



## Women to have active presence in society, considering Islamic criteria

*Tehran Times Women's Desk*  
**TEHRAN** — Women should reach a position in which they would have an active presence in the society, preserving moral criteria and receiving equal rights, the chairperson of the International Institute for Inter-faith Dialogues (IID), Seyed Mohammad Khatami said here last week.

Encouraging women to have an active presence in the society seeks hard work and deep study, the former Iranian president expressed in a meeting with the members of the "central council of Muslim women thinkers."

Establishment of women's organizations, studying women's problems and finding solutions for them leads to women's improvement and consequently development of the families and the whole society.

We are living in a sensible period of history, in which the Muslim people should clarify their duties toward themselves and toward the world. It is not just women's duty, but every human being should know how to act as a Muslim in today's world with its specifications, Khatami concluded.

## 10% of Tehran managerial posts in women's hands, by mid-March



*Tehran Times Women's Desk*  
**TEHRAN** — By the end of the current lunar year (ending March 21, 2009) Iranian female managers will hold about 10 percent of managerial posts in the capital city of Tehran, Masoumeh Ebtekar, a member of Tehran City Council said here on Thursday.

Women will have more active presence in city management, Ebtekar said quoting Tehran's Mayor, Mohammad-Baqer Qalibaf, who announced that at least 10 percent of the city managers will be appointed from qualified female administrators by the end of the current year.

Speaking at the 1st congress of "women's inventions and innovations in city management" Ebtekar laid stress on the outstanding inventions of Iranian women in different

urban issues which prove the fact that women spare no efforts in solving urban problems or promotion of the quality of city life.

Most of the innovations or inventions presented to the festival are applicable to the municipality and other organizations, she maintained highlighting the special section of women's innovation and invention as the strong point of the event.

"Today women play a key role in the society, especially in city management which calls for the officials to pay more attentions to the issue," Ebtekar said evaluating the outlook of women's presence in the city management positive.

By now, the capital city of Tehran was mainly administrated by men which was influenced by macro policies of the country, she noted emphasizing that today the number of women who have active presence in the city management is inconsiderable.

She hoped for the improvement of women's presence in the city management through the changes created in the viewpoints of the officials who observe the points raised in the congress.



**Saudi women's group wins EU rights prize**  
**RIYADH (AFP)** — A Saudi charity which helps divorced and underprivileged women has won a European Union prize for human rights groups in the Persian Gulf, the Riyadh office of the European Commission said on Wednesday.

The Al-Nahda Philanthropic Society for Women won the first Chaillot Prize over several other rights groups for its range of activities, including preparing underprivileged and under-educated women for jobs, setting up a school for Down Syndrome children, and assisting needy families, according to the Commission. The award was announced to mark the 60th anniversary on Wednesday of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, originally presented to the UN General Assembly at the Palais de Chaillot in Paris.

**UN loans to micro-finance scheme for poor Indian women**  
**NEWYORK (UN News Center)** — A new United Nations loan of over \$30 million seeks to boost the social and economic power of rural women in India's largest pocket of poverty.

Women from an estimated 108,000 poor rural households will be targeted by the UN International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) loan, which aims to give women in the Mid-Gangetic Plains of northern India easier access to microfinance and business development services. The loan agreement was signed yesterday in Rome by Shri Arif Shahid Khan, the Indian Ambassador to Italy, and IFAD President Lennart Båge.

**Student receives damages for headscarf slight**  
**The Local, Sweden (The Local)** — A student at a Landskrona secondary school in southern Sweden has been awarded damages for being told not to wear an Islamic headscarf.

The Swedish Ombudsman against Discrimination (DO) has ruled that student was the subject of discrimination. The three local councils that share the operation of the school have reached a compromise agreement with the ombudsman over a compensation payment amounting to 100,000 kronor (\$7,400), according to local newspaper Helsingborgs Dagblad. The student attends a hotel and catering course and the course involves a period of work experience at a hotel. But the hotel refused to accept that the girl wore a headscarf.

**Indian woman gives birth aged 70**  
**NEW DELHI (AFP)** — An Indian woman has given birth to her first child at the age of 70 after receiving IVF treatment, newspapers reported her doctor as saying Monday.

Rajo Devi, who married 50 years ago, gave birth to a baby girl on November 28 after in vitro fertilization, said Anurag Bishnoi, a doctor at the Hisar fertility center in Haryana state. "Rajo Devi and (her husband) Bala Ram approached the center for treatment and the embryo transfer was done on April 19," he told the Hindustan Times. "Both the mother and child are in good health." Bishnoi claimed Devi was the world's oldest mother.

## Anousheh Ansari; proud of being an Iranian Muslim

*Interview by Kourosh Ziabari and Ahmadreza Tavassoli*

The second anniversary of Anousheh Ansari's adventurous travel to the spatial station as the first Iranian space explorer passed over with the reticence of global media who have been busy analyzing the very earliest "side effects" of President-elect Barack Obama's victory in the 2008 U.S. Presidential Elections. In the heat of Ansari's space voyage, American media broached bunches of controversial issues such as the reluctance of half-blooded astronaut to introduce herself as Iranian or Muslim, but she never found the opportunity to clarify this.

Furthermore, most of the newspapers or websites dedicated their conversations to professional and technical matters when interviewing Anousheh Ansari which caused many stories to remain untold.

Following is the text of exclusive interview with the first female private space explorer Anousheh Ansari, the Iranian businesswoman who has perpetuated the name of Iran in the 2007 edition of Guinness World Records Book with her everlasting record.

Mrs. Ansari! Two years passed since you made that historic travel to the spatial station as the first female space explorer; but on that specific time the mainstream media focused on you, not only for being a female voyager, but also for being an Iranian Muslim. What's your conception of being a Muslim born in Iran? Are you restraining to announce or approve it publicly?

I have always advertised my Persian roots and I'm proud to do so. I always start my story by telling everyone that I was born in Iran and show the map of Iran with my place of birth, Mashhad. My Iranian root is a big part of who I am the same way that my life in America has shaped my life. I have always been a spiritual person and my spiritual beliefs were strengthened during my trip to Space. When you see the earth from space and understand how small and fragile it is compared to the dark universe that surrounds it, it gives you a new perspective on life and how small and insignificant we are and how silly it is to fight over things that are but a speck of dust in the grand scheme of things.

Furthermore, I had also brought a copy of Holy Quran with myself to the spatial station which was a personal decision without any political motivation. I also carried prayers given to me by my parents and friends. Also I have to add something for the accuracy of title which I had been given, which many newspapers and TV channels broadcast it mistakenly. I was considered the first Private women space traveler, not the first female astronaut.

The first woman cosmonaut was also the first



was announced, you were not supposed to be that astronaut who had been appointed to run for the mission.

But after your Japanese colleague failed to pass the medical and practical examinations successfully, you were replaced immediately which should have been a kind of shocking news for Mr. Enomoto beside of being an unbelievable, exciting incident to you. Am I right on that?

As soon as I found out, I called him to see how he was doing. On one had as you mentioned, I was very excited at the prospect of being able to fly to space, on the other hand I felt uneasy since I had become friend with Mr. Enomoto during our training together and I knew how much he wanted to fly. When I talked to him, naturally he was disappointed, but he was determined to take care of his medical issue and to try again to fly in a future flight. He encouraged me to fly and offered to help.

I asked him if I could do anything for him and he gave me a few of his personal items to fly to ISS with me, which I did.

Once the news on your space exploration came out in the media, many critics and journalists worldwide stated that \$20 million is too much to be spent for such an individual intention which could be potentially used for charity or instructional purposes, instead. Do you agree with them?

I believe that each person is entitled to their opinion. My family and I worked hard and made many sacrifices for the money we earned and the decision on how to spend it should be ours alone. I support causes that are important to me and my family in the ways that I believe is effective. At the same time I feel that my trip has impacted many lives and inspired many people around the world to pursue their dreams.

Having hope and inspiration is a priceless gift and I was fortunate enough to have been able to play a small role in giving a glimpse of hope and inspiration to many.

For the last question, let me ask if you have any idea or suggestion for the scientific communities and researchers of Iran to improve their skills and find their dissevered global position?

I believe Iranians are very smart and have great potential given the right opportunities. This is obvious based on their accomplishments in their new homelands around the world.

Unfortunately their opportunities are limited inside Iran and because of wars and sanctions and other issues, the country is not considered as a part of the advanced world. I believe if Iran would join the global economy and provided the right opportunities, it could advance and catch-up with developed countries with a few year lag.

(Source: mideastyouth.com)



**Thick cut-outs**  
 "A big batch of big thick sugar cookies. These are THE big soft sugar cookies you have been looking for. Frost them while warm and sprinkle with colored sugar."

### Ingredients:

- 6 egg yolks
- 4 eggs
- 455 g butter, softened
- 425 g white sugar
- 875 g all-purpose flour
- 10 g baking powder
- 3 g salt
- 8 ml vanilla extract
- 480 g confectioners' sugar
- 60 ml vegetable oil
- 3 ml vanilla extract
- 15 ml hot water or as needed

### Directions:

In a large bowl, cream together the butter and sugar until smooth. Beat in the eggs, one at a time, mixing well after each. Combine flour, baking powder, and salt; stir into the sugar mixture. Cover dough and chill for at least one hour.

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C). Grease cookie sheets. On a floured surface, roll the dough out to 1/2 inch thick and cut into desired shapes using cookie cutters. Place 2 inches apart on the prepared baking sheets.

Bake for 8 to 10 minutes in the preheated oven. Allow cookies to cool on baking sheet for 5 minutes before removing to a wire rack to cool completely. To make frosting, mix together the confectioners' sugar, oil and 1 teaspoon vanilla until smooth. Gradually add enough hot water to achieve a spreadable consistency.

