

Iran's Stock Market Outstrips Global Rivals

TEHRAN (FT) -- The stock market of Iran, for a long time dogged by U.S. sanctions, has notched up a notable achievement: ranking among the world's best performing over the past 12 months, as domestic investors seek refuge from rampant inflation.

A collapse in the rial against the dollar has triggered a huge spike in prices, with the official inflation rate at almost 43 percent in the year to September. Banks' interest rates have not kept up, which analysts say has pushed Iranians into stocks to protect the value of their savings.

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Kayhan International



IRGC Chief: Military Options No More on Table

TEHRAN (Tasnim) -- IRGC Commander Major General Hussein Salami highlighted Iran's full preparedness to counter any foreign threats and said the Islamic Republic has become so powerful that the enemies cannot speak of military options any longer.

Speaking to reporters, Salami replied to a question as to why the enemy's military option against Iran is "no more on the table", saying, "Because we have become powerful; because we have been invincible and, at the same time, our enemies have been weakened and their options have become really weak."

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Candidate to Head IAEA:
Iran Deserves Goodwill, Not Sanctions



Portugal Crowns 'Isolated' As Best Short Film



Iran Beat Canada to Register First Win at FIVB World Cup



Syrian FM Vows to 'Liberate Every Inch' of Syria



Gen. Soleimani, Ayatollah Sistani Targeted

Assassination Plots Foiled in Iran and Iraq

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- A senior Iranian official said on Thursday that Tehran had foiled a plot by Israeli and Arab agencies to assassinate Major-General Qassem Soleimani, head of the Quds Force.

State media quoted Hussein Taeb, the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) security chief, as telling a conference that the plotters had planned to buy a property adjacent to the grave of Soleimani's father and rig it with explosives to kill the commander.

Soleimani leads the foreign arm of the IRGC and has had a key role in fighting foreign-backed terrorists in Syria and Iraq.

Taeb said three people had been arrested in the plot, which he said had been "years in planning". Taeb did not name the Arab countries involved in the plot.

Quds Force's successes have made Soleimani instrumental in the steady victory of anti-terror forces in the Middle East, which the United States and Saudi Arabia and the occupying regime of Israel have struggled to keep in check.

The Zionist regime's foreign minister Israel Katz has said Israel was working to "uproot" Soleimani, according to Israeli media.

According to Taeb, the terrorists planned to buy a place next to a Husseiniyah (religious hall) belonging to General Soleimani's late father, plant 350-500 kilograms of explosives beneath the place, and blow up the place during Tasu'a and Ashura mourning processions marking the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (AS), the third Shia Imam, on September 8-9.

The plotters, however, were under watch since they transferred the terrorist cell's members to a neighboring state for high-cost training programs before carrying out the plot, the IRGC official said.

Following precise intelligence work, the IRGC's intelligence unit "succeeded in arresting the three-member team," he said, adding that the "Hebrew-Arab services" had spent several years to draw up the plot.

"Through this ominous act, they were after igniting a religious conflict and portray it (assassination) as a domestic revenge case; however, with God's blessing, despite several years of planning, they encountered the barrier of diligence and vigilance of the Iranian nation's children and were trapped by the IRGC's intelligence unit before being able to carry out the plot,"

Taeb said.

Members of the team, he said, confessed after their arrests that they had wanted "something big" to disrupt the internal order and public opinion.

General Soleimani topped leading U.S. magazine Foreign Policy's 2019 list of Global Thinkers in the defense and security field.

In November 2018, the New York Times revealed a March 2017 meeting in Riyadh to assassinate Iranian officials, namely General Soleimani.

Plot to Assassinate Ayatollah Sistani Foiled

Iraq's security forces have dismantled a terrorist network planning to assassinate Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, Lebanon's Al Mayadeen television news network reported on Friday.

Citing Najaf Governor Luay al-Yassiry, it said members of the terror outfit sought to assassinate the revered cleric in the holy city where they had been deployed to an old neighborhood to carry out the plot.

Yassiry did not provide any further information about the identity or the number of terrorists involved in the assassination attempt.

A correspondent for the Iran-based Al-Alam television news network, Navid Behrouz, said the captured terrorists had planned to incite protesters to storm Ayatollah Sistani's office.

Ayatollah Sistani Urges Protesters to Avoid Violence

Flames of Sedition Rage in Iraq



A rioter flashes the V for victory sign as a police vehicle burns in Baghdad.

BAGHDAD (Dispatches)-- Iraq's top Shia cleric on Friday urged security forces and protesters not to use violence, and criticized Iraqi officials for failing to eradicate corruption, blaming lawmakers in particular.

"It is sorrowful that there have been so many deaths, casualties and destruction" from days of clashes between protesters and security forces, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani said in a letter read out by his representative Ahmed al-Safi during a sermon in the holy city of Kerbala.

"The government and political sides have not answered the demands of the people to fight cor-

ruption or achieved anything on the ground," he said. "Lawmakers hold the biggest responsibility for what is happening."

Iraqi Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi expressed regret that the ongoing protests have become violent, saying he is ready to meet with representatives of the protesters to discuss their demands.

Speaking Thursday night, the Iraqi prime minister said certain elements have been able to derail the protests from their peaceful path.

He said there was no "magic solution" to issues such as graft, unemployment and corruption but he would begin passing a law for ba-

sic income to be meted out to poor families.

During the televised address, Abdul-Mahdi also asked the parliament, where his coalition is in majority, to give him support so that he can reshuffle his cabinet to address people's demands.

On Friday, Abdel-Mahdi gave his full support to the security forces, insisting they were abiding by "international standards" in dealing with protesters. He described the clashes as "the destruction of the state, the entire state".

As protests and clashes gained intensity, many Baghdad shops and petrol stations remained shuttered

Friday.

In a residential area near the protest site, crowds gathered to buy vegetables and fruit, with one shopkeeper saying the price of tomatoes, grapes and other greens had risen threefold.

Northern and western provinces that were ravaged in the 2014-2017 war against Daesh have remained relatively quiet.

The unrest comes as millions of pilgrims are preparing to travel to the Iraqi holy cities of Najaf and Karbala to attend Arba'een marking the fortieth day after the martyrdom of their third Imam, Hussein ibn Ali (AS).

On Friday, a senior Iranian cleric said the United States and the occupying regime of Israel are stoking unrest in Iraq to disrupt the Arba'een pilgrimage.

"The enemy is now determined against the Islamic nation. America and Zionism ... are targeting Arba'een and Iraq, and causing trouble because it is hard for them to accept the presence of millions (of pilgrims) in Karbala," Ayatollah Muhammad Emami-Kashani said in a sermon in Tehran.

Iran's Foreign Ministry on Thursday urged all pilgrims from the country to postpone their visit to Iraq until calm is restored.

"Stressing the importance of the great march of Arba'een and the necessity of holding this magnificent congregation, the Foreign Ministry calls on the Iranian faithful ... to postpone their visit to Iraq until calm is restored to the country.

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Yemenis Rally to Support Operation Against Saudis

SANAA (Dispatches) -- Tens of thousands of Yemenis took to the streets of the northern city of Sa'ada Friday to express support for a recent retaliatory military operation against Saudi-led forces in the border region of Najran.

Authorities addressing the rally called for "national reconciliation" and a further deployment of forces against the Saudi aggression, Yemen's Al-Masirah news network reported.

They also warned Riyadh that continued aggression and failure to accept a ceasefire proposed by Yemen would result in more serious strikes from Yemeni forces.

During the rally, demonstrators carried images of Yemeni soldiers who had lost their lives during the recent operation.

Demonstrators also decried "Washington's policies in the region" and called for Muslim and Arab states to unite against the "oppressors", chanting slogans expressing support for the Palestinian cause. "We are headed to Al-Aqsa," they chanted, referring to the Al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied Jerusalem Al-Quds.

Friday's protests came a week after Yemeni forces, led by the popular Houthis Ansarullah movement, announced the conclusion of a major ground operation

against Saudi-led mercenaries dubbed "Victory from God Almighty".

Yemeni forces killed some 200 Saudi-backed mercenaries and took 2,000 others captive, a military spokesman said.

The operation marked one of Yemen's most successful military operations repelling the Saudi-led aggression against the country.

It also came after a major drone attack on the heart of Saudi Arabia's oil industry, which allegedly shut down more than half of the kingdom's crude production.

Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies launched the war on Yemen in March 2015, with the goal of bringing the government of former president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi back to power and crushing the Ansarullah movement.

Resistance by Yemeni forces has however pushed the Saudi war into a stalemate, with Yemeni forces increasingly using sophisticated weaponry in retaliatory attacks against the coalition.

On Thursday, Voice of America said efforts to resolve the nearly five-year conflict in Yemen are increasing following drone and missile attacks on Saudi oil facilities last month.

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Haaretz: Anti-Iran Alliance Crumbling

TEL AVIV (Dispatches) -- An anti-Iran alliance forged between the leaders of the United States, the occupying regime of Israel and Saudi Arabia is faltering as each have become overwhelmed by their own dilemmas, Israel's leading daily Haaretz wrote on Thursday.

"The three leaders who have led the anti-Iran line in recent years were each absorbed in his own domestic crisis this week," it said in an opinion piece.

The Zionist paper pointed to the recently intensified impeachment inquiry surrounding U.S. President Donald Trump and pre-indictment hearings threatening the tenure of Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu during the past week as signs that the two leaders were mired in crisis.

Harretz also highlighted that the "mysterious" death of the long-time personal bodyguard of Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud earlier this week had "embarrassed" Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman.

Riyadh faces renewed global criticism on the anniversary of the brutal murder of dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi, Haaretz wrote.

Enumerating other setbacks for Riyadh in

the past week, Haaretz highlighted a major Yemeni operation in the country's northern region of Najran against Saudi-led troops.

The operation led to the death of about 200 Saudi-led forces and the capture of another 2,000 troops.

The article went on to describe Iran's latest international developments in comparison, saying the country had experienced a "relaxed week" despite "pressure of the U.S. sanctions and the country's economic distress."

It wrote that "Iranian President Hassan Rohani received an enthusiastic welcome at the United Nations General Assembly in New York" last week, adding that Trump has been "wooing" the Iranian president in order to get a chance to meet with him.

The daily added that the developments marked a stark contrast with the Trump administration's initial rhetoric against Iran, when Washington withdrew from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal last year and announced a campaign of "maximum pressure" campaign against Tehran.

Also pointing to Riyadh's change in tone towards Iran, the article highlighted that the

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