

Iran Daily condoles with its readers on the martyrdom anniversary of third Shia Imam, Imam Hussein (PBUH) and his companions. Our next issue will appear on September 14.

IRAN DAILY



US maximum pressure policy defeated by Iran's resistance strategy: Shamkhani

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Iran's five-month copper cathode production at 110,000 tons



Nadal one win away from getting to 19 majors, closing gap on Federer



Iran director, actor awarded at Venice festival's side event

Iran fires up advanced centrifuges in latest nuclear step



Tehran warns clock is ticking for EU to salvage agreement
Russia supports restoration of balance within JCPOA

Trump impeachment fight looms over freshmen Dems at home in California

It didn't take long for freshman Rep. Katie Porter to get the question that's been roiling House Democrats this summer: Should Congress impeach President Donald Trump?

When a constituent told her that "impeachment was a mistake" – because it would flip Trump politically – in her first question at an August town hall in her home district, the California Democrat didn't hesitate.

"I came out in favor of impeaching Donald Trump because no American, especially not a democratically elected President, can be above the rule of law," Porter said, sparking rousing applause from the several hundred attendees packed into the Islamic Center of Irvine on a recent Saturday afternoon, CNN reported.

"I was one of the first people who flipped a seat to come out on this," she continued. "People said, 'Well, you know, this might be risky. You might not get reelected.' I said I'm here to do what's right."

Porter's exchange underscores the questions that she and other freshman House Democrats who won Republican seats last year are facing as they're confronted by constituents with a wide mix of impassioned opinions: An urge to embrace impeachment, tepid support for impeachment will actually help Trump get reelected and outright anger over the Democrats' flirtation with seeking to remove the sitting president from office.

The Democrats such as Porter who have come out for an impeachment inquiry faced voters at town halls over the past month who cheered their position, urged them to go forward with impeachment but also cautioned about the political consequences they could face. Democrats who haven't backed an impeachment inquiry, meanwhile, are still being pushed by liberal Democrats to get on board.

Iran took the third step in reduction of its commitments to the 2015 nuclear deal, injecting gas into advanced centrifuges to increase its stockpile of enriched uranium, the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) said on Saturday.

The AEOI spokesman Behrouz Kamalavandi told a news conference in Tehran that Iran has started up advanced centrifuges to boost the country's stockpile of enriched uranium, warning remaining signatories of the nuclear deal that the clock is ticking for them to salvage the landmark agreement in the face of pressure by the United States.

Kamalavandi said the organization has activated 20 IR-4 and 20 IR-6 centrifuges for research and development purposes.

"The capacity of these machines is many times more than the previous machines. This started as of yesterday (Friday)," he said.

He added that Iran is now capable of raising uranium enrichment past the 20% level and, while it had no immediate plans to do so, the clock was ticking toward the point where the nuclear deal could not be salvaged.

Since May, Iran has begun to scale back its commitments to the pact following the US withdrawal from the nuclear deal last year and Europe's failure to fulfill their obligations set out in the deal.

The third step was taken after the Europeans failed to meet a 60-day deadline to provide Iran with meaningful economic incentives as required under the nuclear accord despite expressing vocal support for the deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani first announced the decision to expand research and development (R&D) work beyond JCPOA limits on Tuesday. He gave the other side 60 more days to fulfill its commitments.

Iran's measures reversible

Iran says its retaliatory measures will be reversible as soon as Europe finds practical ways to shield the mutual trade from US sanctions, which were reimposed last year when withdrew from the deal – agreed on by Iran, China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, the US.

As a last-ditch effort to save the deal, French President Emmanuel Macron floated a proposal to give Iran a \$15 billion line of credit. The line of credit would be guar-

anteed by Iran's oil revenues and would require the US administration to ease US sanctions aimed at barring Iran from selling its oil, France's foreign minister told reporters earlier this week.

But Trump administration officials flatly reject the possibility of easing sanctions on Iran.

Trump administration has launched "maximum pressure" sanctions campaign on Tehran to force it to renegotiate a new deal that addresses its ballistic missile program and regional influence as well.

Previous moves

As part of its previous response to the non-compliance by other parties, Iran has already increased its enriched uranium stockpile beyond the 300 kilogram cap set



by the JCPOA and begun enriching uranium to purity rates beyond the limit of 3.67 percent.

The reductions are in accordance with Tehran's legal rights under Articles 26 and 36 of the JCPOA.

Kamalavandi said that the countermeasures seek to create a balance between its accord rights and its commitments in a bid to force other signatories to implement the deal and "respect Iran's rights".

The spokesman added that with the third step, Iran has effectively cut back on half of its total JCPOA commitments.

Kamalavandi stressed that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has been informed about Iran's new nuclear steps which it will continue to monitor.

IAEA chief in Tehran

The Acting Director General of the IAEA Cornel Feruta is scheduled to hold talks with high-level Iranian officials during a visit to Tehran today, the IAEA said in a statement.

"The visit is part of ongoing interactions

between the IAEA and Iran," the IAEA said in a statement on Friday, adding that this included "the IAEA's verification and monitoring in Iran under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)".

Reactions to Iran's move

Russia's Permanent Representative to the IAEA Mikhail Ulyanov said Iran's recent decision to activate its advanced centrifuges "should not be over-dramatized", adding that balance within the nuclear deal must be restored.

"Decision of Iran to use more advanced centrifuges shouldn't be over-dramatized. Yes, it's another deviation from JCPOA, but new activities will remain verifiable by IAEA and reversible. No proliferation threat. Just a strong signal that balance within the JCPOA must be restored," Ulyanov tweeted on Saturday.

However, the US Defense Secretary Mark Esper said he was "not surprised that Iran has announced that it's going to violate the JCPOA".

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Friday that Iran's latest reduction in commitments to a nuclear deal was "unacceptable."

On Saturday, Britain called Iran's move "particularly disappointing at a time when we and our European and international partners are working hard to de-escalate tensions".

Iran's latest move comes against a backdrop of heightened tensions with the US in the wake of Trump's withdrawal from the deal.

Tensions between the two nations deteriorated after Iran shot down a US surveillance drone on June 20 following its violation of Iranian airspace.

Several oil tankers were also targeted near the Persian Gulf last month, with Washington quickly blaming Iran for the suspicious attacks.

Tehran has rejected the accusations of its involvement as baseless, saying the incidents in the Sea of Oman appear to be false flags meant to frame the Islamic Republic.

The United States has engaged in significant regional military buildup, including by sending an aircraft carrier, a bomber task force, an assault ship, and around 1,500 additional forces to the Middle East.

Reuters, AFP, IRNA and Press TV contributed to this story.

Zarif to Pompeo: US resorts to extortion, not Iran

National Desk

Iranian foreign minister said on Saturday that what the US is doing is extortion, not Iran's moves on the 2015 nuclear deal.

Iran's top diplomat made the comments a day after the US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo pressed European nations to stop what he claimed Iran's "extortion" after Tehran again reduced its commitments under the nuclear deal in response to US sanctions.

"We are confident that the UK, France and Germany – indeed, all civilized nations – will take decisive actions to stop Iran's nuclear extortion," Pompeo, who visited the European Union headquarters in Brussels earlier in the week, wrote on Twitter.

"Is it violating a UN resolution & punishing anyone observing it?" Zarif said in his tweet, referring to the US violation of the UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which endorses the JCPOA from which the US withdrew last year.

But the Iranian foreign minister responded to the Pompeo's comments, saying that, "What exactly is EXTORTION, @SecPompeo?"

"Is it violating a UN resolution & punishing anyone observing it? Offering bribes for theft of oil & designating those who refuse?, Zarif tweeted on Saturday.

On bribes, he was referring to a recent move by US Special Representative for Iran Affairs, Brian Hook, who tried to bribe the captain of an Iranian tanker illegally detained by Britain last month to pilot the vessel to a country which could seize it on behalf of the US.

"Maybe it's demanding Iran's submission or its people starve? Or, is it lawful remedial measures under JCPOA?" the Iranian foreign minister added, referring to an earlier claim by Pompeo that if Iran "wants its people to eat" it must listen to the US.

Tensions between Tehran and Washington have deteriorated in recent months following the US unilateral withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal and reimposition of sanctions against Iran.

Russia, Ukraine swap prisoners in landmark step to ease tensions



Russia and Ukraine carried out a long-awaited swap of 70 prisoners on Saturday, in a deal hailed by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy as a "first step" toward ending their conflict.

Planes carrying 35 prisoners from each side landed simultaneously in Moscow and Kiev, where the passengers emerged under sunny skies, AFP reported.

"We have taken the first step," Zelenskyy said on the tarmac after greeting and hugging former prisoners. "We have to take all the steps to finish this horrible war."

In emotional scenes at Kiev's Boryspil airport, family members embraced and handed flowers to the former prisoners, many weeping with joy.

Among those swapped were 24 Ukrainian sailors, Ukrainian filmmaker Oleg Sentsov and Russian-Ukrainian journalist Kyrillo Vyshynsky.

"I am overflowing with happiness," Natalya Mokryak, the mother of one of the sailors, told AFP at the airport. "I have finally seen this come true."

Russian state television showed the Russian prisoners emerging from the plane at Moscow's Vnukovo-2 airport used for government flights.

Anticipation had been building for days for the exchange, which involved weeks of behind-the-scenes negotiations.

Relations between Kiev and Moscow nosedived in 2014 when people in Crimea voted to rejoin to Russia and Moscow's support for pro-Russia forces in the eastern industrial regions of Donetsk and Lugansk. Fighting there has claimed more than 13,000 lives over the past five years.

Zelenskyy's election in April has raised hopes that a stalled peace process could be revived.

The comedian-turned-politician vowed during his campaign to have Ukrainian prisoners in Russia returned and has said ending the conflict with Russia is his top priority.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said this week that the exchange would be "a huge step toward normalizing relations" with Kiev.

Saturday's exchange was "a very important step", Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said.