

Iran MPs appoint Salehi foreign minister

AFP, Tehran

Iran's parliament yesterday officially endorsed atomic chief Ali Akbar Salehi as the Islamic republic's foreign minister, who told lawmakers the nuclear issue was a key part of foreign policy.

Salehi's candidacy was endorsed by 146 of the 241 lawmakers who voted in the conservative-dominated parliament yesterday, state television reported on its website.

"The nuclear issue is one of the important agendas of the foreign policy," Salehi said in his address to the parliament prior to the vote.

Iran is at loggerheads with the West over its controversial nuclear programme and the latest round of talks between the two groups broke down in Istanbul earlier this month.

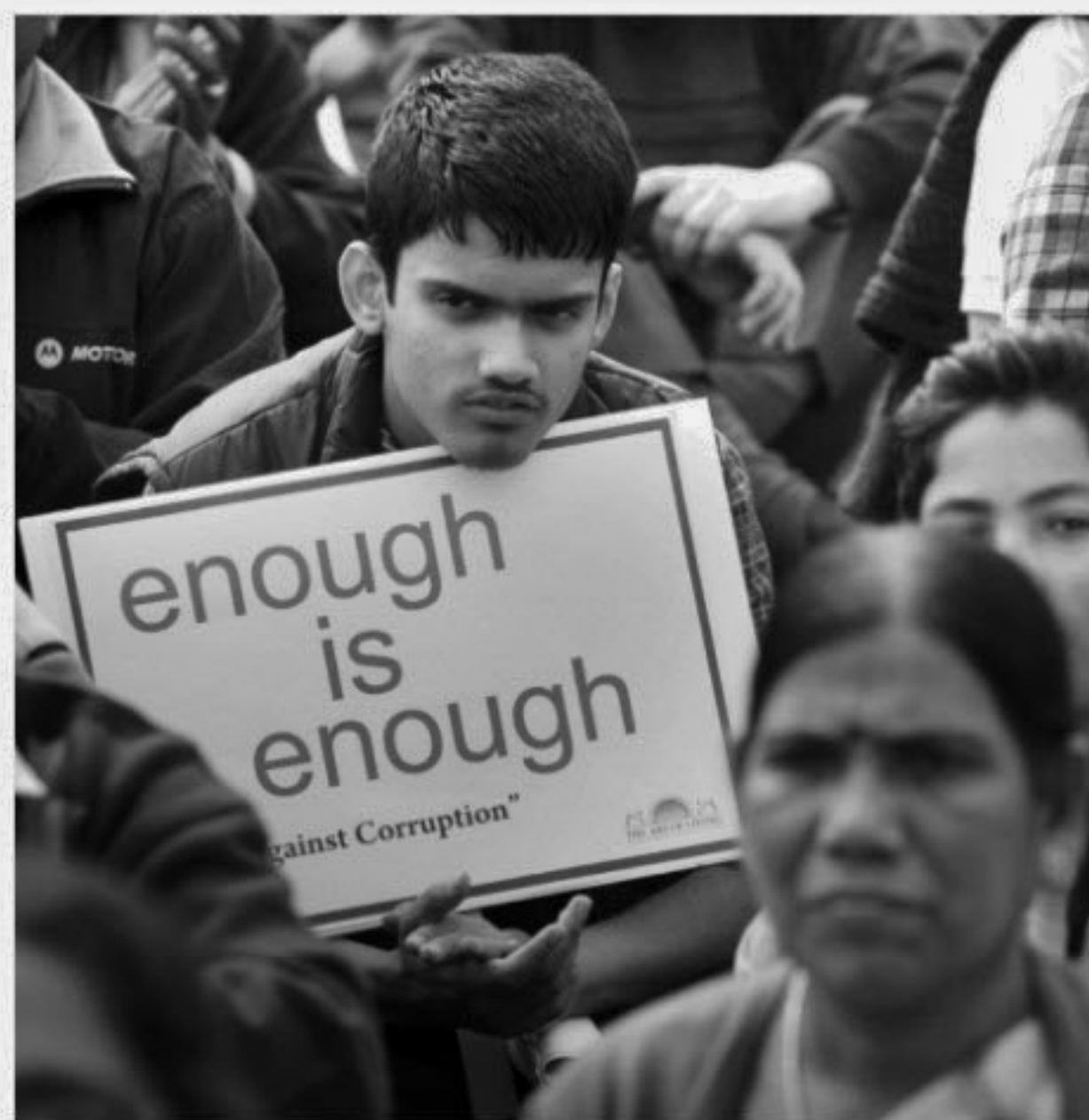


PHOTO: AFP

An Indian man shouts slogans after placing a garland on the statue of Mahatma Gandhi as a tribute on Martyr's Day in Amritsar (Left), People hold anti-corruption placards while listening to speeches during a march "India Against Corruption" in New Delhi yesterday. Marking the 63rd death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, thousands of people participated in a protest march against corruption. The march that is taking place simultaneously in 60 cities across India, is part of an anti-graft campaign by civil society groups.

Govt corruption raises protests in India

AFP, New Delhi

Thousands of people marched through New Delhi and several other Indian cities yesterday to protest against corruption in the country's government and state bodies.

Public anger has grown over the long-standing issue of graft in India after a series of high-profile scandals and revelations of financial mismanagement that have damaged Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's administration.

The rallies in Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore and other cities called for an effective anti-corruption agency to be set up to counter the culture of bribes and scams that affect the everyday lives of many Indians.

"This campaign is neither aligned to nor against any political party," the umbrella group organising the protests said in a statement.

"We feel that every political party has misused its position whenever they have

been in power or otherwise. Therefore, it is extremely important that the citizens of this country unite to demand systemic changes."

Recent corruptions scandals include the cut-price sale of mobile phone licences, which may have cost the treasury as much as \$40 billion and allegations of widespread corruption related to the 2010 Commonwealth Games.

About 5,000 people attended the rally in central Delhi with other similar gatherings in cities across India on the anniversary of the death of independence leader Mahatma Gandhi, who was shot dead in 1948.

Demonstrators carried placards reading "Sack and jail the corrupt" and "Enough is enough".

Politicians and business leaders have said corruption in India is slowing development and threatening the country's future economic prosperity.

BLASPHEMY LAW

Thousands rally in Lahore

AFP, Lahore, Pakistan

About 40,000 people rallied in Pakistan's eastern city of Lahore yesterday in the latest protest against proposed reforms of a controversial blasphemy law, police said.

Religious groups have held protests in several Pakistani cities since former Punjab governor Salman Taseer vowed to amend the law, that was recently used to sentence a Christian woman to death

Taseer's stance enraged the country's increasingly conservative religious base and he was assassinated on January 4 by his own security guard, who has said he killed the governor over his support for reform.

Under intense pressure from religious parties, Pakistan's government has since said it had no intentions to amend the law.

Demonstrators from religious parties Jamaat-e-Islami, Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan and Jamaat-ud-Dawa, a charity linked with 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks, held banners

in support of Mumtaz Qadri -- the police commando who shot dead Taseer.

Participants chanted slogans including "Free Mumtaz Qadri", "We are ready to sacrifice our lives for the honour of Prophet Mohammad" and "Changes in blasphemy law not accepted."

An AFP reporter saw activists carrying effigies of Pope Benedict XVI and Pakistani minorities affairs minister Shahbaz Bhatti shouting slogans "Allah-o-Akbar."

Local government official Tariq Zaman put the overall number of protesters at 40,000.

Leaders of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz and Quaid-i-Azam group also addressed the rally.

Event organisers called the brothers of two Pakistani men shot dead by a US national in Lahore on Thursday to the stage and pledged their support for the victims' families in pursuing a murder case.

Hillary heads to Haiti to mediate political crisis

AP, Washington

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton is flying to Haiti to mediate in a political crisis there while other administration officials are keeping watch on violent protests halfway across the world in Egypt.

Clinton will meet Sunday with President Rene Preval and the three candidates vying to succeed him during her visit. She will also see a treatment center for the cholera epidemic that has killed almost 4,000 people.

Haiti's political crisis stems from a first-round presidential election in November that was marred by fraud.

The US wants Preval's preferred candidate, Jude Celestin, to bow out because the Organization of American States says he had the least support. The US warns that continued aid for Haiti's reconstruction from last year's earthquake is at stake. Haiti's presidential run-off is in March.



India sends plane to rescue citizens from Egypt

AFP, New Delhi

India yesterday sent a passenger plane to Cairo to evacuate Indian citizens from Egypt due to the ongoing unrest, the government in New Delhi said.

The special Air India flight will return with 300 people, mostly women and children, the ministry of external affairs said in a statement, adding that it had been arranged after requests from Indians living in troubled country.

The plane, belonging to the country's state-run carrier, departed yesterday.

Pak PM declines comment on US man's arrest

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistani Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani yesterday declined to comment on the arrest of a US man who shot dead two men in Lahore, saying the matter was being probed by courts and regional authorities.

The US embassy has claimed diplomatic immunity on behalf of Raymond Davis, previously described as a consulate employee, who is under investigation on double murder charges after shooting dead two motorcyclists on Thursday.

A third Pakistani was crushed to death by a consulate car that went to help Davis following the shooting in a busy street in the eastern city.

"The federal government is not silent over this matter. This matter is in the court," Gilani told reporters in a live televised press conference from his home town of Multan.

"The Punjab government is conducting an inquiry into this matter and I would not comment till it is completed," Gilani said.

ANNOUNCEMENT

life-changing careers

Novo Nordisk is a global healthcare company with 87 years of innovation and leadership in diabetes care and markets its products in 179 countries. Find out more about us at www.novonordisk.com For its fast growing Bangladesh operations, Novo Nordisk is looking for career minded, talented and proactive professionals in the following areas:



Manager, Medical Services:

Reporting to: Managing Director

Your Responsibilities include:

- Budgeting, Planning, Supervising, Coordinating, Controlling and quality Monitoring of all the activities regarding clinical meetings, clinical trials & scientific seminar, Training of field staffs and printing materials of medical department
- To ensure close and positive interaction between medical and marketing to help sharpen promotional strategies and their implementation
- To ensure that all promotional activities and products & packing conform to regulatory laws and directions within Bangladesh
- Review quality activity plans and internal audit reports, drive compliance with QMR, QAP and QBIQ update/ training norms in Bangladesh. Address customer complaints and queries IN ORDER TO ensure compliance to quality systems and procedures as per Novo Nordisk global standards

Qualifications and competencies:

- Bachelor's/ Master's in Medicine with 3-5 years of working in similar position
- Able to analyze data will be an asset
- Excellent command in English, both verbal and written
- Proven strong competencies of people management
- Willingness to taking initiatives and taking decisions
- Self-driven, innovative, problem solving and decision making skills
- Willingness to travel

Marketing Manager:

Reporting to: Managing Director

Your Responsibilities include

- Conduct competitor and market analysis, analyze parent company expectations, evaluate market potential, prepare medium/short term marketing strategy and investment plans, set targets and allocate approved budget segment wise, finalize annual brand plans, product mix and product launch plans IN ORDER TO ensure achievement of annual business plans.
- Propose and drive innovative marketing activities and facilitate roll-out of Sales and Marketing effectiveness initiatives in Novo Nordisk Bangladesh
- Support and facilitate sales team to drive marketing plan in the field and achieve the stipulated budget.
- Act as a liaison person to Global Marketing on behalf of Novo Nordisk Bangladesh

Qualifications and competencies:

- University degree in Business Administration / Marketing with 3-5 years of working in similar position
- Communication skills with an ability to influence and enthuse team
- Creativity with strong business, decision making, analytical skills, and strategic orientation
- Willingness to travel

Executive, Regulatory Affairs and Quality:

Reporting to: Manager Medical Services

Your Responsibilities include:

- Review, analyze and co-ordinate data for new product submissions, line extensions, ensuring the approval of product information, labels and other documentation as required for regulatory compliance
- Provide regulatory input and support for marketing plans, product launches and other cross-functional activities
- Ensuring the Quality Management System is established, maintained and in compliance with international standards and regulations
- Evaluation, reporting and recommendation of improvements related to the Quality Management System and Regulatory Affairs of the company

Qualifications and competencies:

- University Degree in Pharmacy with 2 year's similar experience in a reputed pharmaceutical company
- Possess working knowledge of international and local regulatory guidelines and codes
- Innovative and creative with good project management skills along with good command of both written and spoken English
- Proficient in basic MS Word, PowerPoint and Excel and familiarity with use of databases
- High level of accuracy, precision and responsibility in work assigned

Are you ready to take on the challenge?

Please send your CV with colour photo to info@e-zonebd.com or drop a hard copy to E-Zone HRM Ltd, Planners Tower (10th Floor), 13/A Sonargaon Road, Dhaka-1000. Total confidentiality is assured. Closing date and time: Sunday February 06, 2011, 6 pm.

Malaysia's ruling coalition wins by-election

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia's ruling coalition yesterday comfortably won a key by-election in its traditional stronghold, amid speculation of snap polls later this year.

The vote was called in the semi-rural Tenang constituency in southern Johor state after the death of a state assemblyman from the United Malays National Organisation.

The vote pitted the Barisan Nasional's Mohamad Azahar Ibrahim against Normala Sudirman, a rising star within the conservative Islamic Party.

The Election Commission declared Mohamad Azahar winner after he secured 6,699 votes while Normala obtained 2,992. Mohamad Azahar won with a 3,707 majority.

Fire kills 12 in Philippines

AFP, Manila

Twelve people were killed in a huge fire that razed some 100 houses in a poor residential area in the Philippine capital yesterday, authorities said.

Investigators said the fire at suburban Navotas city, north of Manila, began before midnight on Saturday and raged for about five hours.

City fire marshal Felis Medes said 11 people who were trapped in the burning structures were killed, while another person died in hospital while being treated.

"Five of those killed were children," he told reporters. Arson investigators said they had yet to determine the cause of the blaze.

Radio reports quoted witnesses as saying that a mentally disturbed resident was seen playing with petrol in one of the burnt houses earlier in the day.



PHOTO: AFP

Protesters of religious groups hold placard and shout slogans during a protest rally in Lahore yesterday. About 40,000 people rallied in Pakistan's eastern city of Lahore in the latest protest against proposed reforms of a controversial blasphemy law, police said. Religious groups have held protests in several Pakistani cities since former Punjab governor Salman Taseer vowed to amend the law, that was recently used to sentence a Christian woman to death.

Dutch ends Iran ties over hanging

ALJAZEERA ONLINE

The Dutch government has frozen official contacts with Iran to protest the hanging of a Dutch-Iranian woman, the foreign ministry said.

Gharib Abadi, the Iranian ambassador was informed of the sanctions after he confirmed reports that Zahra Bahrami, 45, was executed in Tehran on Saturday.

His embassy later said the hanging was 'an internal issue' that should have no impact on diplomatic relations.

Iranian state television reported Bahrami was hanged for possessing and selling drugs. The report said that initially Bahrami was arrested for committing 'security crimes,' but it did not say what became of that case.

Bahrami had been jailed in Iran since December 2009 after protests against Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's re-election. Protesters took to the streets, saying the vote was marred by fraud and that opposition leader Mir Hossein Mousavi was the rightful winner.

Bengt van Loosdrecht, the Dutch foreign ministry spokesman, said Uri Rosenthal, the foreign minister, was "shocked, shattered by this act by a barbaric regime."

Dutch diplomats had been denied access to Bahrami while she was in prison because Iran refused to recognise her Dutch nationality. The Dutch government reportedly hired lawyers to defend her.

The diplomatic freeze means Iranian embassy staffs are forbidden from meeting or having contact with Dutch officials without prior written approval, Van Loosdrecht said.

The foreign ministry also advised other dual citizens against travelling to Iran, as Dutch consular officials would now have no access to them if they are arrested.

Van Loosdrecht said Rosenthal would raise the issue next week when European Union foreign ministers meet in Brussels.

The Netherlands will seek unspecified 'collective measures' against Iran, Van Loosdrecht said.

Cyclones to hit flood-weary Australia

AFP, Sydney

Flood-shattered Australia braced for further downpours yesterday as two tropical cyclones hammered toward the devastated northeast, threatening further misery for already submerged towns.

Tropical Cyclone Anthony was intensifying as it closed in on Queensland state, where it was expected to make landfall yesterday night near the northeastern city of Townsville, the weather bureau said.

Abnormally high tides were forecast along the coast along with intense rain and flooding to catchments already brimming from a deluge that hit vast areas of the state earlier this month, swamping tens of thousands of homes and killing 35 people.

"After the summer that's been you just think, 'Can any more cruel blows actually land on Queensland and the nation?' and unfortunately the answer seems to be yes," said Prime Minister Julia Gillard.