

Over 3m Iranians so far registered to attend Arbaeen march

1 → Arbaeen pilgrimage is a distinctively spiritual exercise, gathering Shias as well as Sunnis, even Christians and Zoroastrians, etc. from various nationalities altogether making their ways to the holy Iraqi cities of Najaf and Karbala, walking towards the holy shrine of Imam Hussein (AS) commemorating the 40th day of his martyrdom in the battle of Karbala, in 680 AD. Last year about 1.8 million Iranians took part in the ceremony. This is while in 2011 only 50,000 took the trek to Karbala which shows a great surge in the number of pilgrims taking the long walk to pay tribute to the third Shia Imam.

Madrid to begin 'humane slaughter' of parakeets

Madrid's city council has grown sick of its parrots. Or, more precisely, of the thousands of shrill, bright green monk parakeets that screech through the capital's skies and build vast nests in its trees. The council has announced plans to reduce the number of parakeets after a recent survey showed the population had grown from 9,000 birds three years ago to 12,000 today. In 2005, there were only 1,700 of them in Madrid.

Although the birds are native to Argentina, many were imported as pets before ownership was outlawed eight years ago. The city council says the swelling population needs to be brought down as the parakeets are competing with other species for food and damaging the environment by stripping vegetation to build their huge stick nests.

It also says they pose a public health risk as they can pass illnesses such as psittacosis (parrot fever), avian flu and salmonella on to humans. And then there is the size of their nests. "As time goes on and they get bigger, these nests can become dangerous and weigh up to 200kg," the council said in a statement. "That represents a threat to the branches that support them and also to the people on whom they could fall."

The city authorities are working with the Spanish Ornithological Society, SEO Birdlife, and will begin "humane slaughter" and egg sterilisation over the coming months. "We're going to put into effect a plan to control and reduce the number of monk parakeets in the city of Madrid as they have become a worry for people and we've had a lot of complaints," said Borja Carabante, the council's environmental representative. The council said it had received 197 complaints about the birds between January and the end of August this year – almost as many as the 218 registered for the whole of last year. Carabante did not reveal how many parakeets would be targeted, but Santiago Soria, the council's head of biodiversity, said it would not eradicate the entire population. Without action, he added, the numbers would only continue to grow.

The cull, however, is not the city council's most controversial environmental initiative. The council – a coalition between the rightwing People's party and the centre-right Citizens party, backed by the far-right Vox party – has also sought to scrap the popular low-emissions zone introduced by the previous mayor, the leftwing former judge Manuela Carmena. At the end of September, it announced plans to allow cars banned from the city centre back into the low-emissions zone and to reduce parking charges. According to the environmental group Ecologists in Action, Camena's Madrid Central scheme brought about record reductions in nitrogen dioxide levels in the city centre, with pollution from the gas 48% lower in April 2019 than during the same month last year. Nitrogen dioxide levels across the city were down by 16%. *(Source: The Guardian)*

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Shoe bomber to be charged

(December 24, 2001) The man who was restrained on a transatlantic flight on Sunday after apparently trying to blow up explosives hidden in his shoes is due to appear in court in the United States later today. The man **identified** by the British passport he was carrying as twenty-eight-year-old Richard Reid will **appear before** a federal court later today. He's **charged with** interfering with the performance of a flight crew by assault or intimidation. The maximum **sentence** is twenty years in jail. The FBI has published an **affidavit** which describes how a flight attendant first smelled smoke from a match. When she identified Reid, he hid the match in his mouth. After **raising the alarm**, she then **saw him trying to light** one of his training shoes and saw a wire coming out of it. The FBI hasn't said whether they believe the man was **acting alone** or as part of a wider group. French authorities are examining why the man was allowed to fly with a one-way ticket and no baggage, and **after being stopped** and questioned as he tried to board a flight **the previous day**.

- Words identified:** if something identifies you it makes it possible for people to recognize you
appear before: when someone appears before a court they go there to answer charges
charged with: formally accused of having committed a crime
sentence: the punishment a person receives in a law court after they have been found guilty
affidavit: a written statement in which you swear that what you say is true
raising the alarm: warning people of danger
saw him trying to light: saw that he was attempting to set fire to
acting alone: not doing this with other people
after being stopped: after the authorities had prevented him from getting on the plane
the previous day: here, Saturday

(Source: The BBC)



WHO delivers 3 mobile clinics to Iran

SOCIETY TEHRAN — The World Health Organization (WHO) has delivered 3 fully equipped mobile clinics to the Ministry of Health of Iran.

"These mobile clinics will provide health services and save lives in communities beyond health centers and health posts both in good times and during the crisis," said Dr. Christoph Hamelamann, WHO Representative in the Islamic Republic of Iran, according to un.org.ir.

The mobile clinics will provide outreach services to populations and communities where health facilities do not exist, are not functional or are inaccessible.

They will also reach communities in areas that are hard-to-reach and subsequently, cater for a population with limited access to health services. As the clinics are deployed and move around within a specific area, vulnerable and often displaced



communities will be able to receive access to life-saving health services.

The mobile clinics provide diagnosis, treatment, immunization, early diseases detection, control and response services, to ensure adequate follow up of patients with specific medical needs, referral of critical cases to advanced care, and detection of possible outbreaks of diseases. Each mobile clinic is accompanied by a medical team and pharmaceutical supplies to cover a range of essential health services for children, women and older people.

The mobile clinics specifically deployed on their first mission in the country to Ilam province for the mass gatherings in Arbaeen will save lives by providing first aid, stabilizing patients and referring them to the nearest health facility as needed. Some mobile clinics can also assist with more complicated cases, such as deliveries.

Are you malnourished? Quite possibly.

By Kundhavi Kadiresan

The word 'malnourished' tends to invoke images of starving children in refugee camps, fleeing conflict or drought in lands far-away. While that image does reflect a reality of hunger, it does not solely define malnutrition nor those who suffer from it.

Certainly with more than 820 million hungry people in the world, most of them living in our Asia-Pacific region, undernourishment is definitely a huge problem and one that has stubbornly vexed attempts to crack.

But there are other malnutrition phantoms in our midst and these are probably lurking closer to your own home than you might realize. Waistlines of men and women have been expanding in recent decades and there are now more than two billion overweight adults in the world – while 670 million of them are obese. More than 120 million children and teens are also defined as obese.

What we eat, of course, defines how well-nourished (or malnourished) we are. In other words, it's not simply quantity (as in how much we eat) that's causing the malnourishment, it's more to do with what we're eating – or not eating. Simply put, the world is facing a triple burden of malnutrition – from undernourishment, micronutrient deficiencies (lack of vitamins and minerals) and from becoming overweight or obese.

There are, of course, reasons (and excuses) for the weight gain. Lifestyles and diets have changed. Increased urbanization indirectly contributes to it as does the pressure of everyday life – and the reliance on processed, fast food. Indeed, in many countries of the Asia-Pacific region, we are bombarded by advertisements encouraging us to eat more junk food high in sugars, salt and fats.

Meantime, many people consume fewer fruits, vegetables and other foods high in fibre. It seems we've forgotten that an apple a day keeps the doctor away! Technologies such as computers and smart phones, which

bring us much of our entertainment these days, encourage more sedentary lifestyles which mean the additional calories we are absorbing are not being burned due to a lack of exercise. That's simply a 'fat fact.'

This phenomenon of poor diets is not restricted to urban areas or richer countries or wealthier people within poorer countries. Some people, due to where they live, don't even have the option to buy healthier foods. Fruits and vegetables, in some cases, are either not available or might be deemed too expensive – so they eat whatever is available – often fried street foods.

■ Paying the price of a poor diet and amending our ways

As with most excesses, there is a human and monetary price to pay for all of this. Diets have become so unhealthy, that when combined with sedentary lifestyles, they rank as the world's primary risk factor for disability and death from non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, some



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cancers and cardiovascular diseases. Apart from the human costs, the financial toll of malnutrition in all its forms – undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, as well as overweight and obesity – is estimated at USD 3.5 trillion per year.

So, it's clear, we have both a personal and collective best interest in changing our ways. But where to start and who leads?

As individuals, we can start by having a look in the mirror, and realizing that there are personal choices that we all can, and should, make about the foods we eat. But governments, farmers and the private sector have equally important roles.

Governments can improve food systems by implementing policies that place a higher priority on nutritious foods. As one example, in the Republic of Korea, the city of Seoul is tackling rising obesity through a number of initiatives including certifying "smart meals" with lower levels of fat and salt at restaurants, child care centres and even pre-packed meals in convenience stores so that youth can identify a healthier option. And young people are key to turning this around – so parents, teachers and other mentors are vital to instilling healthy diets at a young age.

The private sector – food manufacturers, retailers, etc. – can improve the nutritional quality of their products and promote them as such to the public.

Farmers can plant a wider variety of nutritious foods like fruits, vegetables, legumes and nuts. The diversification should even improve the farmer's livelihood and help make his or her family more food secure in the process.

So we all have a role to play, particularly as the world has pledged to end malnutrition in all forms by 2030 as one of the key Sustainable Development Goals.

On 16 October this year countries worldwide will organize activities around World Food Day and this year's theme calls upon us all to take action to achieve healthier diets. It claims "our actions are our future". The future is already here. So our actions should start now.

Half the world's coral reefs already have been killed by climate change

The oceans have long been the biggest buffer for humankind's dangerous greenhouse-gas emissions. Around a quarter of all the carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere since the 1980s—from driving cars, running factories and churning out electricity with fossil fuels—has ended up sunk into the waters.

As the planet has warmed from mounting emissions, the oceans warmed first and fastest, absorbing 90% of that excess heat. A report released last month by the UN-based Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the foremost scientific authority on the subject, warned that damage to the oceans is accelerating and may be at the point of irreversibility. That makes delicate coral reefs around

the world something of a leading indicator for the collapse of the ocean ecosystem. Half of all reef systems have already been destroyed, putting a quarter of marine life at risk. Even if global warming is limited to the 1.5 degree Celsius target outlined in the 2016 Paris Agreement—a longshot goal, at the current rate of emissions—the IPCC now concludes that "almost all warm-water coral reefs are projected to suffer significant losses of area and local extinctions."

In a perverse consequence, lost reefs will leave nearby coastlines even more vulnerable to erosion and storms, as well as from accelerating sea-level rise, which could go up by as much as two feet this century as a

result of glacier melt.

Coral reefs are so sensitive to rising sea temperatures that you can see their demise. When water is too warm, corals enter a stress response and lose the symbiotic algae that give them their distinctive colors—a process known as bleaching. If a coral is severely bleached, chances of disease and death increase.

In 2014, an El Niño-driven coral bleaching event swept the world's reefs that lasted three years—the longest and most damaging of its kind on record. Bleaching was evident in 75% of tropical reefs and brought nearly 30% to mortality level.

Some of the planet's most important habitats are within 12 nautical miles from

shore—the coral reefs, seagrass and mangrove areas plied by over 50 million fishers for food and livelihood. Reefs that manage to survive the onslaught of warming and acidification will be left with less marine diversity, the IPCC warns, which will "greatly compromise" seafood supplies and tourism revenue.

That could leave 680 million people who live in low-lying coastal zones in a bind, especially those in smaller island states.

Fishing and tourism contribute an estimated \$16 billion annually to 52 economies particularly intertwined with coastal reefs. Almost 20% of gross domestic product in the Maldives is directly tied to reefs. *(Source: Bloomberg)*

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Female Asiatic lion to join male companion in Iran

Iran will play host to a female Asiatic lion from Ireland to accompany the recently returned male lion under a population management program aiming at endangered species reproduction by the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA), a veterinarian at Eram Zoo has said. The female lion, born 4 years ago, now is coming back to its motherland after being extinct for 8 decades, YJC quoted Iman Memarian as saying on Saturday. He went on to say that the lion has undergone genetic tests and diagnostics under the EAZA supervision, and the results have showed that the animal is completely healthy. Both will be kept at Tehran Zoological Garden separately for a period, and then will live together, Memarian concluded.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“-ship”

- **Meaning:** position
- **For example:** True **friendship** is about trusting one another.

PHRASAL VERB

Pare something down

- **Meaning:** to reduce something, especially by making a lot of small reductions
- **For example:** The list was pared down for the final interviews.

IDIOM

On cue

- **Explanation:** to happen at exactly the appropriate or expected moment
- **For example:** My grandmother was blowing out the candles on her birthday cake when, right on cue, the flowers arrived.

شیر ماده ایرانی به جفت نر خود می پیوندد

دامپزشک پارک پردیسان و مدیر باغ وحش ارم از پیوستن شیر ماده ایرانی از ایرلند به جفت نر خود تحت نظر برنامه تکثیر گونه‌های در خطر انقراض خبر داد. ایمان معاریان در گفتگو با خبرنگار حوزه محیط زیست گروه اجتماعی باشگاه خبرنگاران جوان، اظهار کرد: شیرماده ایرانی که در باغ وحش دوبلین ایرلند به دنیا آمده و ۴ ساله است، پس از ۸۰ سال در راه بازگشت به وطن است. وی افزود: شیر ماده ایرانی از نظر ژنتیک و نبود بیماری چک شده و هیچ گونه مشکلی نداشته، این شیر پس از استانداردسازی مورد تایید اتحادیه باغ وحش‌های اروپا به ایران جابه جا شد. دامپزشک پارک پردیسان و مدیر باغ وحش ارم ادامه داد: دو شیر ماده ونر ایرانی مدتی جدا از هم زیست خواهند کرد و به صورت تدریجی این دو گونه به هم معرفی خواهند شد.