the Revolutionary Guards had intervened in the latest Majles elections and supported certain candidates. His claim was categorically denied in an official announcement released on behalf of the Revolutionary Guards.

### **Surprise and criticism in Iran over Ahmed Shafik's qualification for the second round of the Egyptian presidential elections**

The conservative media have expressed their surprise over the results of the first round of the Egyptian presidential elections, and particularly with the qualification of Ahmed Shafik, affiliated with the "old regime", for the second round.

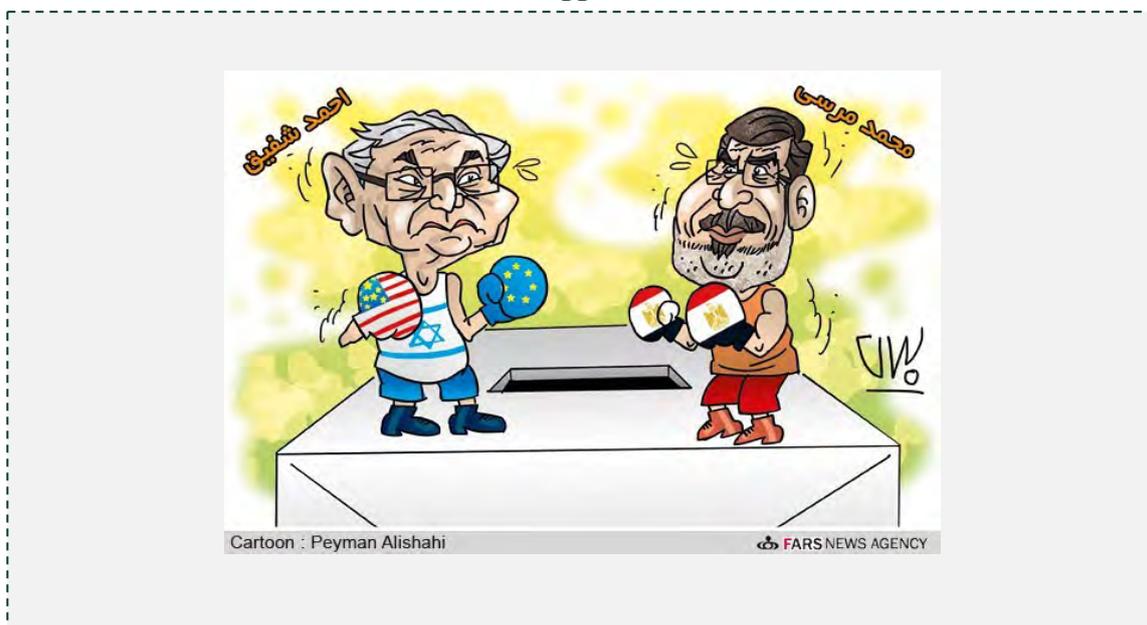
The Asr-e Iran website said that nobody expected Shafik, the last prime minister during the Hosni Mubarak regime, to be able to defeat Amr Moussa or Abdel Moneim Aboul Fotouh and qualify for the second round of the elections. The website estimated that Shafik had received most of the votes from those who used to support the previous regime and from the Christians, who are concerned over the rise of an Islamic government in Egypt. An editorial published by the website after the election results were announced said that the lack of stability in Egypt after Mubarak's fall has many people in Egypt preferring the return of the old tyrannical regime over the current revolutionary state of affairs. In addition, Shafik's achievement also had to do with the relatively low voter turnout. According to Asr-e Iran, the elections in Egypt have proven how important it is to have apparatuses able to support presidential candidates. The candidates on behalf of the Muslim Brotherhood made use of their movement's apparatus, while Shafik took advantage of the security apparatus formerly used by President Mubarak. The money handed out by Shafik and the Muslim Brotherhood candidate in the underprivileged areas as part of their efforts to "buy votes" was significant as well.

The website said that, as far as Iran is concerned, even more important than the establishment of a revolutionary government is the establishment of a government that

will not side with Israel. While it is true that the results of the first round of the elections do not satisfy those who had Mubarak's regime toppled, those people, too, need to recognize the principles of the democratic game. The very fact of holding the elections is a great achievement for the Egyptians, and Saudi Arabia had better be sure that all the young people of Egypt—starting with the liberals and left-wingers and down to Islamists—will not allow Mubarak's regime to come back (Asr-e Iran, May 26).

The Iranian Diplomacy website also referred to the election results as surprising, since Ahmed Shafik had a hand in suppressing the demonstrators during the Egyptian revolution and is considered a supporter of Arab countries, the United States, and Israel. The website credited Shafik's achievement to the low voter turnout and the support he had received from the West, Saudi Arabia, Israel, and the security apparatuses in Egypt. The website estimated, however, that Shafik's achievement will lead to an awakening of the public opinion and the political system in Egypt, which will now rally in support of Mohamed Morsi, the Muslim Brotherhood candidate, to prevent Shafik from winning the second round and tyranny from returning. The situation in Egypt is a sensitive one, Iranian Diplomacy said, and it remains to be seen whether the Egyptians will choose to preserve the values of the revolution or let it be led astray from its path and lose its achievements (Iranian Diplomacy, May 26).

The daily Jomhuri-ye Eslami argued that the results of the elections are an expression of the serious threat still posed by the remnants of the tyrannical regime to the achievements of the revolution. The results of the elections show that half of the voters voted for candidates who took no part in the revolution. Even if the Muslim Brotherhood wins the elections, it will not be enough to conceal the considerable support for candidates who opposed the Islamists, some of whom even supported the remnants of the old tyrannical regime. This is an indication that the tyrannical regime, rather than being based on a single person, is based on a group of people who cooperate with each other. Ahmed Shafik and Amr Moussa were part of the tyrannical apparatus against which the Egyptian people rose up, but the remnants of the dictatorship are still able to run candidates and take part in the presidential elections.



**Mohamed Morsi vs. Ahmed Shafik**

The daily noted that the results of the elections can be partially explained by the differences of opinion in the revolutionary and Islamist camps, the handling of state affairs by the military council, and the existence in Egyptian society of secular elements that fear the Salafis. And yet, the lack of success encountered by the revolutionists and the Islamists in the elections can be mostly attributed to the way they conducted themselves. The lack of determination about the ongoing involvement of the United States in Egypt's internal affairs, their hesitant approach towards Israel, their conduct towards the ruling military council, and the failures in the management of Mubarak's trial and the spread of revolutionary culture among the various sectors of society—all of these have compromised the conduct of the revolutionary front, and particularly of the Muslim Brotherhood. Even if the Muslim Brotherhood does win the elections, its success in handling state affairs is conditioned upon its ability to act in accordance with the revolutionary and Islamic principles and the will of the Egyptian people (Jomhuri-ye Eslami, May 27).

The daily Keyhan, which on the eve of the elections estimated that the two Islamist candidates, Mohamed Morsi and Abdel Moneim Aboul Fotouh, would qualify for the second round, questioned the reliability of the official election results. Keyhan expressed its surprise over the low voter turnout, which was even lower than the voter turnout in the parliament elections, considered less important than the presidential elections. According to the daily, the gap between the achievements of the Islamic parties in the elections for the parliament and the results of the presidential elections also raises big question marks.

The daily claimed that Shafik's qualification for the second round was made possible thanks to a "conspiracy" planned in advance by the Western countries, Israel, and the supreme military council, all of which were concerned over the possible victory of the Islamist camp. On the eve of the elections, Egyptian and Israeli intelligence chiefs traveled to Doha, the capital of Qatar, while a NATO representative arrived in Cairo to hold meetings with the heads of the intelligence and security apparatuses. The Muslim Brotherhood now has to recognize the election results, since claims about the elections being fraudulent will allow the army chiefs and the supreme military council to cancel their results and postpone the elections by six months to a year.

Keyhan warned against attempts by the Egyptian army to destabilize the security situation in the country during the coming weeks to strengthen Shafik's status, as the latter emphasizes the need for maintaining stability. The army can also stage a military coup, since the military council considers the establishment of an Islamic government to be a "red line". The daily advised the Islamists not to content themselves with preparing for the elections, but also to take action in the popular and public sphere. According to Keyhan, the Islamists need to bring millions of people to Tahrir Square in order to maintain their internal unity, thwart the pressure exerted by the military council on the Muslim Brotherhood, and smash the hopes of the United States, Europe, the "Zionist regime", and Saudi Arabia for the reestablishment of the tyrannical regime with which they have ties (Keyhan, May 28).

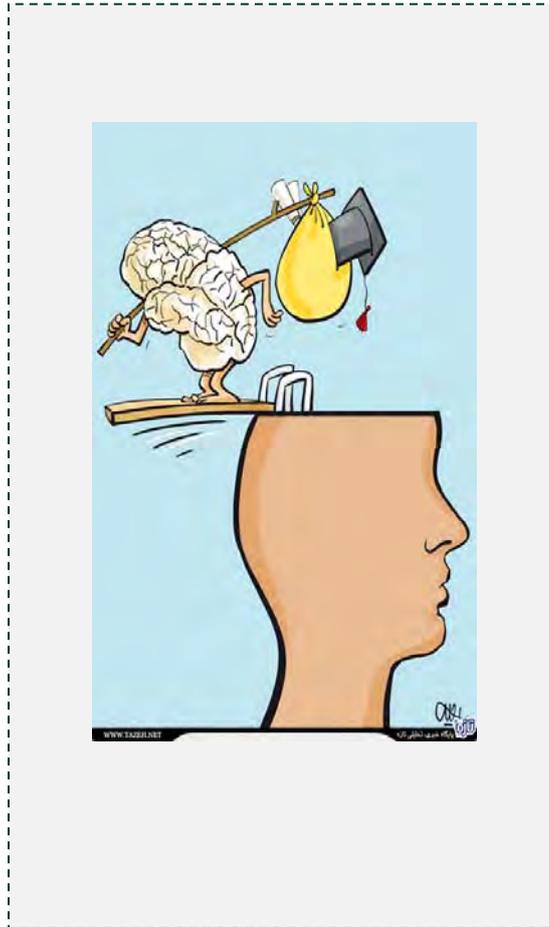
### **"Emigrant Olympiad": 62 percent of Iranian medalists in science Olympiads move to Western countries**

This week, the reformist daily Shargh published on its first page the results of a recently held study about the phenomenon of brain drain among young Iranians who have won medals in science Olympiads (in physics, chemistry, math, and computer science). According to the published data, 62 percent of the Iranian students who won medals in Olympiads held in the years 1993-2007 have moved to developed countries, particularly to the United States and Canada. More than 140 out of the 225 Iranian students who took part in 53 international Olympiads in the years 1993-2007 now study in universities in the United States and Canada.

69.2 percent of medalists in physics Olympiads, 76.7 percent of medalists in math Olympiads, 50 percent of medalists in computer Olympiads, and 50 percent of medalists in chemistry Olympiads now reside outside of Iran. Most of them study and

conduct research in leading universities and research institutes in North America, including Harvard, Stanford, MIT, California, John Hopkins, and Princeton in the United States; and Toronto and Simon Fraser in Canada. 94 percent of these students began their studies in Sharif University of Technology in Tehran. Universities in the United States enroll 75 percent of medalists in physics Olympiads, 40.7 percent of medalists in chemistry Olympiads, 84 percent of medalists in computer Olympiads, and 90.9 percent of medalists in math Olympiads. Universities in Canada enroll 15 percent of winners in physics Olympiads, 59.3 percent of winners in chemistry Olympiads, 16 percent of winners in computer Olympiads, and 9.1 percent of winners in math Olympiads. A small number of the Iranian students who have won medals in science Olympiads now study in universities in France, Germany, Brazil, and Britain. Many of the Iranian experts who have moved to North America work for large hi-tech companies, particularly Google and Microsoft.

The data published in Shargh show that between 4 and 5 million Iranian expatriates now live in 32 countries across the globe. Over 500 Iranian professors (one fifth of the number of lecturers in Iran) teach in higher education institutions in the United States. In addition, various studies have shown that over 70 percent of PhD holders from the University of Tehran are considering leaving Iran (Shargh, May 29).



Source: [www.tazeh.net](http://www.tazeh.net)

Last week Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei stressed how important it is for women to adhere to the standards of appropriate clothing. Speaking at a meeting with women held on May 12 on the occasion of Mother's Day, celebrated on the birthday of

For the past several years, the brain drain phenomenon has occupied a central place in Iran's public discourse, even though top Iranian officials have played down its significance. In October 2010, Science Minister Kamran Daneshjou announced that the extent of the phenomenon was greatly exaggerated, and that the figures on the severity of the phenomenon in Iran were not up to date. Mahmoud Molabashi, the deputy science minister for student affairs, claimed that "brain drain" was an unscientific, meaningless term. He said that what was happening in Iran was not "brain drain" but rather "brain cycle", that there was nothing wrong with Iranian students wishing to study towards advanced degrees abroad, and that the phenomenon could not be called "brain drain". Iranian media expressed reservations over those

statements, claiming they reflected the disregard shown by top Iranian officials for the brain drain phenomenon threatening Iran's society.

According to data released by the International Monetary Fund in 2009, Iran is ranked first out of 91 countries studied in the extent of the brain drain phenomenon. According to the data, 150 to 180 thousand Iranians move from Iran every year due to various reasons, mainly unemployment, the low income earned by lecturers and experts, the lack of sufficient capabilities in the sphere of science, and the lack of political and social stability.

### Pictures of the week: opening session of the ninth Majles



