



>> Medvedev Era

Dmitry Medvedev will be sworn in as Russian president in a Kremlin ceremony on Wednesday, taking over the job from his mentor Vladimir Putin and becoming the youngest ruler since Tsar Nicholas II. See Page 11



>> Nuclear Propaganda

Iran's IAEA envoy Ali Asghar Soltanieh warned against efforts to blame states without nuclear weapons for ongoing proliferation concerns. See Page 3

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All Al-Qaeda Members Extradited



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Iran's ambassador to Iraq, Hassan Kazemi Qomi said the members of Al-Qaeda terrorist group held in Iran have been extradited to their countries of origin.

Call for Stopping Israeli Atrocities



03

A Jewish parliamentarian urged international human rights organizations to stop Israel from committing a systematic massacre in the Palestinian territories.

Sepahan In Syria



15

The fifth round of Asian Champions League continues today with 14 games in seven groups. Iranian teams in the league, namely Sepahan and Saipa, meet rivals from Syria and Kuwait.

Shahidi's House Becomes Museum



16

Residence of noted Islamic historian Seyed Jafar Shahidi has been transformed into library-cum-museum by Cultural and Artistic Organization of Tehran Municipality (TM).

Rice Prices Unprecedented



> Compiled by Behnam Saremi

Unprecedented hike in the price of rice has become a subject of grave concern, as the cereal forms the Iranians' staple diet and the hike is making a big hole in the family basket.

The Central Bank of Iran announced recently that the price of rice has increased by 10 percent. While low-quality Iranian rice is sold at 25,000 rials, consumers have to pay more than 40,000 rials for high quality rice.

Experts and officials consider the unprecedented cold of last winter and drought in many provinces as one of the reasons behind the price hike.

Although the rise in prices of essential commodities, especially rice, is not limited to Iran and has become a global concern, this should not give officials any excuse for failing to predict such a situation.

Iranian lawmakers recently questioned officials about the price hike and initiated a motion to impeach Commerce Minister Massoud Mir-Kazemi.

According to Mehr News Agency, Majlis Speaker Gholamali Haddad Adel said on Tuesday the government should adopt extensive measures for confronting the drought and its impact.

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Perspective

On Putin's Call

By Amir Ali Abolfath

For the first time in Russia's history, which has had more than its share of upheavals, transfer of power will take place in a democratic manner. With the end of Vladimir Putin's 8-year presidency, Dmitry Medvedev will be inaugurated today as the third leader of the Kremlin in the post-Soviet era.

Irrespective of Putin's role and influence in the political direction of this important country, or the possibility that as the next prime minister he may even consign Medvedev to the margins, it should not be overseen that after ages Russia has finally come to terms with the logic of democratic power transfer.

Up until the recent past, all Russian rulers, be it during the rule of Czars or the communists, retired from power either due to death or coups.

Boris Yelstin, the first post-Soviet president, relegated power to Putin only when ill health made it impossible for him to rule. Mikhail Gorbachev, the pioneer of Perestroika and Glasnost, opted out when the Soviet Union disintegrated and joined history books.

From Vladimir Lenin, the first head of the USSR to Konstantin Chernenko, who briefly came to power from 1984 to 1985, former communist leaders gave up power due to death, or like Nikita Khrushchev went into retirement in the wake of internal power struggles.

The situation was not much different in the times of the Czars, including the likes of Ivan the Terrible and Nicola II. For centuries Russia was better known for despotic rule, a country in which dissent was equal to treason, and word of kings and Kremlin bosses was over and above the law.

However, Putin changed all that and gradually moved the military superpower toward rule of law where among other things economic progress became a top priority.



UN Bodies Under Fire

As FAO readies for a summit of world leaders next month, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon Monday defended the Rome-based UN agency, which has come under fire for its failure to help meet the growing challenges of hunger worldwide. 14

Myanmar Cyclone Death Toll Exceeds 22,000

The cyclone death toll soared above 22,000 on Tuesday and more than 41,000 others were missing as foreign countries mobilized to rush in aid after the country's deadliest storm on record, state radio reported.

Up to 1 million people may be homeless after Cyclone Nargis hit the Southeast Asian nation, also known as Burma, early Saturday. Some villages have been almost totally eradicated and vast rice-growing areas are wiped out, the World Food Programme said, AP reported.

Images from state television showed large trees and electricity poles sprawled across roads and roofless houses ringed by large sheets of water in the Irrawaddy River delta region, which is regarded as Myanmar's rice bowl.

«From the reports we are getting, entire villages have been flattened and the final death toll may be huge.» Mac Pieczowski, who heads the International Organization for Migration office in Yangon, said in a statement.

Myanmar's military government has signaled it will welcome aid supplies for victims of a devastating cyclone, the UN said on Tuesday, clearing the way for a major relief operation from international organizations.

But UN workers were still awaiting their visas to enter the country, said Elisabeth Byrs of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Some aid agencies reported their assessment teams had reached some areas of the largely isolated region but said getting in supplies and large numbers of aid workers would be difficult.

The cyclone came only a week ahead of a key referendum on a constitution that Myanmar's military leaders hoped would go smoothly in its favor, despite opposition from the country's feisty pro-democracy movement. However, the disaster could stir the already tense political situation.



Invitation to International Tender

Tender No: 52244515

Khouzestan Steel Company

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