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Iran bans pro-reform business daily

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TEHRAN (Reuters) - An Iranian media body banned on Monday the publication of a leading business daily, Sarmayeh, which is critical of the economic policies of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's government.

The official IRNA news agency said Iran's press supervisory body took the decision because of "repeated violations of the press law." It did not give further details.

"Based on a decision by the press supervisory board ... the authorization for the publication of Sarmayeh daily was annulled," IRNA said.

Sarmayeh editor Saeed Laylaz, an outspoken government critic, was arrested shortly after Iran's disputed election in June. The opposition says the vote was rigged to secure Ahmadinejad's re-election.

The authorities deny vote rigging, and have portrayed the huge street protests that erupted after the election as a foreign-backed bid to undermine the Islamic state.

In August, authorities shut down Etemad-e Melli newspaper of pro-reform cleric Mehdi Karoubi, who came fourth in the poll. He had angered hardliners with his allegation that some detained opposition supporters were raped, a charge officials deny.

The June poll and its turbulent aftermath plunged Iran into its biggest internal crisis since the 1979 Islamic revolution, exposing deepening divisions within its ruling elite and also further straining relations with the West.

Iran arrested thousands of people after the vote, though most have since been freed. About 200 people remain in jail, including Laylaz, on charges of fomenting the post-vote unrest. The opposition has denounced their trials as "show trials."

(Writing by Fredrik Dahl; editing by [Matthew Jones](#))

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