

Tehran's sex-mad police chief let out of jail for now

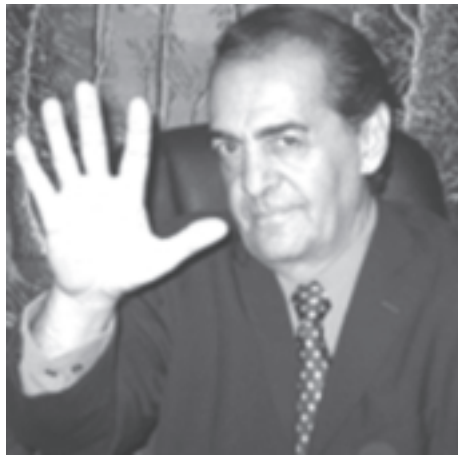
IranTimes:Tehran's former police commander, who was detained in March on accusations of "immorality" after he was reportedly found in a brothel with six naked women, has been released from jail. But whether Reza Zarei was simply allowed out on bail to await trial or was exonerated for lack of evidence remains unclear. State television quoted Teheran Judiciary spokesman Ali-Reza Avai as announcing Saturday that Brigadier General Zarei was freed on bail of 500 million rials (\$54,000) and retired from the police at the reduced rank of colonel. But Iran, a government-owned newspaper, gave a different story about Tehran's former police chief. It said he was released due to lack of evidence for "morality charges." The newspaper also attributed that information to Avai, the same spokesman quoted by state television. According to state television, Avai also announced that a former Majlis deputy has been detained on morals charges while another lawmaker—it was not



clear if the second one was a former or current deputy—faces the same allegations and has been released on bail. He did not name either deputy. In April, local media reported that Zarei was taken to jail after he was found with six nude women during a police raid on an local brothel the previous month. The Zarei case was a major embarrassment for the police, which were enforcing a crackdown on "social corruption" under Zarei's command. The case has been given minimal coverage in the Tehran media.

Regime abducts monarchists

IranTimes:Three Iranian monarchists have reportedly been abducted by undercover Iranian agents in Turkey. Amnesty International reported that Foroud Fouladvand, the leader of Anjoman-



e Padeshahi-e Iran (API), a group that advocates restoring the Iranian monarchy, may have been seized by undercover Iranian agents in Turkey and taken into Iran for detention by the Ministry of Intelligence. He has allegedly been charged with efsad fil arz (corruption on earth) and moharebeh (enmity for God), crimes

publishable by death. Two other members of Fouladvand's group—Alexander Valizadeh, an Iranian-American citizen; and Nazem Schmidt, an Iranian-German citizen—may also be held in Tehran. If so, the rights group reported, all three are at risk of torture or even death. The monarchists were reportedly abducted January 17, 2007, in Yükseskova, a district of Hakkari Province in Turkey, near the border with Iran. Amnesty International said Fouladvand, who had been granted refugee status in the U.K., traveled with Valizadeh and Schmidt to Turkey. They were due to meet fellow monarchists, but may have instead faced undercover Iranian intelligence officers. The rental car used by the trio was found abandoned; its windows were shattered, its wiring cut and its license plates missing. API advocates restoration of the constitutional monarchy. It broadcasts into Iran on the satellite channel "Your TV" that has been operating from London since 2002. Human rights groups have accused the Islamic Republic of abducting Iranian nationals outside Iran, but there have not been such reports this decade, suggesting the practice might have been abandoned. Tehran has consistently denied any abductions.

Cup sells for only \$100K

IranTimes: A battered gold cup used as target practice by an English boy decades ago and later revealed to be a 2,500-year-old Achaemenid relic has sold at an English auction for \$100,000. The gold relic features the decorated heads of two women looking in opposite directions, their foreheads ornamented with knotted snakes. After spending decades hidden under a bed, the relic was tested and revealed to be a unique piece beaten out of a single sheet of gold somewhere in the vast Achaemenid Empire. John Webber, 70, said his grandfather, William Sparks, a scrap metal dealer, gave him the 5.5-inch (14-centimeter) cup as a toy before dying in 1945. Webber said when he was younger he sometimes used the cup for target practice with his air gun, until he finally stored the cup away in a shoebox under his bed. "He had a very good eye, granddad; he was always picking up all sorts everywhere he went. Heaven knows where he got this; he never said. Half of the people in Taunton used to call on him on the way home and sell him stuff—if they'd had a bad day at the races, usually their gold watches." The relic, which Webber estimated was worth as much as 500,000 pounds (about \$1 million), was sold at the Duke's auction house in Dorchester last month for 50,000 pounds (about \$100,000). Duke's had published a guide price of 50,000 to 100,000 pounds. It took less than two minutes and three bids for the cup to go for the low end estimate to a buyer who was not named. Duke's said the winner was a private buyer from Somerset, England, who wanted to add the item to a family collection. Webber said he had hoped it might go to a museum in Iran. Two other items given to Webber by his grandfather, a Roman gold spoon showing lions chasing an antelope and a "Hellenistic" gold mount with a figure sold for 5,000 pounds (about \$10,000) and 1,000 pounds (about \$2,000) respectively. Webber said it was only when he was packing to move last year that he decided to call in a researcher, who sent it for authenticity testing per the British Museum's advice. "Because he [Sparks] mainly dealt in



brass and bronze, I thought that was what it was made from. I put it in a box and forgot about it. Then last year, I moved houses and took it out to have a look and I realized it wasn't bronze or brass. I sent it to the British Museum and the experts there hadn't seen anything like it before and recommended I have it tested at a laboratory," Webber said. The scientific report by Peter Northover concluded the gold was ancient and from the Middle East. Experts from the University of Oxford and Harwell Scientifics in Oxfordshire dated the Achaemenid relic to the 3rd or 4th Century BCE. The low price at auction may have been the result of the highly qualified language of the report, which was larded with words like "probably," "suggested" and "appears to be." Since the cup is unique, the report said it was extraordinarily difficult to say definitively what it was.

1 Japanese freed; 16 cops taken captive

By: Grace Nasri

IranTimes:A Japanese tourist kidnapped in October by a Baluchi gang while traveling in Iran's southeast was released just as 16 Iranian policemen were abducted, apparently by another Baluchi gang. Satoshi Nakamura, 23, was released, eight months after he was taken hostage near Bam. Officials gave no details as to where he was freed and whether any conditions were met to win the release. But the commander of the Iranian border patrol, Qassem Rezaei, said the release was secured without giving in to the demands of the kidnapers. Nakamura told reporters in Tehran, "Basically, I have not been treated badly or subjected to violence in the past eight months, so I could come back in such a healthy body without any illness or injury." He said it was "somewhat tough for me mentally.... I tried to keep my nerves by thinking about my family." Iranian Intelligence Minister Gholam-Hossain Mohseni-Ejai said drug smugglers and armed bandits were responsible for the kidnapping. He said, "The main agents of the abduction were arrested and the fugitive rebels in Pakistan had to release the Japanese national and the Friday prayer leader from the town of Fahraj," who was kidnapped in April. Nakamura was abducted as he headed toward the citadel of Bam in Kerman province. He had been traveling alone after teaching Japanese and English in Nepal with a volunteer group. According to Iranian authorities, a bandit named Esmail Shahbakhsh—blamed for the kidnapping—had demanded the release of his jailed son in exchange for Nakamura. Shahbakhsh is said to be the same bandit whose gang in August abducted two Belgian tourists who were later freed. Tourists continue to use the roads to cross from Iran into Pakistan despite clear warnings and the kidnapping of at least six foreigners in the area since 1999. Most of the cases have been resolved peacefully, although a German national was killed in 1999. About the time of Nakamura's release, a group attacked a police station in Saravan in the province of Sistan-Baluchestan, kidnapping 16 Iranian police officers, who were likely taken across the border into Pakistan. A senior Pakistani government official who asked



not to be identified told Agence France Presse, "We have received a request from the Iranian government to trace the militants and secure a safe return of their officers." Pakistani troops last August secured the release of 21 Iranian port officials kidnapped by militants in southeastern Iran and then taken across the border. Deutsche Presse-Agentur (DPA) reported the rebel group Jundallah (God's Army), headed by Abdel-Malik Rigi, yet another Baluchi rebel, claimed responsibility for the kidnappings in a phone call made to journalists in the provincial capital of Quetta. Maulvi Abdur Rauf, a spokesman for the group, told DPA, "Iran has two weeks to free our comrades otherwise they [the border guards] will be killed." In August, Iran blamed the same group for taking 30 people hostage in the same province. The hostages, who were also taken across the border into Pakistan, were freed by Pakistani forces. Jundallah also claimed responsibility for a fatal attack last year on a Pasdar bus that killed 13 people. The group says it fights for the rights of Baluchi Sunnis oppressed by Iran's government. Meanwhile, Pakistan handed over four senior members of the Jundallah to Iran. Among the rebels handed over was Abdel-Hamid Rigi, brother of Jundallah's leader. "[Abdel-Hamid] Rigi had been jailed in Quetta, Pakistan, over the past year. But he was handed over [to Iranian authorities] after Iran presented evidence that these people were Iranian nationals," IRNA reported.

'Get married now or get fired'

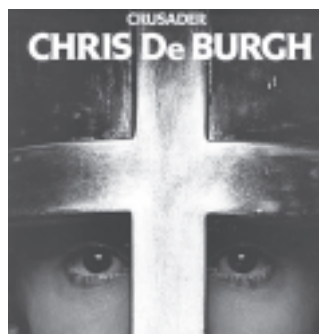
IranTimes:A major state-owned company has announced it will fire any employees who are not married by mid September, citing marriage as a religious duty. The reformist Etemad daily identified the firm as the Pars Special Economic Energy Zone Company (PSEEZC), which covers many of Iran's gas and petrochemical facilities on the Persian Gulf shores. Etemad quoted the firm's directive: "Unfortunately some of our colleagues did not fulfill their commitments and are still single. As being married is one of the criteria of employment, we are announcing for the last time that all the female and male colleagues have until September 21 to go ahead with this important and moral religious duty." The directive was signed by the head of security of PSEEZC and invoked the hadith, the sayings of the Prophet Mohammad, to encourage employees to get married and fulfill what the company said was their religious duty. The directive said employee contracts would be annulled October



22 if the employee was found to be single. The zone of refineries is located on Iran's southern coastal energy hub Assaluyeh where temperatures rise up to 122 degrees Fahrenheit (50 centigrade) in the summer. Employees of the company typically tend to be young males drawn by the lure of substantial salaries.

De Burgh in trouble over lyrics calling Saladin whoring drunk

IranTimes: Singer Chris de Burgh's dreams of performing in Iran are now being questioned because one of his earlier songs characterized a Muslim hero as a "whoring" drunk. The British-Irish pop singer has said he wants to be the first Western act to perform in Iran since the revolution in 1979—the same year he released the album "Crusader." One of the tracks on that album may cause problems with Iran's Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, the ministry that ensures all musical lyrics and styles do not contradict Islamic values. On the title track, which references the 1187 capture of Jerusalem by the



Muslim Kurdish leader Saladin, de Burgh sings, "Jerusalem has fallen to the hand of some be-deviled eastern heathen who has seized the Holy Land." The song goes on to describe Saladin "whoring and drinking and snoring and sinking." The cover of "Crusader" also features de Burgh wearing a medieval Crusaders' helmet resembling a Christian cross. But the 59-year-old singer, in his biography written by Tony Clayton-Lea, said the message of the song was actually reconciliation. "The point of 'Crusader' was not an historical event, necessarily, but the mixing together of old and new wars, of the idea that maybe former enemies could combine." It isn't known if the Culture Ministry has been aware of "Crusader," but after The Mirror of London made a point of citing the lyrics on page three Monday, the ministry is bound to catch on. If the Cultural Ministry approves de Burgh's visit, he will join with Arian—an Iranian band with which he has recorded songs—in a joint performance.