

Larijani rejects nuclear freeze ahead of talks

AFP, Tehran

Iran's top nuclear negotiator Ali Larijani said yesterday Iran would not halt uranium enrichment, on the eve of talks with the EU foreign policy chief over Iran's controversial nuclear programme.

"Suspension is not a logical way to resolve Iran's nuclear issue," Larijani told reporters at a Tehran airport before flying off to Spain for talks with Javier Solana today.

The meetings between Larijani

and Solana are central to diplomatic efforts to resolve the nuclear standoff, which has already seen Iran slapped with two sets of UN sanctions for its refusal to suspend uranium enrichment.

Western powers are now pressing for Iran to face further penalties over enrichment, the process which can be used both to make nuclear fuel and, in highly purified form, the fissile core of an atomic bomb.

The United States accuses Iran of seeking nuclear weapons, a charge vehemently denied by Tehran, which says it just wants to produce energy.

Iran says it has a right to enrichment for peaceful ends as a signatory to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The Madrid encounter is the second meeting between Larijani and Solana after April talks in Ankara, which according to the EU foreign policy chief's spokes-

woman were "positive in form but not fruitful in substance."

Larijani said on Wednesday that "positive points were discussed in Ankara", describing them as "buds which need to grow on an international level to resolve the issue."

Echoing Tehran's often-heard position, Larijani said Iran "is ready to implement mechanisms to alleviate other countries' concerns over the nature of its nuclear programme."

Norway most peaceful country, Iraq least

AFP, London

Norway is the most peaceful country in the world and Iraq the least, according to a study launched yesterday, which notably puts Japan near the top and Russia and Israel close to the bottom.

The Global Peace Index, published a week before a Group of Eight (G8) summit in Germany, rates 121 countries from Algeria to Zimbabwe on some 24 factors including levels of violence, organised crime and military expenditure.

While most European countries including Britain rank in the top, more peaceful half of the league table, the United States is nearer the bottom in 96th place, while Russia is fifth from last on 118th.

"This is a wake-up call for leaders around the globe," said Steve Killelea, who commissioned the study from the Economist Intelligence Unit, which is linked to the newsweekly The Economist.

Countries like Japan and Germany can give hope and optimism to countries further down the index that there can be light at the end of what may seem at the moment like a very dark tunnel," he added.

Norway, the peace-promoting Scandinavian country which brokered the 1993 Oslo Mideast

TOP 10	BOTTOM 10
1. Norway	112. Angola
2. New Zealand	113. Ivory Coast
3. Denmark	114. Lebanon
4. Ireland	115. Pakistan
5. Japan	116. Colombia
6. Finland	117. Nigeria
7. Sweden	118. Russia
8. Canada	119. Israel
9. Portugal	120. Sudan
10. Austria	121. Iraq

accords and has also sought to resolve fighting in Sri Lanka -- is followed by New Zealand in second place and neighbouring Denmark in third.

Iraq, which has been gripped by growing violence since the 2003 US-led invasion of the country, comes bottom just below Sudan, with Israel only two places from the bottom on 119th place.

The index is backed by international figures including the Dalai

Lama, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, former US President Jimmy Carter and US economist Joseph Stiglitz, all winners of the Nobel peace prize. It is also supported by Queen Noor of Jordan.

Overall the study found that small, stable countries which are part of regional blocs such as the 27-nation European Union are most likely to be more peaceful.

Income and education are crucial in promoting peace, it said, while also noting that countries which had turbulent times in the 20th century, such as Ireland and Austria, have emerged as "peace leaders" in the 21st century.

"I believe there is a link between the peacefulness and the wealth of nations and therefore business has a key role to play in peace," said Killelea.

The Dalai Lama, the Tibetan Buddhist leader who fled China after an aborted uprising in 1959, said the launch of the index could be a useful tool for policymakers.

"Compiling and maintaining an index of which countries are the most peaceful and publishing the results will undoubtedly make the factors and qualities that contribute to that status better known, and will encourage people to foster them in their own countries," he said.

Peres to run for presidency

AFP, Tel Aviv

Israel's elder statesman Shimon Peres said yesterday he will run for president, the second try at the ceremonial post by the man respected abroad but often dismissed as a perennial loser at home.

"I have decided to be a candidate for the presidency of the state," the Nobel peace laureate told lawmakers from his centrist Kadima party ahead of a June 13 vote in parliament on the new head of state.

"I have decided to thus respond to the requests of numerous Israelis, including the prime minister, lawmakers and ordinary people to provide what could ultimately be my last contribution to the country," said the 83-year-old deputy prime minister.

Peres ran for the largely ceremonial post seven years ago, but suffered a shock defeat at the hands of Moshe Katsav, then a relative unknown who is today ending his term in disgrace amid a looming indictment on a string of charges including rape.

"I have held practically all of the most senior public posts, I have known failures but also successes," Peres said, adding that he would become president "with God's help."

The remark was a tacit admission that his assuming the post was far from certain, despite a political pedigree that eclipses any rival, having held just about every major office in a career stretching back half a century.



A female well-wisher hugs Thailand's Democrat Party leader Abhisit Vejjajiva at the party's headquarters after the court decision in Bangkok yesterday. Thailand's top court said that Democrat Party, one of the kingdom's two main political groups, did not commit electoral fraud and will not be dissolved.

Thai Democrat Party won't be dissolved

Constitutional Tribunal rules

AFP, Bangkok

Thailand's oldest political party did not commit election fraud and will not be dissolved, a top court ruled yesterday, easing tensions in the kingdom which was bracing for unrest ahead of the verdict.

But the Constitutional Tribunal can still decide to disband ousted prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra's Thai Rak Thai (TRT), Thailand's other main political party that is at the centre of an electoral fraud inquiry.

The judgments, which some analysts warn could plunge the country into chaos, come after more than a year of political upheaval, including a bloodless military coup against Thaksin last September.

The Constitutional Tribunal, which was created after the coup, ruled that the 61-year-old Democrat Party was not guilty on all four charges stemming from last

April's elections, which were later annulled as fraud allegations piled up.

It also ruled that no Democrat executives would be banned from politics.

"The facts cannot prove that the Democrats did any wrongdoing so there is no reason to dissolve the Democrats," said Thanit Kesawapitak, oncofnetribunaljudges.

The Democrats, which ruled Thailand on and off for a decade before the TRT first swept the polls in 2001, faced charges including obstructing political campaigning and slandering the TRT.

Similarly, the TRT has been charged with illegally financing smaller parties to contest the 2006 election in a bid to boost the polls' credibility.

TRT officials hoped the Democrat ruling was a signal that they too would escape the election scandal unscathed.

"The oldest party survived the

verdict, and we do hope that TRT, who have less than 10 years history, will get fair treatment as well," said Kudeb Saikrajang, one of the TRT's executives.

Tensions had risen ahead of the court verdict, which threatened to prolong the political uncertainty that has gripped Thailand since the beginning of last year.

Analysts warn that disbanding Thailand's main parties could cause disarray, even if they simply re-establish themselves under new party names and leaders.

They say the move would wipe out a generation of veterans and discourage younger politicians from stepping into leadership roles, significantly altering the kingdom's political landscape.

"If we send them all to the political wilderness, who would be there to administer the country?" said Michael Nelson, a political analyst at Bangkok's Chulalongkorn University.

3 Pak journos get bullet 'warnings'

AFP, Islamabad

Three Pakistani journalists working for international news organisations found bullets placed in their cars late Tuesday in what a local media group said was an attempt to intimidate them.

The Karachi Union of Journalists said an envelope containing a bullet was taped to the windshield of one journalist, while envelopes -- each with a bullet inside -- were left inside the vehicles of the two others.

The action comes a week after a shadowy organisation with links to a party that supports military ruler President Pervez Musharraf issued a list of a dozen journalists, declaring them as "enemies".

The Mohajir Rabita Council, which published the list, has ties to the Muttahida Qaumi Movement, the ruling party in the volatile southern port city. Neither group could immediately be reached for comment.

"We believe it is a very serious threat to working journalists," Karachi Union of Journalists president Shahmim-ur Rehman said, without naming the journalists or the organisations involved.

"It is an attempt to muzzle the free media.... We have lodged a police report and we are demanding the government should arrest those behind the latest threat," he added.

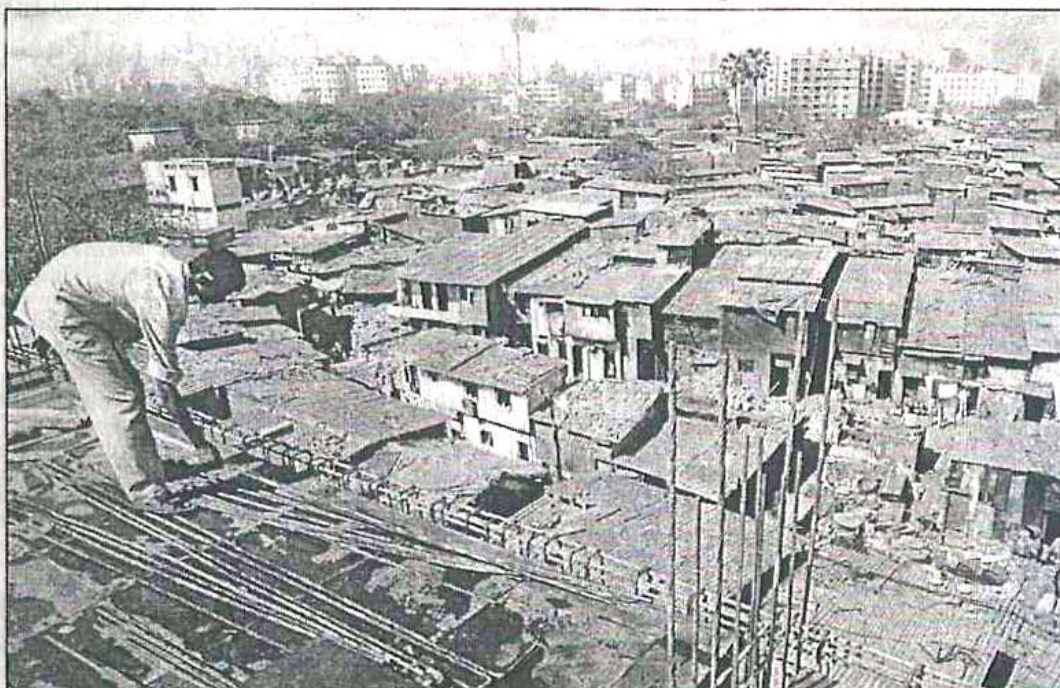
"If the government fails to do so we will be justified in believing that there is complicity of the government in the current campaign to harass journalists."

Karachi police chief Azhar Farooqi confirmed that police had registered a case and told AFP that he had set up a special team to investigate the incident.

Karachi has been tense since May 12 when clashes between rival political groups in the city left more than 40 people dead.

The bullet warnings follow what press and television organisations say is a sudden rise in pressure on the media in Pakistan amid a spiralling crisis engulfing Musharraf.

TV stations and newspaper offices have been attacked and journalists assaulted since Musharraf's suspension of Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry on March 9 sparked nationwide protests.



AFP file photo of Asia's largest slum Dharavi in Mumbai.

Notorious slum up for sale

AFP, Mumbai

One of Asia's most notorious slums went up for sale yesterday in a 2.3-billion-dollar project to raze thousands of ramshackle homes and create one of the world's hottest building sites.

The filthy and cramped 535-acre slum of Dharavi stands on prime building land in Mumbai, parts of which have some of the world's most expensive real estate, and has long been an embarrassment to promoting the country's economic capital as a global financial centre.

Newspaper advertisements were published in 20 countries Wednesday offering "the opportunity of the millennium" for five major developers to take part in the long-delayed and controversial project in one of Asia's largest slums.

Tamil language wins official recognition

AFP, Chennai

Tamil, one of India's ancient Dravidian languages, is to have its own government-funded institute, Tamil Nadu state's chief minister said.

The federal government has agreed to set up the International Institute of Classical Tamil Language in the state capital Chennai, where language politics have often boiled over.

M. Karunanidhi told reporters late Tuesday the government had also agreed to several more demands to promote Tamil, including setting up international Tamil prizes and awards for scholars and experts.

"These steps will ensure that Tamil gets its due recognition and incentives that have been available for North Indian languages," Karunanidhi said.

Federal government efforts to impose Hindi -- a north Indian language from the Indo-Aryan group -- in the Dravidian south sparked violence.

Madras state was created in 1956 along linguistic boundaries and renamed Tamil Nadu in 1965. Demand for equal status for Tamil with the national language Hindi is a common political slogan.

More than 62 million people live in Tamil Nadu and Tamil is also spoken in Sri Lanka and Indian communities spread through Malaysia, Singapore and South Africa.



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DISTRIBUTION OF CASH DIVIDEND WARRANT & BONUS SHARES

This is for information of the valued Shareholders of Mutual Trust Bank Ltd. that the Cash Dividend Warrant for the year 2006 are ready for delivery and the Shareholders whose names were recorded in the Register of Members of the Bank on Record Date i.e. April 12, 2007 are requested to collect the Dividend Warrants from the Bank's Share Department at Ispahani Building, 14-15, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka from June 03, 2007 to June 21, 2007 either personally or through duly authorized representative during office hour.

The Dividend Warrants not collected within this period will be dispatched to the address of respective Shareholders through courier service / post at their own risk.

This is also for kind information that the Bonus Shares for the year 2006 will be credited on June 4, 2007 to the respective BO Accounts of the Shareholders through Central Depository System.

Bonus Shares of the Shareholders who have not yet provided us with their BO A/C Numbers will be kept in Bank's Suspense Account. They are requested to provide us their BO A/C Numbers to enable us to credit Bonus Share to their respective BO Accounts.

Sd/-
Quamrul Islam Chowdhury
Company Secretary

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- We are looking for an experienced professional who would report to the Account Director and be responsible for:
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- Excellent presentation and influencing skills
- The ability to prioritize and manage multiple assignments
- GSM Technology experience would be an added advantage

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We are looking for experienced professionals who would report to the Account Director and will be responsible for:

- Facilitating risk management for projects and be the authority on contractual terms & conditions
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- Review contract requirements in order to identify, assess and quantify contractual risk both pre and post sales
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You should have:

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- Effective communication and negotiation skills
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We are looking for an experienced professional who would report to the Account Manager and be responsible for:

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- University degree in Computer/Electrical Engineering or a Business degree with work experience in telecommunication
- Effective communication and interpersonal skills
- The ability to work in a team and Customer focus
- Ability to manage multiple assignments
- Ability to learn about product portfolio & market trends

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We are looking for an experienced professional who would report to the Director of Solution Management and be responsible for:

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- Providing innovative solutions; that meet customer's requirements
- Regular technical meeting for products solutions/presentation with customer
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- Developing a structured competence development plan for solution team
- Preparation of solution, tender response, technical information for the customers

You should have:

- A degree in Communication or Electrical Engineering
- At least 2-3 years of experience in telecommunication with either OSS and/or RAN
- Back-ground on SUN, HP will be an added advantage
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- Effective communication and presentation skills
- The ability to prioritize and manage multiple assignments

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We are looking for an experienced professional who would report to the Head of Procurement and be responsible for:

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- Establishing supplier management process for every local or regional preferred supplier
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- Ensuring implementation of best practices and synergies through co-operation within Ericsson

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- University degree in Structural/Civil Engineering from any reputed university
- Minimum 2-3 years of working experience in Telecom Industry, working in power sector will be an added advantage
- Experience in commercial negotiations, preparing legal contracts, following-up supplier's performance
- Effective communication and negotiation skills
- Ability to manage multiple assignments

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Please clearly mention the name of the position you are applying for on the subject line. Please only apply for a single position.
Only short listed candidates will be called for an interview.

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