

Leader Performs Funeral Prayer for Abbas Sheibani
 TEHRAN -- Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei here Friday performed funeral prayer for former Iranian politician Abbas Sheibani. Sheibani passed away on Thursday at the age of 91. He was a founding member of the Iranian Freedom Movement. Sheibani was also a member of the Council of the Islamic Revolution of Iran and served in the parliament for five terms. He served as chancellor of the University of Tehran from 1983 to 1984 and minister of agriculture from 1979 to 1980. Lastly, he served as city councilor in the metropolis of Tehran.

Kayhan International

Intel Minister: Iran's Unity Foiled Enemy's Plans
 TEHRAN -- Intelligence Minister Esmaeil Khatib said national unity has defused the enemies' malign plans against Iran.
 "During the recent riots, Western intelligence services and mass media used all their capabilities to attack the powerful Iran, its sacred system and its always-ready-at-the-scene nation, its sagacious Supreme Leader and people's resistance, but once again they faced defeat," he said.
 "The enemies resorted to hallucinating people, fabricating news, and using all their capacity to effectively

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Iran, One of Strongest Democracies in West Asia



China's Foreign Minister Warns U.S. Not to Cross Its 'Red Line'



UWW Selects Rahman Amuzad as 2022 World Wrestling Star



Zionist Troops Martyr More Palestinians



Muzzling Eutelsat Drops All Free Speech IRIB Channels

TEHRAN -- French satellite operator Eutelsat on Thursday confirmed that it has suspended all broadcasting services to the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) as well as three Russian channels.

In a statement, Eutelsat said, "Pursuant to the Council of the EU Regulation 2022/2428 dated 12 December 2022, Eutelsat has ceased all Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB)-related broadcasting activity."

The statement added that the satellite operator as of Wednesday "ended all involvement in the broadcasting of three [Russian] channels Rossiya One, Pervyi Kanal and NTV, within the prescribed 7-day compliance period."

"Pursuant to the Council of the European Union Regulation 2022/2474 of 16 December 2022, these three channels as well as a fourth, RenTV, will be subject to sanctions if so confirmed by the Council by 1 February 2023, in accordance with the notice 2022/C 481 I/04 released by the Council on 19 December 2022," Eutelsat said.

According to the statement,

the satellite operator also said it is not involved in the broadcasting of RT News in Russia in line with the process of implementing or preparing for the implementation of the aforementioned measures.

As a result of the suspensions, Eutelsat said it will take a bottom-line hit of around 10 to 15 million euros (\$16 million) to its full-year revenues.

Eutelsat on December 7 notified Press TV of a plan to take the English-language news network off air, weeks after the European Union imposed sanctions on the Tehran-based broadcaster.

On November 14, the European Union imposed sanctions on a number of Iranian institutions and individuals, including Press TV, over alleged "rights violations" following the recent foreign-backed riots in the country.

Eutelsat is a French satellite operator providing coverage over the entire European continent, the Middle East, Africa, Asia and the Americas. It is the world's third-largest satellite operator in terms of revenues.

Russia: Risk of Clash With U.S. 'High'



President Putin says U.S. supplies of Patriot missiles to Ukraine, agreed upon during Volodymyr Zelensky's trip to Washington, will not stop it achieving its military goals.

MOSCOW (Reuters) -- Russia's ambassador to the United States on Friday compared the state of U.S.-Russia relations to an "ice age", and said that the risk of a clash between the two countries was "high", Russian state-owned news agency TASS reported.

TASS cited Anatoly Antonov as saying that it was hard to say when talks on strategic dialogue between the two sides could resume, but that talks on prisoner swaps had been

"effective" and would continue.

U.S.-Russia ties have fallen to their lowest point in decades amid the fallout from Russia's military campaign in Ukraine, and the consequent imposition of Western sanctions.

Two prisoner swaps, in which U.S. Marine veteran Trevor Reed and basketball star Brittney Griner were freed by Russia in return for convicted drug smuggler Konstantin Yaroshenko and arms dealer

Viktor Bout, were rare instances of successful U.S.-Russia diplomacy in 2022.

President Vladimir Putin said Thursday night that U.S. supplies of Patriot missiles to Ukraine, agreed upon during Volodymyr Zelensky's trip to Washington, will not stop it achieving its military goals.

Putin dismissed the weapon as old and said Russia's missile systems would be able to shoot it

down. "The Patriot air defense is outdated. An antidote will always be found ... Russia will knock down the Patriot system," he said.

The Russian president said "all armed conflicts end through negotiations" -- implying that Ukraine would ultimately be forced to cede territory in exchange for peace. "The sooner this becomes clear to Kyiv, the better," he added.

In a call with reporters, Putin's spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said there were no signs from Zelensky's meeting on Wednesday with the US president, Joe Biden, that Ukraine was ready for talks.

Peskov suggested the U.S. was fighting a proxy war with Russia and was determined to keep going "to the last Ukrainian".

During his first foreign trip since the invasion began in February, the Ukrainian president gave a defiant address to a joint session of the U.S. Congress. He said his country would never give in to Russian aggression and that the White House's continued support was key to ultimate victory.

Biden announced \$1.85 billion in new military assistance to Kyiv, including the delivery of a Patriot missile battery system. Zelensky said this would significantly enhance Ukraine's air defense shield and prevent Russia from hitting critical infrastructure -- "our cities, our energy".

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'Once-in-a-Generation' Storm Hits U.S.

CHICAGO (AFP) -- A "once-in-a-generation" winter storm with temperatures as low as -40 degrees Fahrenheit (Celsius) caused Christmas travel chaos in the United States on Thursday, with thousands of flights cancelled and major highways closed.

Heavy snow and howling winds upended holiday plans at one of the busiest times of the year, as a huge cold front swept down from the Arctic and took freezing hold of the middle of the country.

Tens of millions of people were under winter storm advisories or warnings, with meteorologists saying it was so cold in places that anyone venturing outside risked frostbite within minutes.

"This is not like a snow day when you were a kid," President Joe Biden told reporters. "This is serious stuff."

Blinding whiteouts and hazardous road conditions were already spreading, even as 100 million people were expected to take to the roads, according to the American Automobile Association.

The I-90, a major highway running across the north was shuttered in South Dakota, with officials saying it would not reopen until Friday.

"Multiple highways are currently listed as 'Road Impassable'... travel on the road segment is physically impossible due to widespread deep snow and drifts," South Dakota Department of Transport said.

Conditions were cold enough for people to post videos of themselves carrying out the "boiling water challenge".

Around 100 motorists were stranded near Rapid City in the state, Pennington County Sheriff's Office tweeted. "NO TRAVEL advised," it added.

Plane tracking website Flight-aware.com showed more than 22,000 flights had been delayed on Thursday, with 5,500 cancelled outright, many at Chicago O'Hare or Denver, both international hubs.

Holiday travel volumes are expected to be close to pre-pandemic levels, with the busiest day on Thursday, three days before Christmas.

AccuWeather forecasters have

said the storm could rapidly strengthen into what is known as a "bomb cyclone" through a process known as "bombogenesis," when the barometric pressure drops and a cold air mass collides with a warm air mass.

The National Weather Service warned snow squalls -- bursts of snow lasting an hour or two -- had already happened or were expected from the Central Plains to the mid-Atlantic and Northeast.

Forecasters in Montana said they were expecting their coldest night of the Arctic snap Thursday, with temperatures down as low as -40 Fahrenheit, and windchill taking the temperature to a bone-crushing -60 Fahrenheit -- only a little warmer than Mars, according to NASA data.

Rich Maliawco, lead forecaster for the National Weather Service in Glasgow, Montana, said an encroaching high pressure system was driving clouds away.

"When you've got skies that clear out... the temperatures are just going to fall considerably," he told AFP.

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UK Strikes Leave 250,000 Passengers Stranded

LONDON (Dispatches) -- Around a quarter of a million passengers arriving at UK airports on Friday were warned to expect delays due to the start of strikes by passport control staff.

Around 1,000 members of the Public and Commercial Services (PCS) union employed by the Home Office to operate passport booths walked out at Heathrow, Birmingham, Cardiff, Gatwick, Glasgow and Manchester airports, and the port of Newhaven in East Sussex.

The Border Force strikes will take place every day from Friday to the end of the year, except December 27.

Aviation data company Cirium said 1,290 flights were scheduled to land at affected airports on the first day of industrial action, with a total capacity of more than a quarter of a million passengers.

This is the busiest Christmas for airports since 2019, as it is the first festive period without coronavirus travel restrictions since the start of the pandemic.

The Border Force strikes are part of a rolling program of industrial action by members of the PCS

union in a long running dispute over pay, jobs, pensions and conditions.

PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka has urged people affected by disruption to vent their anger at the Government.

Talks have been held with ministers, but Serwotka said pay is never discussed.

"The Government could stop these strikes tomorrow if it puts more money on the table," he said.

"Like so many workers, Border Force employees are struggling with the cost of living crisis. They are desperate."

Cirium said a total of 8,910 arriving flights with a combined capacity of nearly 1.8 million seats were scheduled at affected airports across all the strike days.

Hundreds of thousands of workers are striking over winter as unions seek pay rises in line with the rate of inflation to help shield their members from the cost of living crisis.

The past year has seen strike action in a range of sectors from dock workers to lawyers as decades-high inflation has eroded earnings.

The government insists it must

stick to more modest increases for public sector workers recommended by independent pay review bodies in order to bring inflation under control.

Royal Mail employees were also on strike Friday, their fifth day of action this month, in what Royal Mail said was a "cynical attempt to hold Christmas to ransom".

The company has estimated that the strike, which will continue on Christmas Eve, has already cost it £100 million.

National Highways workers in London and the South East will continue their four-day walkout that started on Thursday.

The workers, who plan, design, build, operate and maintain the roads, are following action by colleagues in Yorkshire and the Humber, northwest and northeast England.

Thousands of British ambulance workers will stage two further strikes on Jan. 11 and 23 in an escalating dispute over pay and staffing, the Unison trade union said on Thursday, after a similar walkout by staff on Wednesday.

While Wednesday's strike, which

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