

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Iran has indicted 10 officials over the shooting-down of a Ukrainian passenger plane in January 2020 that killed all 176 people on board, a military prosecutor said on Tuesday.

In a report published last month, Iran's civil aviation body blamed the crash on a misaligned radar and an error by an air defense operator. "Indictments have been issued for 10 officials involved in the crash of the Ukrainian plane... and necessary decisions will be taken in court," Gholam Abbas Toriki, the outgoing military prosecutor for Tehran province, said.

BISHKEK (Dispatches) -- President of Kyrgyzstan Sadyr Japarov on Tuesday expressed gratitude to Iran for providing his country with humanitarian aids in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic.

In a meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Muhammad Javad Zarif here, Japarov also described constant political interaction between Kyrgyzstan and Iran as a sign of mutual interest in promoting relations, and highlighted the great potential for economic cooperation between the two countries, especially in the agricultural, pharmaceutical and construction sectors.

Viewpoint

Palestinian Children Continue to Reel Under Israeli Oppression

Iran, Tajikistan Set for Expansion of Defense Cooperation: Hatami



Iran to Host Asian Handball Championship



Jordan Bans Media Coverage of Royal Rift



As Talks Begin in Vienna: Iran Demands U.S. Lift Sanctions All At Once

VIENNA (Dispatches) -- European intermediaries began shuttling between Iranian and U.S. officials in Vienna on Tuesday as they sought to bring Washington back into compliance with the 2015 nuclear deal that it abandoned three years ago.

Neither side expected any early breakthrough because the U.S. has taken no effective step back from the former American's regime's wrong approach. Tehran has repeatedly rebuffed "direct and indirect negotiations" with Washington.

Iran's negotiator Abbas Araqchi said Tuesday the U.S. must lift its anti-Iran sanctions altogether and in one step if it truly seeks to re-join the 2015 nuclear agreement, which it abandoned around three years ago.

"They (Americans) have left the JCPOA, and they have imposed sanctions. So obviously if they want to come back, they will have to lift all those sanctions, all together, in one step," he told Press TV.

The remaining parties to the deal briefly met at a Viennese hotel for preparatory talks in the Austrian capital, where the pact was originally reached in 2015.

Russia's envoy to the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mikhail Ulyanov, said after the meeting that the parties had tasked two expert-level groups on sanctions-lifting and nuclear issues to identify concrete measures to move forward.

The experts were set to begin technical work later on Tuesday with the aim of discussing lists of sanctions that the United States should lift.

"The restoration of #JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or nuclear deal) will not happen immediately. It will take some time. How long? Nobody knows. The most important thing after today's meeting of the Joint Commission is that practical

work towards achieving this goal has started," Ulyanov tweeted.

Reuters said officials from Britain, France and Germany will act as intermediaries between Iran and the United States. Russia and China, also part of the accord, are present as well.

The U.S. delegation, headed by special envoy Rob Malley and sanctions expert Richard Nephew, is reportedly based in a nearby hotel.

Saeed Khatibzadeh, spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, said the talks held so far have been focused on how the parties "could make sure that the U.S. will get back to full compliance and effectively remove all imposed, reimposed or re-labeled sanctions after it ceased its participation in the JCPOA".

The Europeans are trying to resurrect the 2015 nuclear deal, which the administration of former U.S. president Donald Trump almost wrecked after abandoning it in May 2018 and imposing the "toughest ever" anti-Iran sanctions.

After the withdrawal, Iran waited for a year for the Europeans to take remedial measures and thwart the unilateral American sanctions as per their obligations under the JCPOA, but to no avail.

That prompted the Islamic Republic to suspend some of its obligations in line with its legal rights stipulated under Article 36 of the JCPOA.

The new U.S. administration, under President Joe Biden, has spoken of a willingness to return to the nuclear agreement, but in practice, it has been sticking to Trump's "maximum pressure" campaign.

Majid Takht-Ravanchi, Iran's envoy to the United Nations and a former nuclear negotiator, put the onus on Washington.

"The U.S. has so far failed to

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Global COVID Deaths Surpass 3 Million



A medical worker wearing protective gear stands next to an ambulance outside a hospital for patients infected with COVID-19 in Kyiv, Ukraine, November 24, 2020.

BRASILIA (Dispatches) -- Coronavirus-related deaths worldwide crossed 3 million on Tuesday, according to a Reuters tally, as the latest global resurgence of COVID-19 infections is challenging vaccination efforts across the globe.

Worldwide COVID-19 deaths are rising once again, especially in Brazil and India. Health officials blame more infectious variants that were first detected in the United Kingdom and

South Africa, along with public fatigue with lockdowns and other restrictions.

According to a Reuters tally, it took more than a year for the global coronavirus death toll to reach 2 million. The next 1 million deaths were added in about three months.

Brazil is leading the world in the daily average number of new deaths reported and accounts for one in every four deaths worldwide each day, ac-

ording to a Reuters analysis.

The World Health Organization acknowledged the nation's dire condition due to coronavirus, saying the country is in a very critical condition with an overwhelmed healthcare system.

"Indeed there is a very serious situation going on in Brazil right now, where we have a number of states in critical condition," WHO epidemiologist Maria Van Kerkhove told a briefing last Thursday, adding that many

hospital intensive care units are more than 90% full.

India reported a record rise in COVID-19 infections on Monday, becoming the second nation after the United States to post more than 100,000 new cases in a day.

India's worst-affected state, Maharashtra on Monday began shutting shopping malls, cinemas, bars, restaurants, and places of worship, as hospitals are being overrun by patients.

The European region, which includes 51 countries, has the highest total number of deaths at nearly 1.1 million.

Five European countries including the United Kingdom, Russia, France, Italy and Germany constitute about 60% of Europe's total coronavirus-related deaths.

The United States has the highest number of deaths of any country at the world at 555,000 and accounts for about 19% of all deaths due to COVID-19 in the world. Cases have risen for the last three weeks but health officials believe the nation's rapid vaccination campaign may prevent a rise in deaths. A third of the population has received at least one dose of a vaccine.

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Quds Force Chief Pays Two-Day Visit to Iraq

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Brigadier General Esmail Qa'ani, the commander of the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), ended a two-day trip to Iraq Tuesday, the Arabic-language Al-Alam news network reported.

Citing informed sources, the Iranian news channel said the IRGC Quds Force's chief met with a number of Iraqi officials and senior figures besides leaders of political parties and movements in the Arab country.

The meeting, the report said, focused on the developments concerning bilateral relations between the two neighboring countries as well as regional issues of common interest.

Qa'ani was appointed as chief of the IRGC's Quds Force following the assassination of General Qassem Soleimani by the U.S. during an official visit to Baghdad early last year.

General Soleimani was martyred along with Deputy Commander of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis and a number of their comrades when his vehicle was hit by a drone strike ordered by former U.S. president Donald Trump.

The Quds Force under General Soleimani played a key role in liberation of Iraqi territories from Daesh, the world's most notorious terror group, in late 2017.

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Why Eurasian Market Is Important to Iran

TEHRAN (Press TV) -- Iran Khodro (IKCO) is eyeing the Eurasian market, hoping to produce low-cost cars in countries such as Russia, the company's head of operations in Asia, Europe, America and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) says.

"We are trying to produce cars in Russia in classes in which there is less competition," Sabina Nobari told Iran Economic News Agency (Econews).

The largest car maker in the Middle East is counting on Eurasia Expo 2021 -- to be held through May 18-21 in Tehran -- to expand its footprints in a non-Western region which is emerging as a new center of partnerships.

Eurasia is rising as a new trend which is marginalizing Europe and the Western liberal order, while resurgent powers China and Russia are linking regional integration projects through the Belt and Roads Initiative (BRI) and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU).

Iran is a potential major player in both projects. The Middle Eastern powerhouse is a key destination in the trillion-dollar BRI, spearheaded by China, which involves huge infrastructure projects connecting Asia to Europe and beyond. The country is also a candidate for joining the EAEU, a Eurasian trade bloc with an integrated market of 180 million people headed by Russia.

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