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## **Iran's oil revenue "love fund"**

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**2 September, 2005**

## **THE ARTICLE**

### **Iran's oil revenue "love fund"**

**BNE:** The Iranian government has plans to establish a billion dollar "love fund" to help young couples from poor families get married, gain employment and find a house. Weddings in Iran can be prohibitively expensive and many shun the expensive ceremonies and receptions. Vice-President Farhad Rahbar announced on state television: "The love fund is a realization of the new government's slogan - taking oil money to the tables of the people." It will be the first piece of legislation to be enacted by new president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. His electoral promise was to redistribute oil revenues to make a more equitable society. The new measure is likely to be hugely popular with the young.

Iran is the world's fourth biggest producer of crude oil. With oil prices currently soaring, coffers are overflowing and have exceeded by \$24 billion the country's annual budgetary forecasts. The government has earmarked \$1.3 billion from those revenues for the love fund. The new plan is still subject to parliamentary approval, although it is likely to gain swift passage due to its populist appeal. It will help alleviate unemployment, which stands at 11 per cent, and provide a boost to the property market. Some economists predict tapping into the oil slush fund could lead to inflationary pressures and destabilize the economy. Excess revenues are usually used for emergencies, in the event of 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. Establish 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 / electoral promises / 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:** How far do you agree with the following opinions on the government and young people?

- a. All young people should have free access to a 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 boost a country's economy.
- e. Helping young couples to get married will help cure many social problems.
- f. Families should help young people, not governments.
- g. Giving money for weddings is the government's present to newlyweds.
- h. Many young people will abuse the system and get money for nothing.

**6. QUICK DEBATE:** Students A think governments should do more to redistribute 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 established a fund to help couples fall in love.              | T / F |
| b. Prohibitive wedding costs cause poor Iranians to shun weddings.        | T / F |
| c. The Iranian government will put lots of money on people's tables.      | T / F |
| d. President Ahmadinejad promised a more equitable society.               | T / F |
| e. Iran's oil coffers are overflowing due to soaring oil prices.          | T / F |
| f. The government will mark the ears of all couples eligible for funding. | T / F |
| g. The legislation is expected to receive a rough passage in parliament.  | T / F |
| h. Economists fear the love fund will create inflationary pressures.      | T / F |

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

- |                 |              |
|-----------------|--------------|
| a. establish    | fulfillment  |
| b. shun         | spending     |
| c. realization  | act          |
| d. equitable    | skyrocketing |
| e. measure      | level        |
| f. soaring      | relieve      |
| g. earmarked    | set up       |
| h. alleviate    | slide        |
| i. tapping into | avoid        |
| j. slump        | set aside    |

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

- |  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| a. gain                                  | legislation to be enacted          |
| b. Weddings in Iran can be prohibitively | lead to inflationary pressures     |
| c. The love fund is a realization of     | \$1.3 billion from those revenues  |
| d. the first piece of                    | expensive                          |
| e. redistribute oil revenues to          | the new government's slogan        |
| f. coffers                               | to parliamentary approval          |
| g. The government has earmarked          | employment                         |
| h. The new plan is still subject         | passage due to its populist appeal |
| i. it is likely to gain swift            | make a more equitable society      |
| j. tapping into the oil slush fund could | are overflowing                    |

## 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).

### Iran's oil revenue "love fund"

**BNE:** The Iranian government has plans to \_\_\_\_ a billion dollar "love fund" to help young couples from poor families get married, gain employment and find a house. Weddings in Iran can be \_\_\_\_ expensive and many shun the expensive ceremonies and receptions. Vice-President Farhad Rahbar announced on state television: "The love fund is a realization of the new government's \_\_\_\_ - taking oil money to the tables of the people." It will be the first piece of legislation to be \_\_\_\_ by new president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. His electoral promise was to redistribute oil revenues to make a more equitable society. The new measure is likely to be hugely popular with the young.

Iran is the world's fourth biggest producer of crude oil. With oil prices currently \_\_\_\_, coffers are overflowing and have exceeded by \$24 billion the country's annual budgetary forecasts. The government has \_\_\_\_ \$1.3 billion from those revenues for the love fund. The new plan is still subject to parliamentary approval, although it is likely to gain \_\_\_\_ passage due to its populist appeal. It will help alleviate unemployment, which stands at 11 per cent, and provide a boost to the property market. Some economists predict tapping into the oil slush fund could lead to inflationary pressures and destabilize the economy. Excess revenues are usually used for emergencies, in the event of a \_\_\_\_ in oil prices.

1  
soaring  
skyrocketing  
escalating  
going through the roof

2  
slump  
slide  
plummet  
plunge

3  
prohibitively  
excessively  
extortionately  
preposterously

4  
earmarked  
set aside  
designated  
reserved

5  
slogan  
motto  
catchphrase  
rallying cry

6  
swift  
speedy  
expeditious  
prompt

7  
enacted  
executed  
passed  
authorized

8  
establish  
set up  
inaugurate  
create

## **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. SYNONYM 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:

- |                 |             |
|-----------------|-------------|
| • establish     | • crude     |
| • prohibitively | • coffers   |
| • realization   | • approval  |
| • legislation   | • boost     |
| • redistribute  | • pressures |
| • hugely        | • slump     |

## **DISCUSSION**

### STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What were your initial thoughts on this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. What do you think of the love fund idea?
- d. Is the measure in line with your impression of Iran?
- e. Does your government attempt to redistribute wealth?
- f. Do you think governments should provide help to young people?
- g. Mr. Ahmadinejad hopes encouraging young people to marry will reduce promiscuity and prostitution. What do you think?
- h. Are weddings prohibitively expensive in your country?
- i. Do your political leaders keep their promises?
- j. Is there an equitable society in your country?

### 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 soaring 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 overflowing oil coffers 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 responsible for creating a more equal society. Write the pros and cons of the proposals 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		

Decide on three of the proposals you will adopt.

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



## **LISTENING**

Listen and fill in the spaces.

### **Iran's oil revenue "love fund"**

**BNE:** The Iranian government has plans to \_\_\_\_\_ a billion dollar "love fund" to help young couples from poor families get married, gain employment and find a house. Weddings in Iran can be \_\_\_\_\_ expensive and many \_\_\_\_\_ the expensive ceremonies and receptions. Vice-President Farhad Rahbar announced on state television: "The love fund is a \_\_\_\_\_ of the new government's slogan - taking oil money to the tables of the people." It will be the first piece of legislation to be \_\_\_\_\_ by new president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. His electoral promise was to redistribute oil revenues to make a more \_\_\_\_\_ society. The new measure is likely to be hugely popular with the young.

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## **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?

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

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

### SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                 |              |
|-----------------|--------------|
| a. establish    | set up       |
| b. shun         | avoid        |
| c. realization  | fulfillment  |
| d. equitable    | level        |
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### PHRASE MATCH:

- |  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| a. gain                                  | employment                         |
| b. Weddings in Iran can be prohibitively | expensive                          |
| c. The love fund is a realization of     | the new government's slogan        |
| d. the first piece of                    | legislation to be enacted          |
| e. redistribute oil revenues to          | make a more equitable society      |
| f. coffers                               | are overflowing                    |
| g. The government has earmarked          | \$1.3 billion from those revenues  |
| h. The new plan is still subject         | to parliamentary approval          |
| i. it is likely to gain swift            | passage due to its populist appeal |
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### SYNONYM FILL:

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