

<p>England striker Alan Smith (r) from Leeds United battling for the ball with Liverpool's Igor Biscan</p>  <p>10</p>	<p>Music groups from Azerbaijan Republic will perform a series of concerts at Azadi Cultural Complex, May 3-7</p>  <p>12</p>	<p>Saudi Arabia's Oil Minister Ali Al-Nuaimi said his country remains committed to OPEC's target price</p>  <p>11</p>
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Lari:

## GC Obligated To Clarify Disqualifications

TEHRAN, April 28--Interior Minister Abdolvahed Mousavi Lari on Wednesday said Council Secretary Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati has received sufficient responses to his recent remark that the GC is not obliged to explain the disqualification of nominees before the Seventh Majlis elections.

According to ISNA, the minister, who was speaking to reporters

after a cabinet meeting, added, "The rule of law is quite transparent. The GC cannot do whatever it wishes and is obliged to officially declare why it rejected nominees during the last Majlis race. I am surprised that Jannati made such a comment."

Referring to the fifth anniversary of the city and village councils, Lari said, "The councils are on the right track. They have overcome various problems.

Every year we took a step forward and improved the transparency of the councils' affairs."

The minister noted that differences among the executive bodies, the municipalities and the councils have been removed.

"The important point at stake is that the councils are continuing to carry out their legal duties and supervise the performances of the municipalities," he declared.

TEHRAN, April 28--President Mohammad Khatami on Wednesday said skyrocketing prices of goods and services must be brought under control.

According to IRNA, the president, who was speaking to reporters after a cabinet meeting, went on to add, "I am very worried about the high prices (of goods and services). This is either because the government has not supervised effectively or that the prices have been set in an incorrect manner. It is natural to some extent to have high prices. However, in some instances, the government is to be blamed. Perhaps the government is not guilty for all the price hikes, but an effective supervision needs to be exercised. It seems that the situation has gone out of hand. We must think of ways of protecting the people's purchasing power."

Stressing that the Management and Planning Organization (MPO) and related ministries have been performing in a harmonious manner, he castigated the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting for airing a comedy show that blamed all price hikes on the rise in gasoline price. Asked about the letter that he would be writing to the country's youth to discuss untold issues, Khatami said, "On Tuesday, I told the youth that I need the proper opportunity to discuss their problems effectively.

This does not imply that I will answer all the questions they have asked me throughout the years. I will rather discuss the present and the future and the misunderstandings that cur-

TEHRAN, April 28--A number of unidentified flying objects (UFOs) have been observed individually

in the skies of numerous cities on Tuesday night, IRNA reported.

The people of Qasr-e

Shirin, Khuzestan province, poured into the streets to look at the circular shining object, which emitted blue and white rays and disappeared after 20 minutes.

A UFO was also detected in the skies of Kangavar on Tuesday night. The object emitted purple, green, red and blue lights and disappeared after an hour.

Meanwhile, an unidentified flying object was also detected in the skies of Bonab (near Tabriz) on Tuesday night. The object reportedly vanished after 40 minutes.

Reports dispatched by IRNA reveal that UFOs have also been seen in the skies of Khoy, Doroud, Ozna, Zanjan and Kashan on Tuesday night, and three days ago in Kermanshah.

**Perspective**

### Change and Interest

*By Soheil Mohajer*

**B**efore the March 2003 US invasion of Iraq, analysts maintained America's military presence in a country at the heart of the Middle East and with special geopolitical and geostrategic characteristics, would serve as a prelude to major changes in the volatile region and affect both Arab and non-Arab countries.

Regional observers then said Washington accepted to pay the heavy price of fighting a Muslim nation for two reasons: ensure access to energy resources, and make regional changes aimed at thwarting any threat against the self-styled superpower.

America believes that the abundance of oil reserves in the Persian Gulf on the one hand, and absence of political and social freedoms in the littoral states on the other, have indeed created a climate for the expansion of radical movements, which in the long run threaten US interests at the regional and global levels.

The validity of this standpoint was in fact partly verified in the US Iraq policy. To very many it seems the US military presence in this part of the world will have a domino effect, in that almost all regional countries will have their share of change.

The word of a US contingent attack on Iran and Syria was built on this postulate. However, over time the existing realities enfeebled such rumors.

It needs recalling that Washington declared the 'Greater Middle East' initiative which is based on US national security and interests.

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