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Iran's oil revenue "love fund"

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Today's contents

2 September, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Iran's oil revenue "love fund"

BNE: The Iranian government has a plan for a billion dollar "love fund" to help young people. The money will help couples from poor families to get married and find a job and house. Vice-President Farhad Rahbar said on national television: "The love fund is a realization of the new government's slogan - taking oil money to the tables of the people." President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's election promise was to share oil revenues to create a more equal society.

Iran is the world's fourth biggest producer of crude oil. With oil hitting record prices, the government has an extra $24 billion to spend. Mr. Ahmadinejad will use $1.3 billion from this money for the love fund. His plan will also help reduce unemployment, which currently stands at 11 per cent. Some economists predict that using the oil money could increase inflation and put pressure on the economy. Excess oil revenues are usually only used if there is a slump in oil prices.

WARM-UPS

1. "LOVE FUND": In pairs / groups, talk about what you think a "love fund" is. Imagine you are in charge of your country's love fund. Talk about its details. Who is it for? How does it help? Why was it created?

2. GOVERNMENT SPENDING: In pairs / groups, talk about which of the following you would like your government to spend its money on. Agree on the four most important areas.

- Weapons
- Help for weddings
- Parks and trees
- Cancer and AIDS research
- Aid for the jobless

- Helping poor people buy a house
- Promoting sport
- International aid
- University education
- Pensions for old people

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

The Iranian government / love / young couples / poor families / weddings / government slogans / oil money / an equal society / unemployment / oil prices

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. LOVE: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "love". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

5. OPINIONS: Do you agree with these opinions on the government and young people? Talk about them with your partner(s).

a. All young people should have free university education.
b. Helping young people will mean young people will not learn to be independent.
c. Governments should help old people, not young people.
d. Helping young people will help a country's economy.
e. Helping young couples to get married will help reduce many social problems.
f. Families should help young people, governments shouldn't.
g. Giving money for weddings is the government's present to newlyweds.
h. Many young people will get married just to get money.

6. QUICK DEBATE: Students A think governments should do more to share the country's wealth. Students B think citizens should work harder to get a bigger share of wealth. Change partners often.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

a.	Iran has created a fund to help couples fall in love.	T / F
b.	The love fund is for poor people.	T / F
c.	The Iranian government will put lots of money on people's tables.	T / F
d.	President Ahmadinejad promised a more equal society.	T / F
e.	Iran is the world's fortieth biggest producer of crude oil.	T / F
f.	Iran has more money than expected because of high oil prices.	T / F
g.	The love fund plan may increase unemployment.	T / F
h.	Excess oil revenue is always used to help families in a slump.	T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

a.	help	fairer
b.	realization	forecast
c.	slogan	largest
d.	promise	use
e.	more equal	aid
f.	biggest	pledge
g.	spend	cut
h.	reduce	carrying out
i.	predict	decline
j.	slump	motto

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

a.	a plan for a billion	equal society
b.	The money will help couples	producer of crude oil
c.	find	from poor families
d.	the new government's	on the economy
e.	create a more	slogan
f.	the world's fourth biggest	oil prices
g.	reduce unemployment, which	dollar "love fund"
h.	the government has an	currently stands at 11 per cent
i.	put pressure	extra $24 billion to spend
j.	a slump in	a job

WHILE READING / LISTENING

SYNONYM FILL: Place the number of the synonym group in the correct gap (It is not important to guess a correct word - any of the synonyms from each group could be put into the relevant gap).

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Iran is the world's fourth biggest producer of crude oil. With oil _____ record prices, the government has an extra $24 billion to spend. Mr. Ahmadinejad will use $1.3 billion from this money for the love fund. His plan will also help reduce unemployment, which currently stands at 11 per cent. Some economists _____ that using the oil money could increase inflation and put pressure on the economy. Excess oil revenues are usually only used if there is a _____ in oil prices.

1	2	3
predict	slump	plan
forecast	slide	scheme
foresee	decline	project
anticipate	plunge	proposal

4	5	6
slogan	share	hitting
motto	split	reaching
catchphrase	divide	climbing to
rallying cry	distribute	striking

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms … for the words **'love'** and **'fund'**.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. SYNOMYM FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the synonym fill. Were they new, interesting, worth learning…?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "IRANIAN LOVE FUND" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about Iran's love fund.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- plan
- poor
- national
- slogan
- tables
- equal

- crude
- extra
- reduce
- stands
- predict
- slump

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)
   a. What did you think when you first saw this headline?
   b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
   c. What do you think of the love fund idea?
   d. Do you think Iran is good to its citizens?
   e. Does your government try to share its wealth?
   f. Do you think governments should provide help to young people?
   g. Mr. Ahmadinejad wants young people to marry to reduce sexual diseases and prostitution. What do you think of this?
   h. Are weddings very expensive in your country?
   i. Do your political leaders keep their promises?
   j. Is society in your country fair?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)
   a. Did you like reading this article?
   b. What do you think about what you read?
   c. What do you think of the record oil prices?
   d. What does your government do to help you?
   e. Who seems more caring, Mr. Ahmadinejad or your country's leader?
   f. Are your country's leaders popular?
   g. Do the leaders of your country have anything to learn from Iran's president?
   h. What is the condition of your country's economy?
   i. How else could Mr. Ahmadinejad use Iran's oil money to help his people?
   j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.
   a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
   b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
   c. Was there a question you didn't like?
   d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
   e. What did you like talking about?
   f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
   g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

EQUALITY: You are a committee member of your government and are responsible for creating a more equal society. Write the pros and cons of the proposals listed in the left column:

PROPOSAL	PROS	CONS
Increase taxes for rich people		
Equal salaries for all jobs		
Same salaries for men and women		
Give every family a piece of land		
Nationalize all industries		
Share company profits with workers		

With your partner(s), decide on the three proposals you like best.

Change partners and explain your ideas. Give each other feedback.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

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Iran is the world's fourth biggest producer of _____ oil. With oil hitting _____ prices, the government has an extra $24 billion to _____. Mr. Ahmadinejad will use $1.3 billion from this money for the love fund. His plan will also help _____ unemployment, which currently _____ at 11 per cent. Some economists predict that using the oil money could increase inflation and put pressure on the economy. Excess oil revenues are usually only used if there is a _____ in oil prices.

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. LETTER: Write a letter to Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Tell him what you think of his love fund. Read your letters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

4. LOVE FUND: Create a poster about a different kind of love fund. You must decide what it will do. Show your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all decide on similar things?

Iran's oil revenue "love fund" – 2 September, 2005

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. F   b. T   c. F   d. T   e. F   f. T   g. F   h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

a.	help	aid
b.	realization	carrying out
c.	slogan	motto
d.	promise	pledge
e.	more equal	fairer
f.	biggest	largest
g.	spend	use
h.	reduce	cut
i.	predict	forecast
j.	slump	decline

PHRASE MATCH:

a.	a plan for a billion	dollar "love fund"
b.	The money will help couples	from poor families
c.	find	a job
d.	the new government's	slogan
e.	create a more	equal society
f.	the world's fourth biggest	producer of crude oil
g.	reduce unemployment, which	currently stands at 11 per cent
h.	the government has an	extra $24 billion to spend
i.	put pressure	on the economy
j.	a slump in	oil prices

SYNONYM FILL:

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11