



Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad delivers his speech during the opening of the 15th Foreign Ministerial Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement in Tehran yesterday. The 15th Foreign Ministerial Conference of the NAM has opened in Tehran with the inaugural speech by Ahmadinejad.

'Big powers' going down

Says Iranian president at NAM meet in Tehran

AP, Tehran

Iran's president yesterday blamed the US and other "big powers" for global ills such as nuclear proliferation and AIDS, and accused them of exploiting the UN for their own gain and the developing world's loss.

But, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said, time was on the poor countries' side.

"The big powers are going down," Ahmadinejad told foreign ministers of the Nonaligned Movement meeting in Tehran. "They have come to the end of their power, and the world is on the verge of entering a new, promising era."

The more than 100-member NAM is made up of such diverse members as communist Cuba, Jamaica and India and depicts itself as bloc-free. But most members share a critical view of the US and the developed world in general.

And with Iran assuming the

chairmanship of the conference Tuesday, Ahmadinejad's keynote speech was tailored to reflect the struggle that some NAM members see themselves in against the world's rich and powerful countries.

A draft of the final document that ministers will be asked to approve, made available to The Associated Press as the conference opened Tuesday, reflected that struggle.

"The rich and powerful countries continue to exercise an inordinate influence in determining the nature and direction of international relations, including economic and trade relations, as well as rules governing these relations, many of which are at the expense of developing countries," it said.

NAM countries oppose "unilaterally imposed measures by certain states... the use and threat of use of force, and pressure and coercive measures as a means to achieving their national policy objectives," said the draft.

That appeared to be an indirect slap at the United States, which has refused to rule out force as a possible means of last resort against Iran unless it heeds UN Security Council demands to curb its nuclear activities.

The draft also condemns "the categorization of countries as good or evil based on unilateral and unjustified criteria" oblique criticism of President Bush's labelling of Iran as part of an "axis of evil" along with Saddam Hussein's Iraq and North Korea.

Iran has in the past counted on NAM countries to blunt pressure from the US and its allies for harsh UN sanctions and other penalties because of its refusal to freeze uranium enrichment, which can produce both nuclear fuel or the fissile payload of warheads. Tehran has been slapped with three sets of UN sanctions because of its nuclear defiance and new penalties loom unless Tehran shows compromise.

Another draft statement also obtained by the AP before the meeting began seeks continued support. Submitted by Iran on behalf of the NAM, it asks the conference to agree that "sanctions imposed on Iran for its nuclear program are of a political nature and should be promptly removed."

The ministers "further affirm... that there is no legal basis that (the) UN Security Council proceeds" in continuing to deal with the Iran nuclear file, said that draft.

While only infrequently mentioning the US by name Tuesday, Ahmadinejad made clear that he blamed Washington and its allies for trying to "impose their political will on nations and governments."

He accused the great powers of "fomenting discord... to intensify the military and arms race" so they can feed their arms industries. AIDS, he said, also was the result of world conditions "imposed by big powers."

Zimbabwe power-sharing talks break off

AP, Johannesburg

Power-sharing talks between Zimbabwe's opposition and negotiators for President Robert Mugabe have broken off, officials said Monday. One said the talks stalled over Mugabe's insistence that he remain president.

Two officials said the chief negotiators for Mugabe Justice Minister Patrick Chinamasa and Social Welfare Minister Nicholas Goche were flying home. They were expected to consult Mugabe about their mandate, one of the officials said.

Another official, in South Africa, said opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai had left the country and was driving to Pretoria, the South African capital where the talks were held, to consult with his negotiators.

The officials all close to the power-sharing talks insisted on anonymity because all parties agreed to a media blackout during the talks, which began Thursday.

New anti-Qaeda offensive underway in Iraq's Diyala

AP, Baghdad

US and Iraqi forces fanned out in the volatile Diyala province Tuesday in a new operation aimed at clearing al-Qaeda in Iraq from safe havens in an area considered the last major insurgent belt around the capital.

New checkpoints were erected across the province and authorities ordered a ban on unofficial traffic as search operations got under way in the provincial capital of Baqouba and surrounding areas, according to witnesses. Many

residents said they were afraid to leave their houses.

The US-backed Iraqi military is hoping to build on recent security gains from similar offensives against Sunni insurgents in the northern city of Mosul and Shia militiamen in Baghdad, Basra and Amarah.

The troops were focusing on chasing al-Qaeda and other insurgents who sought refuge in Diyala to escape earlier crackdowns, said Gen. Ali Ghaidan, the commander of Iraqi ground forces in the province.

The province, which sits to the north of the capital and borders Iran, has been one of the hardest areas to control since the US-led war began in March 2003. Baqouba, the provincial capital, was hit by a twin suicide bombing that killed at least 28 people on July 15 and has seen a number of female suicide attacks.

"The goal of the operation is to seek out and destroy criminal elements and terrorist threats in Diyala and eliminate smuggling corridors in the surrounding area," the US military said in a statement.

al-Qaeda calls for killing of Saudi king

AP, Cairo/Washington

An al-Qaeda commander who escaped from a US prison in Afghanistan has posted a Web video urging Muslims to kill the Saudi king for leading an interfaith conference.

Abu Yahya al-Libi, who escaped from Bagram prison in 2005, said "bringing religions together... means renouncing Islam."

Saudi King Abdullah sponsored this month's dialogue in Madrid among Jews, Muslims, Christians, Hindus and Buddhists, and encouraged all faiths to turn away from extremism.

But al-Libi said "equating Islam with other religions is a betrayal of Islam." He called for "the speedy killing of this tyrant."

The 43-minute video was posted late Monday on an Internet site often used by militants. Its authenticity could not be independently verified.

al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden has frequently lashed out at

the royal family of his native Saudi Arabia, a US ally.

Meanwhile, the United States can defeat al-Qaeda if it relies less on force and more on policing and intelligence to root out the terror group's leaders, a new study contends.

"Keep in mind that terrorist groups are not eradicated overnight," said the study by the federally funded Rand research center, an organization that counsels the Pentagon.

Its report said that the use of military force by the United States or other countries should be reserved for quelling large, well-armed and well-organized insurgencies, and that American officials should stop using the term "war on terror" and replace it with "counterterrorism."

"Terrorists should be perceived and described as criminals, not holy warriors, and our analysis suggests there is no battlefield solution to terrorism," said Seth Jones, the lead author of the study and a Rand political scientist.



A video grab shows al-Qaeda operative Abu Yahya al-Libi speaking during a new video statement released by al-Qaeda's as-Sahab Media entitled "Interfaith Dialogue, A New Step in the Crusader War".

Obama seeks to overcome doubts among women

AP, Chicago

After Hillary Rodham Clinton lost the race for the Democratic presidential nomination, one of her delegates wanted to send a message. So Mary Beth Pyle wore a Clinton T-shirt to a unity dinner meant to build support for Barack Obama.

Then she pulled it off to reveal an Obama T-shirt underneath a symbol of her support for the party's new candidate for president.

"We were there to get over it. We had a sip of wine goodbye, Hillary and another sip hello, Obama," said Pyle, chairwoman of the Democratic Party in Mesa County, Colorado.

But many of Clinton's supporters aren't so willing to embrace Obama, at least not yet. Independents and moderate Republican women remain a question mark, too.

So Obama is working fiercely to win their votes.

Vacancy Announcement

Financial Management Analyst

The World Bank Office, Dhaka

The Financial Management unit of the World Bank Dhaka office seeks to hire a Financial Management Analyst to:

- Record, track, analyze and report on financial management issues;
- Carry out research and analysis on financial management information at the project, sector and country level;
- Write reports summarizing and analyzing financial management issues;
- Review periodic project financial management reports and audited financial statements; and
- Monitor the continuing adequacy of project financial management arrangements.

For this entry level position, the successful candidate should be:

- A Chartered Accountant, with at least 3 years of experience;
- Interested in working on public sector issues in an international development institution;
- Able to communicate effectively, in writing and orally, in English;
- Recognized as a results-oriented team player who takes initiative, can work independently and is capable of contributing to a diverse set of activities; and
- Willing to travel.

Further details of the post are available at www.worldbank.org/jobs. Qualified candidates should apply on-line referring to job # 081625 by August 12, 2008.

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The ADB-Bangladesh Resident Mission (BRM) has a vacancy for the position of Program Analyst (Procurement & Civil Works) for its Program Liaison Unit (PLU) for administration of the Second Primary Education Development Program (PEDP-II)

- Excellent written and oral communications skills in English;
- Ability to establish and maintain productive contacts with appropriate officials of the Government, DPs and EA;
- Excellent computer skills with sound knowledge of word processing, spreadsheets and presentations.

The contract is for one year, which may be renewed for a further period subject to satisfactory performance. The position will continue to remain contractual. Applicants should be Bangladeshi nationals. A competitive salary package will be offered to the successful candidate.

Send CV and cover letter quoting Ref. No. BRM/PLU/EXT. AD-3, and indicating the title of the position being applied for by 14 August 2008 to:

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Asian Development Bank
Plot E-31, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar
Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh
Fax: +880 2 815 6018/6019
E-mail: adbbrm@adb.org

Gender and cultural diversity is a core recruitment value and women are actively encouraged to apply.

Due to the volume of applications, ADB will not be able to respond to inquiries about application status and will only contact shortlisted candidates. Applications lacking the job reference number and job title or using the wrong e-mail address will not be considered.

www.adb.org

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Genocide suspect Radovan Karadzic's appeal against his extradition to the UN tribunal in The Hague, Netherlands, has not arrived at Serbia's war crimes court, its spokeswoman said yesterday.

Karadzic's lawyer claimed he sent the appeal to the court by registered mail on Friday, before the midnight deadline that day. But the postal service said it doesn't have it and court spokeswoman Ivana Ramic said she didn't, either.

"There is nothing new, the appeal still isn't here," Ramic said.

Under Serbian law, if the appeal is not filed, or if it is sent by mail but doesn't arrive at the Belgrade court, the court's investigative judge can rule to extradite Karadzic without considering his objection.

Karadzic faces 11 charges at the UN tribunal, including genocide and conspiracy to commit genocide. Among the alleged crimes, he is accused of masterminding the 1995 slaughter of 8,000 Muslim men and boys in Srebrenica and the 3 1/2-year siege of Sarajevo that caused 10,000 deaths.

Israeli-Syrian peace talks to resume under Turkish mediation

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel and Syria will begin another round of indirect Turkish-mediated peace talks yesterday amid hints of progress but also complaints that Damascus is still arming Israeli arch-enemy Hezbollah.

Two advisers to Prime Minister Ehud Olmert -- Shalom Turjeman and Yoram Turbowitz -- will travel to Turkey for what will be the fourth round of talks, an Israeli official told AFP on condition of anonymity.

"Israel's desire for peace is very serious," the official said. "That is why we expect that the process that has been begun will soon evolve into direct bilateral negotiations with a view to achieving significant results."

The talks started in May after an eight-year freeze, and the third round was held in early July.

Under the format of the talks, Israeli and Syrian officials do not see each other and Turkish diplomats shuttle between the two sides.

Serbian court still waits for Karadzic appeal

AP, Belgrade

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