

NUCLEAR DEAL ‘Ball in Iran’s court’: Macron

AFP, Algiers

French President Emmanuel Macron yesterday said the fate of a revived nuclear deal is up to Iran, and that an agreement would be “useful” even if it doesn’t settle everything.

Asked during a visit to Algeria about the chances of success in reviving the 2015 agreement between Tehran and world powers, Macron declined to speculate.

“Now the ball is in Iran’s court,” Macron told reporters.

Just weeks after prospects of a revived deal looked dead despite months of talks, the European Union put forward on August 8 what it called a final text to restore the agreement.

Iran came back last week with a series of proposed changes, to which the United States formally responded on Wednesday.

“I think that it’s an agreement, if it is concluded in the terms which are presented today, which is useful,” said Macron.



A riot grenade explodes next to Palestinian protesters during a demonstration against settlements expansion in the village of Beit Lid, east of Tulkarm in the occupied West Bank, yesterday.

PHOTO:AFP

UN ON SRI LANKA CRISIS Children ‘going to bed hungry’

AFP, Colombo

The UN yesterday said that children in Sri Lanka are “going to bed hungry” because of the island nation’s economic crisis, warning other South Asian countries could be approaching similar situations.

Sri Lanka is grappling with its worst downturn on record after running out of foreign currency to buy imports, leaving scarce supplies of food, fuel and other essentials.

The crisis was being acutely felt by families who were “skipping regular meals” because kitchen staples were becoming unaffordable, said George Laryea-Adjei, the South Asia director for the UN children’s agency (UNICEF).

“Children are going to bed hungry, unsure of where their next meal will come from,” he told reporters.

Sri Lanka defaulted on its \$51 billion foreign debt in April and is currently in bailout talks with the International Monetary Fund. Soaring energy prices in the wake of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine have also battered neighbouring economies, and Laryea-Adjei said other countries in the region could face their own nutrition crises.

“Acute economic precarity and inflation across South Asia is poised to further threaten the lives of children,” he said. “What I saw in Sri Lanka is a caution for other countries in South Asia.”

Govts ‘always tempted’ to violate human rights

Outgoing HRW chief says they can no longer hide ‘ugly reality’

AFP, New York

After three decades at the helm of Human Rights Watch, Kenneth Roth has come to believe that governments are “always tempted” to violate citizens’ rights.

But as he prepares to stand down later this month, Roth also believes that a more powerful human rights movement means they can no longer hide this “ugly reality.”

In an interview ahead of vacating his role, Roth looked back on the “endless struggle,” the ups and downs, victories and defeats since he became HRW’s executive director in 1993.

“I think the big trend over the last 30 years is that the human rights movement has deepened and strengthened,” he told AFP in his New York apartment. “Every country

I visit has human rights defenders in it.”

“Does that mean that human rights violations go away? Obviously not,” said Roth.

“Governments are always tempted to violate human rights,” he said, citing China’s repression of Uyghurs, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, and regions he feels receives less attention, such as Tigray in Ethiopia, and Yemen.

But thanks to the stronger activism, “it’s virtually impossible for governments to hide their abuses, particularly in an era of social media where everybody has a smartphone.”

Looking back over the past 30 years, he believes the world has witnessed “enormous changes, some for the good, some for the bad.”

On the one hand, he highlights the birth of democracies in Eastern

Europe and South America, but laments that the Middle East and North Africa, are “still pretty much the same” as they were.

As for Russia and China, after a “positive evolution with significant opening,” the former is “reverting back” towards the Soviet era and the latter towards Maoist-style rule, he said.

“I don’t pretend that we turn these governments into good guys,” he conceded when asked if pressure works on rights violators. “Often, all they care about is staying in power.”

“But if we put enough pressure on them, the benefits they see from violating human rights begin to be outweighed by the cost to their reputation,” Roth said.

“Sometimes we succeed in changing the cost-benefit analysis to make governments feel that it’s just not worth it to violate human rights, but other times we fail. And that’s just inevitable.”



‘Cars must be zero emission by 2035’

AFP, Los Angeles

California ruled Thursday that all new cars sold in America’s most populous state must be zero emission from 2035, in what was billed as a nation-leading step to slash the pollutants that cause global warming. The widely touted move has been hailed by environmentalists, who hope it will prod other parts of the United States to quicken the adoption of electric vehicles. The rules demand an ever-increasing percentage of new cars sold to California’s 40 million inhabitants produce no tailpipe pollutants, until their total ban in 13 years’ time.

US creates Arctic ambassador post

AFP, Washington

The United States yesterday said it will create a position of Arctic ambassador to step up diplomacy as Russia and China increase their presence in waters opened up by climate change. Secretary of State Antony Blinken will soon name an ambassador-at-large who will engage with other Arctic nations, indigenous groups and other stakeholders, State Department spokesman Vedant Patel said. Warming has been rising in the Arctic at levels well beyond the rest of the planet, raising the prospect that once impenetrable waterways will open up for both commercial and military vessels. Russia has been stepping up its presence near the North Pole, both with submarines and warplanes, while China has been building Arctic research stations, widely seen as a prelude to a larger presence.

Brazil records worst day for Amazon fires in 15 years

AFP, Rio de Janeiro



The number of forest fires in the Brazilian Amazon hit a nearly 15-year high this week, according to official figures that provided the latest warning on the advancing destruction of the world’s biggest rainforest. Satellite monitoring detected 3,358 fires on Monday, August 22, the highest number for any 24-hour period since September 2007, according to the Brazilian space agency, INPE. The number was nearly triple that recorded on the so-called “Day of Fire” – August 10, 2019 – when farmers launched a coordinated plan to burn huge amounts of felled rainforest in the northern state of Para. Then, fires sent thick gray smoke all the way to Sao Paulo, some 2,500 kilometers (1,500 miles) away, and triggered a global outcry over images of one of Earth’s most vital resources burning.

Nazrul’s death

FROM PAGE 14

recitation sessions and staging of dramas from the creative literary works of the poet.

Besides, Bangladesh Betar and Bangladesh Television, and other private television channels and radio stations will air special programmes, while the national dailies will publish special supplements.

Kazi Nazrul was a poet, lyricist, musician and philosopher.

The nation got inspirations from Nazrul’s poems and songs during the great Liberation War in 1971 and all other democratic movements and struggles.

Nazrul wrote nearly 3,000 songs and composed many of them which are known as Nazrul-Geeti or Nazrul Sangeet.

After the independence of Bangladesh, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman brought poet Nazrul Islam to Dhaka from Kolkata along with his family and made arrangements for living with state honour.

Bangabandhu also provided a residence for the family of the poet in the city’s Dhanmondi.

Water-sharing deal

FROM PAGE 14

meeting held in New Delhi on Thursday. The JRC meeting was held after a pause of 12 years.

Zahid said India agreed to provide 153 cusec of water of the Kushiara to Bangladesh.

Responding to a question, the state minister said the agreement on the Teesta water sharing remained prepared but its signing is getting delayed due to the objection of the chief minister of West Bengal.

“We kept them under pressure. We firmly believe that we will soon see a solution to that end,” he said, referring to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s repeated call for signing of the long-pending Teesta water sharing deal.

At the 38th minister-level JRC meeting, the two countries discussed “issues related to water-sharing treaties” of various rivers, including the Teesta and the Ganga.

Both sides at the meeting welcomed finalisation of the design and location of water intake point on the Feni River to meet the drinking water needs of Sabroom

town in Tripura as per the October 2019 Bangladesh-India MoU on this subject.

India has been assisting Bangladesh by sharing real-time flood data. India has recently extended the period of flood-data sharing beyond October 15 to help Bangladesh address unforeseen flood events.

Bangladesh and India share 54 rivers, of which seven rivers have been identified earlier for developing the framework of water sharing agreements on priority.

During the meeting, it has been agreed to widen this area of ongoing cooperation by including eight more rivers for data exchange.

India’s Adani

FROM PAGE 14

“Two sides are clearly at loggerheads now and might have to go to the regulator or courts for relief,” said Sumit Agrawal, founder of Indian law firm Regstreet Law Advisors and a former official of India’s market regulator.

I think it was impossible to flee because at least 30 Rab personnel were present there,” he added.

Asked about the court order, Sharif Uddin Ahmed, Special Superintendent (SS) of PBI in Natore, said, “We have received the court order and have already started the investigation.”

A sense of unease

FROM PAGE 14

Refugees in August 2017 joined around 3,00,000 of their compatriots, who had come during previous waves of displacement, causing significant economic and strategic challenges for the country.

The repatriation of the Rohingyas could not be started despite an agreement signed in November 2017.

Asia Cup begins today

FROM PAGE 1

at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium.

The match will begin at 08:00pm [BST].

The six-team tournament, which had to be moved to the UAE from Sri Lanka because of political and economic unrest, will follow the T20 format for only the second time in the tournament’s 38-year history. The only other time the tournament featured the T20 format was back in 2016, in which India emerged as champions by beating hosts Bangladesh in the final in Mirpur.

The Asia Cup has remained elusive to Bangladesh, who failed

to overcome the final hurdle thrice in the last four editions of the continental tournament. The closest they came to clinching the title was in 2012 when the Tigers lost to Pakistan by just two runs in the final at home.

However, the Tigers have since then made strong statements in the tournament – barring the 2014 edition at home in which they lost all four of their matches. This time, Bangladesh will be led by premier all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, who was made skipper of the shortest format at the eleventh hour following dramatic affairs.

The Shakib-led side will be commencing their campaign against

Afghanistan on August 30 in Sharjah and as the skipper said, the Tigers will be considering one game at a time in their initial bid to clear the group stage and reach the Super 4.

One of the highlights of the tournament will be the blockbuster encounter between India and Pakistan on August 28 in Dubai, through which both the cricketing powerhouses will kick off their Asia Cup campaign.

Aside from the group stage game, there remains a chance for India and Pakistan to meet in the tournament two more times given they make it to the final, set to be staged in Dubai on September 11.

Casino kingpin

FROM PAGE 14

thronging Dhanmondi 32 from different parts of the city, creating traffic jams in and around Mirpur Road and Dhanmondi areas.

Dressed in black, Samrat reached Dhanmondi 32 around 4:00pm and placed a wreath at Bangabandhu’s portrait in front of the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum.

He cheerfully exchanged greetings with his supporters there.

The ex-Jubo League leader came under the spotlight after Rab busted his illegal casino business at different sporting clubs in Dhaka. Following his arrest, he was expelled from the youth wing of the Awami League.

Samrat, who had been undergoing treatment in the cardiac ward of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, walked out of the hospital on Thursday afternoon.

His bail will remain effective till September 19, according to his lawyer Ehsanul Haque Samazi.

Contacted, Rasul Amin Shipon, associate professor of BSMMU’s cardiology department and the head of the unit, said, “I have given him [Samrat] clearance from the hospital on Thursday. As he has been released on bail, he will now decide where to continue his treatment.”