

## Evin may not be a prison much longer

IranTimes: Evin prison may lose some of its controversial allure as the government plans to convert it into a mere detention center and to move



convicted prisoners to a new locale. For decades, prisons in Iran have combined under one roof all detainees, whether held for questioning,

awaiting trial or convicted and sentenced. But Iran's prison rules actually direct that Iran's lock-ups be divided into detention centers, to hold only those not yet convicted, and prisons, to hold those convicted and serving out their terms. Mahmud Salar-kia, Tehran's deputy prosecutor, told the Mehr news agency that a new prison was being constructed outside Tehran and that Evin prison would in the future be a detention center only. He didn't say when the new prison would be ready and the change made. Evin was built in 1971 in far northwestern Tehran as a Savak prison. It originally was designed for 320 prisoners, but has been expanded many times over. Under the new arrangement, the newly arrested, whether on political or criminal charges, are still going to find themselves locked up initially in Evin.

## Sex charges against police chief dropped

IranTimes: The Judiciary says all charges against Tehran's former police chief have been dropped and he is a free man—but no longer a police officer. Gen. Reza Zarei, 52, the chief of the capital's police force was arrested in the spring while reportedly cavorting in a bordello with a half dozen naked prostitutes. The arrest was revealed just as the United States was learning of New York Gov. Eliot Spitzer's similar escapades with prostitutes. Zarei was released from jail earlier this month and retired from the police with the rank of colonel, a reduction of one rank. Ali-Reza Avai, the head of the Tehran Justice Department, has now told a news conference that the case against Zarei was heard by the provincial Penal Court, whose judges ruled that the evidence presented to them was not sufficient for a conviction. Avai did not detail the charges



or the evidence. It was not known if the prostitutes with whom Zarei allegedly cavorted were called as witnesses. The daily Etemad said Avai's news conference "left the attending journalists astonished." Zarei spent more than three months in detention.

## Don't speak Farsi while pumping gas

IranTimes: Ohio police have arrested and charged a man in connection with the shooting of a Muslim three weeks ago in an apparent hate crime. The Muslim was shot in the abdomen when he was overheard speaking his native Uzbek language as he pumped gas. The shoot-



ing was caught on a surveillance camera. Prior to the June 20 shooting, the man and his son were reportedly derided by a group of men after the group heard the Uzbek father and son speaking in their native language and subsequently heard the father saying an Islamic prayer in Arabic. The group reportedly mocked the father and son and scornfully imitated the languages. Last

month, less than three weeks after the shooting, Cleveland police charged William "Happy" Neal in the shooting; the FBI is investigating the possibility that the shooting could be a hate crime. Executive Director Julia Shearson of the Cleveland chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) said, "We appreciate the swift and concerted action of the Cleveland Police, the FBI and city officials in making this arrest. We trust the investigation will continue, and that this case will be prosecuted vigorously." Similar incidents targeting Muslims and Islamic institutions have occurred nationwide in the past few months. In April, CAIR's Kansas chapter sought hate crime charges against the perpetrator of a March "Molotov cocktail" attack on a Kansas Muslim. That same month, CAIR's Minnesota chapter asked the FBI to investigate reported threats against Minnesota's Tarek ibn Ziyad Academy charter school as possible hate crimes. Other recent incidents include a firebomb attack on a Minnesota Muslim-owned business and an arson attack on a Tennessee mosque by three members of the white-supremacist "Christian Identity" movement.

## Iran basketball team wins 1st periods in Utah

IranTimes: Iran's national basketball team has made it to the Olympics for the first time in six decades after their first place victory at the Asian Basketball Championships. As part of their preparation for the Olympic games, the Iranian team was invited by the National Basketball Association (NBA) to train in Utah for six days and to compete against clubs including the Utah Jazz and Dallas Mavericks professional basketball teams. In their first match, they led the Dallas Mavericks throughout the first quarter before succumbing to a final 79-62 score. In the game against the Utah Jazz Monday, they also led throughout the first quarter, but then fell behind and lost 82-57. The Salt Lake Tribune was impressed by the Iranian team—but really taken by the enthusiasm of the Iranian-American fans—"100 flagwaving, kazoo-blowing, chanting-in-unison fans who made an NBA summer league game feel like a World Cup final." The one reminder that this was not a routine game was the extra security—police at each door and metal detectors at the entrance. But of trouble there was naught. The Tribune reported, "A super-fan on a kazoo, who has more wind than the entire U.S. Senate, never stopped. His country-

men cheered wildly over every made basket, every rebound, every made free throw and every steal." Jazz Coach Tyrone Corbin loved it. "Their fans came out and made a lot of noise for them. And their team did a good job of responding to that and playing with their hearts." Be-



fore the game, Brian McIntyre, the senior vice president for communications of the NBA, said the association sought guidance from the State Department knowing that the U.S. and Iran have not maintained diplomatic relations for decades. But the State Department encourages

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## Islam not reason enough to open FBI investigation

IranTimes: U.S. Attorney General Michael Mukasey says no investigation will be opened on any person purely because that person is Muslim, but he left open the option of opening an investigation for several reasons, one of which can be the person's Islamic faith. During nearly three hours of testimony last Wednesday at a U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee hearing, Mukasey answered questions about a proposal that might incorporate racial and ethnic profiling in creating terrorist profiles; critics fear the policy could potentially single out Muslims and people of Middle Eastern descent. Mukasey said he was considering changing the Justice Department's current policies to let FBI agents "have clearer and more consistent rules governing how they conduct national security and criminal investigations." "It is...important that we do everything we can to give our national security professionals, who will be confronting the al-Qaeda threat in this administration and the next, the tools they need to keep us safe," Mukasey said in his prepared testimony for the Senate panel. Currently, the FBI cannot open a probe without specific evidence of criminal activity. Democratic Senator Russ Feingold of Wisconsin questioned Mukasey about a proposal that would allow the FBI to investigate Americans without any evidence they have done anything wrong. The controversial policy would allow agents to begin investigations by relying on a terrorist "profile" that many fear could single out Muslims and



people of Middle Eastern descent. Mukasey said race, ethnicity or religion would not be the sole factor used in deciding whether to open an investigation. But he did not rule out the possibility that race and ethnicity might be used in conjunction with other factors—like travel to the Middle East or gun ownership—to create a profile of a potential terrorist. "I'm not prepared to discuss today particular hypotheticals one way or the other," Mukasey told Feingold, explaining that agents have been taking these characteristics into consideration since shortly after the 9-11 attacks. Mukasey also said such investigations—and what's used to trigger them—will undergo scrutiny both by senior FBI and Justice Department officials. The American Civil Liberties Union sent letters last month to the House and Senate Judiciary panels urging an investigation of the policy, which could be put in place this month.

## Driving by tongue

IranTimes: An Iranian-American assistant professor has helped develop a tongue driven system for operating wheelchairs by those paralyzed from the neck down. The system uses a tiny magnet to help disabled people steer a wheelchair or operate a computer using only the tip of their tongue. The tiny magnet, the size of a rice grain, is implanted under the tongue. "We chose the tongue to operate the system because unlike hands and feet, which are controlled by the brain through the spinal cord, the tongue is directly connected to the brain by a cranial nerve that generally escapes damage in severe spinal cord injuries or neuromuscular diseases. Tongue movements are also fast, accurate and do not require much thinking, concentration or effort," said Maysam Ghovanloo, an assistant professor in the Georgia Tech School of Electrical and Computer Engineering, who developed the system with graduate student Xueliang Huo. A headset with magnetic field sensors detects the magnetic tracer on the tongue and transmits wireless signals to a small computer, which can be carried on the user's clothing or wheelchair. "This device could revolutionize the field of assistive technologies by helping individuals with severe disabilities, such as those with high-level spinal cord injuries, return to rich, active, independent and productive lives," Ghovanloo

said in a statement. The team reported on their device to a meeting of the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America in Washington, D.C. The researchers said the computer could be programmed to recognize a unique set of specific tongue movements for each user. "An individual could potentially train our system to recognize touching each tooth as a different command," Ghovanloo said. During a test session, novice users with the current Tongue Drive prototype showed a response time of less than one second with almost 100 percent accuracy for the six individual commands. Ghovanloo received his B.S. in electrical engineering from the University of Tehran in 1994 and his M.S. in biomedical engineering from Tehran's Amir Kabir Institute of Technology in 1997. From 1994 to 1998, he worked at Industrial Development for Electronic Application, Inc., where he participated in the design and development of a modular patient care monitoring system. In December 1998, he founded Sabz Negar Rayaneh Co. Ltd., where he developed physiological and pharmacology laboratory equipment. Ghovanloo received his second M.S. and his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan in electrical engineering in 2003 and 2004.

## Woman to carry flag at Olympics

IranTimes: Homa Hosseini, a 20-year-old woman rower who has secured a spot in the 2008 Beijing Olympics, has been chosen to carry Iran's national flag at the opening ceremonies. Hosseini said she was surprised but thrilled. In an interview with Agence France Presse, Hosseini said, "I was so excited when I heard the news. For me it is a pleasure to carry our flag. I cannot express my feelings right now. I don't think I deserve to carry the flag because it makes me more responsible for my country. But I am sure this will help me show my best performance at the games. I hope I can be a good representative for Iranian sports." This isn't the first time a woman has been chosen by Iran's Olympic Committee to carry the flag. At the 1996 Atlanta games, Lida Fariman, who secured a spot in the Olympics in air rifle, carried Iran's flag. Before the selection was announced, many thought Hossain Rezazadeh or Hadi Saei—two Iranian athletes who won gold for Iran in the last Olympics—would be asked to carry the flag. Hosseini grew up in Kermanshah province and from a young age had dreams of becoming a basketball star. The six-foot-tall Hosseini will wear a headscarf and bodycovering outfit to abide by Iran's Islamic dress rules, which she said was "not a problem." It has only been a couple of years since Iran began pushing row-

ing for both sexes and the hopefuls chosen in the original search process went through physical tests to test their potential. Hosseini said she originally played basketball but tried out for rowing when her coach announced Iran was looking for female rowers. "I was on the basketball team in Kermanshah province where I lived," Hosseini said. "Then one day our coach said that the Iranian rowing and kayak federation was seeking women who are tall and eager to try a new sport for the national team." Only half a dozen women made Iran's rowing team out of 400 who showed up at selection trials. "I started my rowing without any prior knowledge or skill in the sport. But now, after two years, here I am representing my country in one of the most important international games," said Hosseini. Hosseini secured a spot at the Olympics for Iran in the Asian qualifying trials in China a month ago. But she is realistic about her chances in Beijing, where she will face more experienced and powerful rowers like the perennial rivals Romyana Neykova of Bulgaria and Ekaterina Karsten Khodotovitch of Belarus. "I know that it will be very difficult to get to the next stage of the competition, other girls have been training for this game for the past five years, while we

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