

New Kazakh President Plans to Stay on Predecessor's Course

MOSCOW — The new president of Kazakhstan promised during his inauguration Wednesday to continue the course set by his predecessor, who led the Central Asian country since it gained independence in 1991.

Kassym-Jomart Tokayev took the oath of office three days after an election that took place among protests and hundreds of arrests. He received about 70 percent of the vote.

Tokayev was speaker of the upper house of Kazakhstan's parliament before he became acting president, following the surprise resignation in March of long-time President Nursultan Nazarbayev.



"It has to be recognized that, in these elections, citizens voted for the continuation of the course of the Elbasy," said Tokayev, referring

to the title accorded Nazarbayev that means "leader of the nation." Retaining the title and his role as head of the

national security council, Nazarbayev will remain a powerful figure in Kazakhstan.

The transition comes amid rising dissent in Kazakhstan. More than 500 people were arrested in Election Day protests. Opponents alleged the vote was staged to make way for Tokayev as Nazarbayev's hand-picked successor.

Protests have continued in the capital, Nur-Sultan, and in Almaty, Kazakhstan's principal city. Police detained 35 people Wednesday in Almaty as they gathered with plans to hold protests, the Interfax news agency reported. (AP)

Neighbor News

Japan Premier in Iran as Yemen Rebels Strike Saudi Airport

TEHRAN, Iran — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe landed Wednesday in Tehran on a mission to ease tensions between the U.S. and Iran, just hours after Iranian-backed rebels in Yemen launched an attack on an airport in Saudi Arabia, wounding 26 people.

Abe's trip is the highest-level effort yet to de-escalate the crisis as Tehran appears poised to break the 2015 nuclear deal it struck with world powers, an accord that the Trump administration pulled out of last year. It's also the first visit of a sitting Japanese premier in the 40 years since the Islamic Revolution.

But success may prove difficult for Abe, as the Houthi rebel attack on Saudi's Abha regional airport underscored. Separately, the front

page of the Iranian daily Farheekhtegan, or Educated, published Wednesday morning a picture of a mushroom cloud from a nuclear blast — a reference to America's bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of World War II.

"How Can You Trust A War Criminal, Mr. Abe?" the newspaper asked in dual English and Farsi headlines. Hard-line news outlets in Iran immediately picked up the front page from the paper, published by students of Islamic Azad University, which has campuses across the nation. Abe's plane landed at Tehran's Mehrabad International Airport on Wednesday afternoon where he was greeted by Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif. (Press TV)

Britain Sets Deadline for Carbon Neutrality by 2050

LONDON — The British government on Wednesday presented draft legislation to reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2050 in what it said would be a first for a major economy.

The new target was broadly welcomed across the political spectrum but environmental groups said it would require radical action to decarbonise the entire economy.

The deadline is far more ambitious than Britain's current policy of cutting emissions by 80 percent

over the same period and Finance Minister Philip Hammond has reportedly warned it could cost more than £1.0 trillion.

The 2050 date will be introduced in existing climate change laws through a piece of legislation known as a statutory instrument that parliament is expected to approve.

"As the first country to legislate for long-term climate targets, we can be truly proud of our record in tackling climate change," Prime Minister ... (More on P4)...(14)

Saudi-Led Coalition Confirms Houthi Missile Attack on Abha Airport, says 20+ People Injured

RIYADH — The Saudi-led coalition currently embroiled in Yemen's civil war has confirmed that a missile launched by Houthi rebels, in the early hours of Wednesday, struck Saudi Arabia's Abha International Airport, injuring 26 people.

Coalition spokesman Colonel Turki al Maliki said the missile hit the airport at 2:21am local time, according to a statement cited by the Saudi Press Agency. It follows earlier reports on Houthi television

that rebels had successfully targeted the airport with a cruise missile.

Al Malki added that eight of the wounded were admitted to hospital while a further 18 were released after being treated for minor injuries. The airport is now operating as normal, Reuters reports.

The attack followed an earlier interception, by Saudi air defense systems on Tuesday, of two Houthi combat drones that targeted a military base on the kingdom's southern border with



Yemen.

Saudi Arabia has led an alliance of mainly Arab governments as part of a military intervention in Yemen since 2015's oust-

ing of Yemeni President Mansour Hadi. Backed by a supply of arms and training by Western allies, the coalition has ... (More on P4)...(10)

Astronomers Claim Sighting of Long-Lost Apollo Capsule 'Snoopy' after Decades in Space



A team of scientists believes they have beaten 235-million-to-one odds of finding the lost 'Snoopy' spacecraft from the Apollo 10

mission, and have (jokingly) pitched the idea that Elon Musk should 'bring Snoopy home.' Two months before Apollo 11 landed on

the Moon, the Apollo 10 mission, comprising a command module "Charlie Brown" and lunar module "Snoopy," performed a dry run of all operations apart from the actual lunar landing. Charlie made it home but Snoopy was lost to the void of space orbiting the sun somewhere, or so we thought. Fifty years later, a team of scientists, led by astronomer Nick Howes, think they've beaten the astronomical odds.

Snoopy had been shunted around by the gravi-

tational fields of the Moon, the Sun, and the Earth, meaning astronomers had to sift through terabytes of data gleaned from a vast search area to try and track down Charlie Brown's lost pal. "Until someone gets really close to it and gets a detailed radar profile, we can't be sure," Howes told the Cheltenham Science Festival, adding that if they could catch a detailed glimpse of the craft, "It would be a really fantastic achievement for science." ... (More on P4)...(11)

Australian Opposition Calls for Review of Press Freedom

CANBERRA, Australia — Australia's opposition on Wednesday called for a parliamentary inquiry into press freedom after police raids on a media organization's Sydney headquarters and a journalist's Canberra home seeking to uncover the source of government leaks.

The government, meanwhile, was defending the nation's potent array of security laws, which have come under criticism since the raids last week on Australian Broadcasting Corp.

in Sydney and News Corp. Australia reporter Annika Smethurst's home.

Opposition home affairs spokeswoman Kristina Keneally called for the bipartisan Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security to investigate whether the balance between press freedom and national security is right in legislation passed since the conservative government was first elected in 2013. She wrote in The ... (More on P4)...(15)

N. Korea Sends Condolences for Former S. Korean First Lady

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un sent flowers and a message of condolence on Wednesday for the funeral of former South Korean first lady Lee Hee-ho, whose late husband held a historic summit with Kim's father in 2000.

Senior South Korean officials traveled to the border village of Panmunjom to receive the wreath and letter delivered by Kim's sister, Kim Yo Jong, a senior official of North Korea's ruling party, who called for the Koreans to honor Lee's legacy with further cooperation, a South Korean ... (More on P4)...(16)

Catalan Separatists' Rebellion Trial Draws to Close

MADRID — The four-month trial of Catalan separatist leaders accused of rebellion or disobedience for trying to make their region independent from Spain is scheduled to end on Wednesday.

The 12 defendants have been in the dock in Madrid every week since February, in a case that rattled the Spanish state and laid bare bitter divisions in the country. The Supreme Court has scrutinized their role in organizing an illegal referendum on secession and a short-lived declaration of independence in October 2017.

Their supporters say they are "political prisoners" repressed by the Spanish state.

Their opponents say they broke the law and put Spain's unity in peril in the country's worst political crisis since its transition to democracy in the 1970s. Surveys ... (More on P4)...(17)

India's Quest for Military Upgrade: Modi's Big Geopolitical Challenge for Years to Come

NEW DELHI — Recently re-elected PM Narendra Modi has made boosting defense one of the cornerstones of his campaign. The task is tricky given the not-that-friendly neighbors, weak domestic produce, and rivalry among foreign suppliers.

India has been in quite a difficult security situation throughout its modern, post-colonial history, 'enjoying' quite a rocky relationship with its neighbors.

On one side, it has its arch-nemesis — Paki-



stan; the two countries

dispute the region of Kashmir, and have repeatedly engaged in full-blown wars and smaller military conflicts, with the latest happening earlier this

year. On the other, it has China — a powerful regional competitor which has outstanding border issues with India as well. To make ... (More on P4)...(12)

US Threats over F-35 Program Dishonor NATO Alliance, Ankara Says

ANKARA — Turkey has criticized a letter from Washington warning about Ankara's removal from the F-35 fighter jet program, describing the language used in the message as unbecoming of a NATO ally.

Acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan wrote a letter to his Turkish counterpart, Hulusi Akar, outlining how Ankara would be excluded from the F-35 program unless the Turkish government drops its plans to purchase Russian-made S-400 air defense systems.

Shanahan's warning does not suit "the spirit of alliance," Akar said according to a statement released by Turkey's Defense Ministry and cited by Reuters.

He added that Turkey would send a formal response to the letter in the coming days. Akar noted that he will discuss the issue with Shanahan at a NATO meeting at the end of the month, but that Turkey's position on the matter remains unchanged. "We will ... (More on P4)...(13)

Bulgaria Ready to Protect North Macedonia's Airspace with F-16 Jets

SOFIA — NATO member Bulgaria could help protect its southwestern neighbor North Macedonia's airspace if it completes a deal for the purchase of eight F-16 aircraft from the United States, Prime Minister Boyko Borissov said on Wednesday.

Bulgaria, which is also a member of the European Union, is looking to replace its aging Soviet-made MiG-29s and improve compliance with NATO standards.

A Pentagon agency said on Monday that the U.S. State Department had approved the possible sale of eight F-16 aircraft and related equipment to Bulgaria at an estimated cost of \$1.67 billion.

However, Bulgaria expects the United States to offer to sell the jets for its air force at a discounted price of \$1.2 billion.

"We spoke with (my) colleague (North Macedonian Prime Minister Zoran) Zaev last week... to guard North Macedonia's airspace when we acquire the new jets," Borissov told reporters.

"This will be good for them and for us." The official U.S. proposal to sell F-16 fighter jets to the Balkan country is expected to arrive within a week, Bulgarian Defense Minister Krasimir Karakachanov said on Tuesday. The expected deal for Lockheed Martin's F-16 Block 70 would be the Black Sea state's biggest military procurement since the end of Communist rule in 1989. North ... (More on P4)...(18)

China-Tajikistan Relations to Make Further Strides

DUSHANBE — At the invitation of Tajik President Emomali Rahmon, Chinese President Xi Jinping will pay a state visit to Tajikistan in mid-June and attend the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA).

The visit, Xi's second state visit to Tajikistan, is bound to become a new milestone in the development of China-Tajikistan relations and open new prospects for CICA.

The head-of-state diplomacy between the Chinese President and his Tajik counterpart has continued to guide China-Tajikistan relations to grow at a fast pace.

The development of China-Tajikistan relations embarked on a fast lane after President Xi's first state visit to Tajikistan in 2014. In 2017, the relationship

between the two countries was upgraded to a comprehensive strategic partnership.

The two heads of state have established a close working relationship and deep personal friendship, made top-level design and strategic deployment of bilateral relations and all-round cooperation, and further aligned the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) with Tajikistan's national development strategy for the period up to 2030, taking bilateral relations into the best time in the history.

The construction of the BRI has advanced China-Tajikistan cooperation. Tajikistan took the lead in supporting the BRI upon its proposal, and was the first country to sign a cooperation agreement with China on joint construction of the Belt and Road. (Agencies)

Chinese President Leaves for Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan

BEIJING — Chinese President Xi Jinping left Beijing on Wednesday afternoon for Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. At the invitation of Kyrgyz President Sooronbay Jeenbekov, Xi will pay a state visit to Kyrgyzstan and attend the 19th meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Bishkek, capital of Kyrgyzstan.

At the invitation of Tajik President Emomali Rahmon, Xi will attend the fifth summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) in Dushanbe, capital of Tajikistan, and pay a state visit to the country. Xi's entourage includes Ding Xuexiang, mem-

ber of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, member of the Secretariat of the CPC Central Committee, and director of the General Office of the CPC Central Committee; Yang Jiechi, member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and director of the Office of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the CPC Central Committee; State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi; and He Lifeng, vice chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and head of the National Development and Reform Commission. (Agencies)

Effective Use of Human Capital Lead to Better Knowledgeable Economy: President

ISLAMABAD — President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday stressing the importance of quality education said effective use of human intellect could lead to building better knowledgeable economy. Addressing at the launch of National

Academy of Higher Education, the President said the countries which made tremendous growth understood elevation of masses through education ultimately achieved the goals of development and reduction of poverty. (Monitoring Desk)