



Russian President Vladimir Putin (R) speaks with his French counterpart Nicolas Sarkozy (L) during their meeting at Novo-Ogaryovo residence outside Moscow on Tuesday. Sarkozy and Putin discussed the situation around Iran, the problem of Kosovo and Middle East settlement

Sarkozy fails to soften Russian backing for Iran

AFP, Moscow

Russian President Vladimir Putin refused yesterday to bend to western pressure over Iran, saying after talks with French President Nicolas Sarkozy that he did not believe the Islamic republic was trying to build a nuclear bomb.

"We do not have information that Iran is trying to create a nuclear weapon. We operate on the principle that Iran does not have those plans," Putin told journalists after the end of the talks with Sarkozy who was in Moscow seeking to ease tensions.

He added that Russia shared the West's desire for Iran's nuclear programme, in which Russia is building the first civilian power station, to be "absolutely trans-

ent."

The Kremlin leader's statement reaffirmed an East-West split over Iran.

Moscow supports Tehran in rejecting accusations by Washington and in EU capitals that the country is hiding a secret bomb making project behind its Russian-backed civilian atomic programme.

Russia, which has veto power on the UN Security Council, has also been reluctant to back Western calls for tougher sanctions aimed at forcing Iran to halt sensitive nuclear activities.

Sarkozy said after his talks in the Kremlin that Putin's readiness was "important." "After that, there might be a difference in the analysis," he added.

But there was no sign of confirmation that Franco-Russian positions on the controversy had "moved closer," as Sarkozy had indicated following a dinner with Putin on Tuesday night.

This was the first visit as president to Moscow for the new French leader, who stands out among Western leaders for his firm criticism of human rights in Putin's Russia.

Earlier, Sarkozy told students at Moscow's State Technical University that Russia must embrace political freedom. "Build a democratic society in Russia and the world will be grateful," he said.

Sarkozy was also due to meet with the leaders of Russia's most active human rights organisation Memorial.

Western powers ask Myanmar junta to stop 'repressive measures'

AFP, United Nations

The United States, Britain and France late Tuesday circulated a watered-down statement in the Security Council that deplores the military crackdown in Myanmar and urges the ruling junta to stop "repressive measures."

Following amendments offered by China and other council members, the three sponsors softened their earlier draft, notably replacing the word "condemn" by "strongly deplore."

The three western powers submitted their first draft Friday after the council heard a report from UN envoy Ibrahim Gambari on his recent mission to Myanmar to defuse the crisis.

The new, non-binding text was worked out by experts of the 15-member council in bargaining sessions Monday and Tuesday. It now awaits approval by the ambassadors.

The experts were to have a fresh meeting on the draft early yesterday ahead of consultations by council ambassadors later in the day.

The new draft "strongly deplores the violent repression by

the government of Myanmar of peaceful demonstrations, including the use of force against religious figures and institutions."

It urges the military regime "to cease all repressive measures, including the detention of protesters" and to release all political prisoners, including opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

It stresses the need for the regime "to engage without delay in a dialogue with leaders of all political and ethnic groups towards an inclusive national reconciliation process, with the direct support of the United Nations."

The text backs an early return of Gambari to Myanmar "to facilitate concrete actions and tangible results" and urges the authorities and all parties concerned "to cooperate fully with Mr. Gambari and to respond positively to his requests during his visits."

It notes the key role played by Myanmar's neighbors and its partners in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations "in urging restraint, calling for a peaceful transition to democracy, and supporting the good offices mission (of Gambari)."

11 Children hurt in mortar attack on Iraqi school

AFP, Baghdad

Eleven children were wounded, three seriously, when an Iraqi primary school was hit by mortar fire in a town southeast of Baghdad yesterday, police said.

Another four people, including two teachers, were wounded by the shells in the attack in the town of Numanjiya, which lies near the city of Kut about 110 kilometres (about 70 miles) south of Baghdad.

In another attack yesterday, a car bomb exploded in the central city of Tikrit, the hometown of executed Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein. Four people were killed and eight wounded.

Two police were among those killed after explosives in the car were detonated as a police patrol was passing, said a police official in Tikrit.

The car had been parked near a branch of Iraq's main Rafidain bank in the centre of the city, 180 miles north of Baghdad, he added.

Interior ministry officials said at least three people had been killed and 17 wounded in violence in Baghdad.

One civilian was killed and six were wounded by a roadside bomb targeting a US patrol in a main square in the central Karrada district.

Gunmen kill 3 in Afghanistan

AFP, Kabul

Gunmen opened fire on people praying in a remote village's mosque in central Afghanistan, killing two men, while a mullah was gunned down separately in new Ramadan attacks, police said yesterday.

In the west of the country, meanwhile, security forces discovered three rockets set to be fired on a ceremony attended by senior Afghan and NATO officials at a military air base outside the city of Herat.

The mosque attack happened late Tuesday in Sayed Abad district of Wardak province just south of the capital, Kabul, provincial deputy police commander Mohammad Asif Banwal told AFP.

Two people, including a teacher, were killed while 10 others were wounded, all of them "innocent villagers," he said.

He blamed the attack on "enemies of peace" -- a reference to the Taliban who have been waging an insurgency since their ouster from government in late 2001.

Separately, unknown gunmen shot a mullah, or cleric, the same day in Logar province also bordering Kabul, the interior ministry said in a statement.

The mullah died of severe wounds on his way to the hospital, it said, without saying who might have been behind the shooting.

The Taliban said before Ramadan began mid-September that they would step up their attacks during the holy fasting month. They have since claimed responsibility for several deadly suicide attacks.

Police have launched a hunt for the attackers in the surrounding villages, Banwal added.

The ready-to-be-fired rockets were found Wednesday as Afghan and NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) officials gathered to attend a change-of-command ceremony in Herat Air Base, police said.

Japan opposition refuses to budge on Afghan mission

AFP, Tokyo

Japan's main opposition leader yesterday refused to budge in his bid to end a controversial naval mission supporting US-led troops in Afghanistan, saying Tokyo should not simply follow Washington.

Ichiro Ozawa, president of the Democratic Party of Japan, which took control of one house of parliament in July elections, said his party may propose alternative plans on troop deployments overseas.

"After the ruling coalition has submitted its new bill, we may submit our own bill to show our opinions on the matter," Ozawa told reporters.

Joining a military operation

just because the United States tells us, that's not a consensus of the international community nor a consensus of the Japanese people," he said.

The latest opinion poll, however, showed more voters supported extending the mission than ending it and that recently installed Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda enjoyed strong backing.

Japan refuels US and other coalition ships and planes in the Indian Ocean under legislation allowing participation in the "war on terror" passed after the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States.

The new premier has vowed to renew the deployment, saying Japan must take responsibility in

international security. His predecessor, Shinzo Abe, resigned last month citing the opposition's intransigence on the issue.

The legislation is set to expire on November 1. Chief government spokesman Nobutaka Machimura said Wednesday that the government would have a new bill ready around October 17.

The government has proposed a compromise to restrict refuelling to ships policing the Indian Ocean, not forces engaged in Afghanistan. Ozawa said the opposition would wait to see the government bill before commenting.

The opposition leader, famed as a shrewd political strategist, is pushing Fukuda to call an early general election.



Japan's main opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) leader Ichiro Ozawa speaks at a press conference at the party's headquarters in Tokyo yesterday. Ozawa refused to budge in his bid to end a controversial naval mission supporting US-led troops in Afghanistan, saying Tokyo should not simply follow Washington.

NWFP assembly dissolved

AFP, Peshawar

The government of a troubled Pakistani province bordering Afghanistan was dissolved yesterday, four days after military ruler Pervez Musharraf won a disputed presidential election.

North West Frontier Province (NWFP) governor Ali Jan Aurakzai issued the dissolution order and was to appoint a caretaker chief minister later yesterday.

Opposition parties had tried to dissolve the NWFP assembly last week in an bid to erode the credibility of Saturday's election by the federal parliament and four provincial assemblies, which Musharraf won in a landslide.

But internal differences among opposition Islamist leaders and a no-confidence motion against provincial chief minister Akram Durrani by Musharraf supporters thwarted the plan.

The NWFP has been governed since 2002 by an Islamist coalition who are opposed to Musharraf's alliance with the United States in the "war on terror".

Musharraf won Saturday's controversial election after it was boycotted by most of the opposition, but he must await a Supreme Court ruling on the legality of the vote.

He has pledged to step down as military ruler and become a civilian head of state once his re-election is declared official.

Clashes leave over 100 dead in DR Congo

AFP, Kinshasa

More than 100 fighters, including 85 rebels, have been killed in clashes in the Nord-Kivu province of the Democratic Republic of Congo, a top army officer said yesterday.

Colonel Delphin Kahimbi, the army's second in command in the eastern province, said 16 troops and 85 rebels had been killed around Karuba, a town about 40 kilometres north-west of the provincial capital of Goma.

"We have been in control of Karuba since yesterday," he told AFP.

"The enemy has abandoned 85 bodies on the ground," he added. His own forces counted 16 dead including 27 wounded, five of them seriously.

Government forces have been fighting followers of renegade general, Laurent Nkunda, who claims that his aim is to defend the minority Congolese Tutsis of the east from other population groups and armed movements, around Karuba.

Nkunda spokesman Rene Abandi told AFP that government forces had shelled their positions and that they had taken their wounded back to their bases.

He was not able to give figures for their casualties.

But Kahimbi said: "These are the heaviest losses that he (Nkunda) has suffered" since he broke the ceasefire. Government troops had also captured ammunition and a jeep left by the rebel forces, he added.

MONUC, the United Nations peacekeeping force in the region, confirmed that government forces (FARDC) had made progress after two days of fierce fighting.

"Karuba was taken by the FARDC yesterday. Nkunda's forces are gathered around the (neighbouring) village of Ngengwi," MONUC spokesman Major Prem Tiwari, told AFP.

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Poverty is not natural, it is man-made. So, it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings. Poverty reduces all possibilities of improving life; however, we also know that poverty can be eradicated if all kinds of social discriminations are eliminated and people's access to resources ensured. So let us speak against all discriminations and corruptions and stand for establishing people's right to resources and justice.

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- Basic rights to food, clothes, education, health and shelter
- Fair wages for all workers
- Basic services to be ensured by the state, not indiscriminate privatization
- Protect the interest of producers like the farmers, growers and manufacturers
- Dignity of all human beings irrespective of men and women
- Immediate rehabilitation of victims of natural as well as man-made disasters
- Sustainable disaster management measures, not just aid
- Good governance, transparency and accountability at all levels of the state and nonpartisan and effective action against corruption
- Implementation of promises made by the world leaders (.7% of their ODI).

We believe all countries of the world including Bangladesh will come forward and keep their promises.

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For public interest: People's Forum on MDGs (PFM), Bangladesh

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সকাল বেলা। ঈদের নামাজ। বাবার সাথে।



ঈদের দিল। সকাল থেকে রাত। যেখানেই উৎসব সেখানেই থাকতে চাই।
সবার সাথে। সবার পায়ে। তাই এবার ঈদে ছোট্ট সোশালি থেকে দিচ্ছি,
সবার জন্য ৪০০ টাকা থেকে ৫৫০০ টাকা পামের নতুন নতুন জুতো দেশজুড়ে,
এপেক্স এর সব শো রুমে। ঈদ আনন্দে। পায়ে পায়ে। সবার সাথে।

