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# IRAN DAILY



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Saudi warplanes intensify airstrikes against various residential areas across Yemen



Foolad, Sepahan handed ACL group berths after Persepolis, Esteghlal omission



Iranian actor-cum-director Maadi among U.S. film festival jury members

## Iran blacklists 51 more US officials, commanders for involvement in Gen. Soleimani assassination

Tehran updated the list of American individuals it blacklisted for involvement in the US assassination of top Iranian counterterrorism commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani and his companions, adding 51 US officials and commanders to the list.

In a statement released on Saturday, Iran's Foreign Ministry said the United States, by conducting the "callous terrorist act," acted in glorification of terrorism and in violation of the fundamental human rights, Press TV reported.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran underlines that the heinous terrorist act will not in any manner diminish the resolute determination and resolve of the Islamic Republic of Iran in following the path of the revered General Soleimani in fighting terrorism and terrorist groups, in particular, the US-backed terrorist groups," the statement read.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in accordance with the "Act on Countering Violations of Human Rights and Adventurist and Terrorist Actions of the United States of America in the Region", particularly, articles 4 and 5, and in addition to the American individuals including Donald Trump, Michael Pompeo, John Bolton, Mark Esper, Gina Haspel, Christopher Miller and Steven Mnuchin and also Matthew Tueller, Steven Fagin and Rob Waller, who were listed respectively on January 19, 2021 and October 23, 2020, identifies and imposes sanctions as set forth in the abovementioned act on 51 other persons for the role they played in the terrorist act of the United States against General Soleimani and his companions.

The persons, as the case may be, have taken part in decision-making, organizing, financing, and carrying out the terrorist act or have otherwise justified terrorism which is a threat to the international peace and security through supporting such egregious terrorist attack.

On January 3, 2020, the US military conducted an air operation under the order of former US president Donald Trump, targeting General Soleimani near Baghdad International Airport after his arrival. The attack also killed the general's companions, including Deputy Commander of the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis.



## Intense talks held in Vienna for lifting US sanctions

International Desk

Talks on reviving the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers continued in Vienna on Saturday with a working group on lifting sanctions discussing key issues of verification and assurances.

Participants at the expert-level meeting reviewed the details of proposed mechanisms on guarantees of non-repetition of violation that Iran seeks from the United States.

Russian chief negotiator Mikhail Ulyanov tweeted that the working group "assessed the current state of affairs" on sanctions lifting.

Over the past two days, delegates also engaged in "intense discussions at various levels and formats", IRNA wrote.

According to Fars News Agency, representatives of the Central Bank of Iran and the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran took part in some meetings in order to "expedite negotiations and offer detailed expert opinions".

Iran wants the US administration of President Joe Biden to give assurances that further governments will not violate the multilateral agreement again as former president Donald Trump did in 2018 when he unilaterally walked out of it and re-imposed and reinforced sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

Tehran also demands that all those

### Russia: All sides agree progress made for JCPOA revival

sanctions be removed "effectively, practically and verifiably" after the tattered pact, known as the JCPOA, is restored.

"A checklist for the verification of US measures" with regards to the removal of sanctions is being prepared, Tasnim News Agency wrote.

Later in the day, heads of the delegations of Iran and other JCPOA parties - France, Britain, Germany, Russia and China - also held bilateral and multilateral meetings.

Negotiations, now in their eighth round, began six weeks ago with the aim of bringing the US back to compliance with the JCPOA.

Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said on Thursday that the Vienna talks were heading in the right direction.

"The eighth round of Vienna talks is on the right path ... [and] achieving a good agreement is possible if the Western sides show serious determination," Amir-Abdollahian said.

"Lifting sanctions means lifting all forms of sanctions stipulated in the nuclear agreement, and the sanctions that Trump reimposed

contradict the terms of the agreement," he added.

The top diplomat noted that the most "practical model" for the removal of sanctions would be when it comes to Iran exporting oil and obtaining revenues through the country's own banking system.

### All sides see progress

On Friday, Ulyanov said that all sides had seen "some progress... towards an agreement on restoration of #JCPOA and #sanctions lifting".

The Russian diplomat, however, noted that "persistent additional efforts" were needed to achieve a deal.

France's foreign minister also said on Friday progress had been made regarding the Vienna talks although time was running out.

"I remain convinced we can reach a deal. Bits of progress have been made in the last few days," Jean-Yves Le Drian told BFM TV and RMC Radio, according to Reuters.

"We have been heading in a positive direction in the last few days, but time is of the essence, because if we don't get an accord quickly, there will be nothing to negotiate."

Western diplomats have indicated they are hoping to have a breakthrough by the end of January or early February. Iran has rejected any deadline imposed by Western powers.

## Over 20 die as snowstorm traps drivers in Pakistan

At least 21 people died in an enormous traffic jam caused by tens of thousands of visitors thronging a Pakistani hill town to see unusually heavy snowfall, authorities said Saturday.

Police reported that at least six people had frozen to death in their cars, while it was not immediately clear if others had died from asphyxiation after inhaling fumes in the snowdrift.

Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid said the military had mobilized to clear roads and rescue thousands still trapped near Murree, around 70 kilometers (45 miles) northeast of the capital, Islamabad, AFP reported.

Video shared on social media showed cars packed bumper-to-bumper, with one-meter-high (three-foot) piles of snow on their roofs.

"People are facing a terrible situation," said Usman Abbasi, a tourist

stuck in the town where heavy snow was still falling.

For days, Pakistan's social media has been full of pictures and videos of people playing in the snow around Murree, a picturesque resort town built by the British in the 19th century as a sanatorium for its colonial troops.

The Punjab Province chief minister's office said Murree had been declared a "disaster area" and urged people to stay away.

Prime Minister Imran Khan said he was shocked and upset by the tragedy.

"Unprecedented snowfall & rush of ppl proceeding without checking weather conditions caught district admin unprepared," he tweeted.

"Have ordered inquiry & putting in place strong regulation to ensure prevention of such tragedies."

Authorities warned last weekend that too many vehicles were trying to



enter Murree, but that failed to discourage hordes of day trippers from the capital.

The town of around 30,000 clings to the side of steep hills and valleys and is serviced by narrow roads that

Current extraordinary instability will lead to end of capitalism as we know it

EXCLUSIVE

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### OPINION

## Kazakhstan scene of East-West confrontation

By Ramin Mehmanparast\*

Protests in Kazakhstan over the past few days has drawn the attention of various countries in the region, Europe as well as the United States, Russia and China.

Such domestic developments grabbed headlines due to Kazakhstan's strategically important position. It is one of the most important countries in the Central Asian region, with an area of more than 2.7 million square kilometers, with access to the Caspian Sea.

Sharing borders with Russia and China, as well as military bases from the Soviet-era and the spaceport of the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan adds to its strategic importance. The country has high potential for grain production. Before the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan used to produce 38 million tons of grains. Moreover, other countries' access to the North-South and East-West corridors through Kazakhstan gives it a special status.

Kazakhstan's first president since independence from the Soviet Union, Nursultan Nazarbayev, ran the country from 1990 to 2019, until Kassym-Jomart Tokayev took over from him. During his 29-year-long rule, Nazarbayev tried to strike a balance in foreign policy between the East and the West.

In addition to that balance, under the long-serving president, Kazakhstan managed to implement a successful development program using its vast natural resources. In fact, this has made Kazakhstan one of the most outstanding countries in the Eurasian region, as well as among ex-Soviet states.

But this development program led to the emergence of a wealthy and aristocratic class that undertook these large-scale economic projects, meaning that mostly the new caste and not the whole of society benefited from the projects. This created a kind of social class division. Furthermore, ordinary Kazakhs witnessed significant corruption in the country's administrative system.

Social class division, coupled with public corruption, have stoked a sense of discrimination and injustice among the majority of Kazak society.

Although massive development projects improved people's livelihoods, they fueled discrimination and created an unjust social class division that could trigger certain social movements which had been suppressed over the past years.

Now a New Year increase in fuel prices seemed to have served as a spark, unleashing accumulated dissatisfaction of the public and bringing people to the streets.

One should bear in mind that Kazakhstan has always been a scene for rivalry between Russia and the United States. It has a strategic position that makes it crucial to the United States and Russia to secure their presence in the Eurasian and Central Asian regions. Such rivalries have already taken place in Armenia, Ukraine, Georgia and Azerbaijan.

Western nations are always looking for such opportunities to take advantage of grassroots protests and foment colorful revolutions in order for them to play a greater role or to install pro-West political parties in these countries.

And now, Kazakhstan seems to be the scene of confrontation between Western countries (NATO) and Russia's security power.

Russian forces have been deployed to Kazakhstan as part of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) at the request of the Kazakh government, and do not appear to be allowing the Americans to flex their muscles there.

The recent protests have been largely contained and the government will most likely weather the crisis. But it should not be forgotten that as long as roots of dissatisfaction such as injustice, corruption and lack of political reform are not properly addressed, new protests could flare up at any time in the future.

\*Ramin Mehmanparast is former Iranian ambassador to Kazakhstan.

are frequently clogged even in good weather.

Sheikh Rashid said residents had sheltered people trapped in the town and provided blankets and food to those they could reach on the outskirts.

Authorities said schools and government buildings had taken in those who could make it to the town from the clogged roads.

Helicopters were also on standby for when the weather cleared.

Rescue 1122, Pakistan's emergency service, released a list naming 21 people it said had been confirmed dead.

It included a policeman, his wife and their six children.

Hasaan Khawar, a spokesman for the Punjab government, said they had frozen to death inside a trapped car.