

Tehran to host Islamic unity conference

Tehran Times Political Desk
TEHRAN — Ayatollah Mohammad Ali Tashkiri announced on Sunday that Tehran will host a conference on "challenges facing the unity of Islamic ummah and how to counter them".

The conference will be held on March 13 to 15 which has been declared as Muslim unity week by Iran, Tashkiri, secretary general of the World Forum for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought, told the Mehr News Agency. About 20 countries will participate at the conference, Tashkiri added. It will be the 22nd unity conference hosted by Iran.

Govt. sets new model for foreign policy: FM

Tehran Times Political Desk
TEHRAN (IRNA) — Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki said on Sunday that the government of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has set a new model for foreign policy and acting at the international arena.

Addressing a local gathering to review performance of the government, the minister said Iran's status has changed at the international arena resulting from the measured performance of the government.

"Clearing Iran from the baseless charges and blaming the U.S. for the wrongdoing in the international community are the achievement made by the government," Mottaki said.

He added that the government of President Ahmadinejad had in many cases took the initiatives to keep upper hand at the international arena.

Stressing the coordination between all layers of the Islamic establishment, particularly between the leadership and the executive body, Mottaki said the world hegemonic powers have tried to portray the reality otherwise.

"There was a time when outsiders tried to make others believe there was a disagreement between the Iranian government and the leadership," said the minister calling it "an external strategy."

However, Mottaki stressed that the appropriate performance of the government broke the strategy during the past couple of years.

U.S. annual human rights report not legitimate: spokesman

TEHRAN (IRNA) — Foreign Ministry spokesman Hassan Qashqavi here on Sunday refuted the annual report issued by the U.S. State Department on Iran and said such repeated and baseless accusations lack legitimacy.

Referring to wide-scale violation of human rights and civic and religious freedoms in the U.S. particularly in the wake of the September 11 incident, he said the U.S. itself is on top of the list of countries violating human rights worldwide and so it is not eligible to comment on other countries.

The Islamic Republic of Iran



abides by its principles on human rights issues, he said adding, "We advise the new U.S. administration to avoid making mistakes and instead focus on the poor status

of human rights in its own country, CIA secret cells around the globe, CIA secret flights over Europe for torture of those accused of terrorism and the status of Guantanamo and Bagram prisons, be accountable to world public opinion and remove relevant concerns."

Tehran assessing stands taken by Canadian premier

Qashqavi said that Tehran is now assessing the accuracy of reports on recent stands taken by the Canadian premier.

Qashqavi made the remark in response to a question on recent allegations quoted by Wall Street

Journal on stands taken by the Canadian premier against. He said "We are now evaluating the accuracy of the news."

"If such illogical and baseless comments attributed to a Canadian official are substantiated through legal channels, then the Islamic Republic of Iran will show a proper reaction to such allegations," he said.

"We are waiting to hear reaction of Canadian officials to this end and believe that the Canadian officials are wise enough not to make such baseless and non-diplomatic comments," Qashqavi said.

Iran, Pakistan to secure their borders against crime

Tehran Times Political Desk
TEHRAN — Iran and Pakistan will not let any element to commit any kinds of crime along their common borders, the countries' interior ministers said in a statement on Sunday.

In the statement, Sadegh Mahsouli and his Pakistani counterpart Rehman Malik stressed the need to increase cooperation

in campaign against terrorism, organized crime, extremism, human and drug trafficking, illegal immigration, kidnapping, extortion and money laundering.

Both officials said Pakistan-Iran borders, which they called the borders of friendship, can be a great potential for developing bilateral relations.

They also called for periodical

meetings between the officials of both countries including their interior ministers.

Malik told a press conference in Tehran on Saturday that Pakistan and Iran have decided to establish a joint task force that will meet each month to manage their border issues in a better way.

He also provided two separate lists of Pakistani and Iranian

kidnappers to the Iranian Interior Ministry on Saturday.

Malik stated that Pakistan has successfully discovered the location of Iranian commercial attaché Heshmatollah Attarzadeh, who was kidnapped in Peshawar on November 13, 2008 after a bloody shootout in which his guard was killed, but added that the Pakistani government cannot take an irresponsible action that could put his life in jeopardy.

Iran, Syria vow to bring Israel to justice

Speaking at a joint press conference in Tehran on Sunday the Iranian first Vice-President Parviz Davoodi and Syrian Prime Minister Mohammad Naji Otri pledged support for the oppressed people of Palestine, particularly the people of Gaza.

"We have to help support the rights of Palestinian people especially in Gaza and should be very vigilant because of the plots and ploys of enemies," Davoodi said while praising Damascus for being a key player in supporting Palestinians against Israeli aggression.

Israel staged a massive air strike against the besieged region of Gaza for 23 consecutive days, pounding residential units, schools, mosques and hospitals, killing over 1,300 people and wounding more than 5,000 others.

Israel's offensive against Gaza was faced with severe international criticism across the globe, which came to an end after the two sides announced separate ceasefires.

Recently some 5,700 Iranian lawyers filed a complaint against 24 Israeli leaders and commanders involved in the recent Gaza onslaught. Israeli President Shimon Peres, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Defense Minister Ehud Barak and Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni are among the officials accused of war crimes.

Meanwhile, Turkey's Mazlum-Der rights group launched an investigation into Israeli crimes against humanity and genocide during the 23-day deadly offensive in the Gaza Strip.

The group filed a complaint which asked that Turkey



be given the right to try 19 Israeli warlords including Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, President Shimon Peres, Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and Defense Minister Ehud Barak of committing genocide and crimes against humanity in Gaza.

Several international rights groups, including Amnesty and Human Rights Watch, have accused Israel of using banned weapons against the densely populated coastal enclave of 1.6 million.

Iran is also going to host an international conference in support of Palestine on March 4-5 2009 in Tehran. Significant figures of the international community including the Arab League, Organization of Islamic Conference as well as renowned international lawyers have been invited to the conference.

(Source: Press TV)

OIC health ministers

meet in Tehran

TEHRAN — The second conference of the Organization of the Islamic Countries' health ministers opened in Tehran on Sunday.

A number of 20 health ministers and representatives from 57 Islamic countries are attending the event in order to study implementation of OIC's development plans in Muslim states.

The first conference of the OIC's health ministers was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in 2007 in which a number of ten resolutions were approved.

Domestic production of vaccines, implementation of the world program to combat child polio and malaria, promotion of women's and children's health as well as smoking control program were among the issues discussed at the Kuala Lumpur conference.

We are unaware of any Talabani request about Iraq's reparations debt: Iran FM

Tehran Times Political Desk
TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki says that he is unaware of any request by Iraqi President Jalal Talabani in regard to the reparations for the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

"I have not heard of this issue," he told reporters in Tehran on Sunday.

Some media outlets had quoted Talabani as saying that the current Iraqi officials fought against former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein during the Iran-Iraq war and now Iraq expects Iran to cancel its debt for the war reparations.

The Iraqi president met senior Iranian officials during his three-day visit to Tehran, which began on February 25.

Some experts have estimated that the war, which was initiated by former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, caused one trillion dollars of damage.

Rafsanjani to begin tour of Iraq on Monday

Tehran Times Political Desk
TEHRAN — Expediency Council Chairman Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani will take a trip to Iraq on Monday at the head of a political and religious delegation.

In a letter on September 25 last year, Jalal Talabani officially invited Rafsanjani to pay a visit to Iraq and its holy sites.

In his meeting with Rafsanjani's office director in Baghdad, Talabani had explained that he will personally accompany Iran's Expediency Council chairman in his visit to different places.

Rafsanjani also plans to hold talks with Iraq's ulema, tribal chiefs, Shia, Sunni, and Kurdish party leaders, as well as a number of academics.

Discussions on regional developments, especially Iraq issues and Tehran-Baghdad relations, will feature most in talks.

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