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Heart of Asia

Your Gateway to Afghanistan & the Region

Tuesday, January 5, 2021

Issue No. 898

www.heartofasia.af

10 afs



**Taliban accuse U.S.
of violating deal
following airstrikes**

The Taliban on Monday accused the United States government of violating the US-Taliban agreement signed in February in Doha claiming US Forces had carried out airstrikes in Nangarhar, Helmand and Kandahar provinces. In a statement issued by the group, the Taliban stated airstrikes had been conducted in support of Afghan troops who were carrying out ground operations in these areas. The group stated the airstrikes were also carried out in non-combat areas, "Such repeated violations by the Americans occurred two days ago when the US Secretary of State announced that (after the signing of the Doha Agreement, they were not attacked by the Mujahideen). This confession shows the commitment and commitment of the Islamic Emirate to the Treaty of Doha." "The Islamic Emirate warns once again that if the bombings and the ... **P3**



**Actions will prove
whether Taliban
has cut ties with
al-Qaeda: Sullivan**

US President-elect Joe Biden's national security adviser, Jack Sullivan, said Sunday night the Taliban's commitment to severing ties with al-Qaeda must not only be proven in words but more importantly in practice. He told CNN that under the Taliban agreement with the US, they had pledged to sever ties with al-Qaeda, but that this commitment needed to be not a matter of words but of action. Sullivan emphasized that the Taliban must reduce violence and enter into negotiations with the Afghan government in good faith, because, in his view, this is in fact an agreement between the Taliban and the Afghan government that will hopefully result in a political solution in Afghanistan. The agreement was signed in February between the US and the Taliban and led to the Taliban and the Afghanistan Republic's talks team sitting down together in Doha to start the peace process.

Taliban Trying to Bring Leadership from Pakistan to Afghanistan: NDS Chief



The National Directorate of Security (NDS) says that the informations show that the Taliban group is trying to facilitate the transfer of its leadership and commissions from Pakistan to the country by increasing violence and war. Ahmad Zia Saraj, speaking at the Lower House of Parliament on Monday, said the Taliban had

expanded the geography of war in the southern and southwestern provinces of the country. The NDS chief said that when Taliban leaders leave Karachi and Islamabad for Qatar, they feel remorse and therefore try to prepare the ground for their presence in Afghanistan.

According to Saraj, the Taliban's

efforts in the past to secure the group's leadership presence in Afghanistan have failed and will not be succeed.

He also said that the current movements of the Taliban show that the group is focused on Nangarhar province for this purpose.

Ahmad Zia Saraj, meanwhile, said that with the start of the second

round of talks, we will enter an "important and key" period, and the information received shows that the Taliban do not believe in peace.

Interior Minister Massoud Andarabi also said that the Taliban are ready for a full-scale war next year. The interior minister also stressed on the security forces' readiness to repel the attacks.

**Departure of
negotiators' for
Doha delayed**

The government peace-negotiating team's departure for Qatar, scheduled for Monday, has been delayed to Tuesday for technical reasons. After 80 days of discussions between the Taliban and government representatives in Doha, the two sides agreed on procedural rules for peace talks. The negotiating teams rose for a recess on December 12 for a period of three weeks to discuss fresh developments and decide on future negotiations. ... **P2**



Tehran Dissatisfied with Afghanistan & Iraq Votes in UN Sanctions Review of Iran

Iran has expressed dissatisfaction with the recent move of Iraq and Afghanistan in the review of Iranian sanctions at the United Nations, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said at a press conference.

Recently, the United States sought to revive a committee and expert group on sanctions against Iran by adding an article to the 2021 UN budget during a meeting of the Fifth UN Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Affairs.

Iraq reportedly had abstaining vote to the US proposal and Afghanistan also did not attend the meeting.

At the meeting of the UN Budget and Administration Committee, the US proposal was not approved by 110 votes to 10, with 32



abstentions.

"We have expressed our dissatisfaction with our neighbors. Of course, the Iraqi prime minister has said he will pursue this issue. The neighbors themselves know

how much the US adventure is to the detriment of the countries in the region," the spokesman for Iran's foreign ministry said in response to his neighbors' decision.

Departure of...

The negotiators were scheduled to travel to Qatar yesterday (Monday) but a source in the State Ministry for Peace and a member of the negotiating team told Pajhwok Afghan News the trip to Doha had been delayed due to technical issues.

Fauzia Kofi, who is part of the negotiating team, told reporters in Kabul they would travel to Doha today (Tuesday) for the second phase of talks.

U.S. carrier...

and other cities.

The anniversary of the Baghdad drone attack was also marked in recent days across Iran and by supporters in Syria, Lebanon, Yemen and elsewhere.

Trump unilaterally withdrew the US from a landmark nuclear deal with Iran and world powers in 2018 and launched a "maximum pressure" campaign against Tehran, reimposing and reinforcing crippling sanctions.

The two countries have twice come to the brink of war since June 2019, especially following the killing of Soleimani.

Days after the Soleimani assassination, Iran launched a volley of missiles at Iraqi bases housing US and other coalition troops, with Trump refraining from any further military response.

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China

Press Conference by Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region of Xinjiang-related Issues in Beijing

... For example, it was claimed in the Documenting Xinjiang's Detention System that Xinjiang has established 380 "detention centers" for holding ethnic minorities such as Uyghurs. As a matter of fact, these places they identified are either government offices or civil institutions. The two "detention centers" in Turpan City mentioned in the report are actually the administration buildings of the Industry, Commerce and Information Bureau and the Veteran Affairs Bureau of Gaochang District; the "detention centers" in Kashgar city are high schools and senior colleges.

For example, in its report Uyghurs for Sale, ASPI alleged that there is "forced labor issue in Xinjiang. In fact, there is no such thing as "forced labor" in Xinjiang. On the contrary, employment and labor rights protection and practice in Xinjiang is carried out according to China's constitution and related laws, and in line with international labor and human rights protection standards and the strong aspiration for better lives of local Xinjiang people of various ethnic groups, which will withstand the investigation from the world. As rightly pointed out by the Grayzone, an independent news website in the US that there is no solid evidence to prove the so-called forced labor in Xinjiang. Uygur for Sale is another maliciously "public activity" plotted by anti-China forces in the US and Australia, aiming at starting a "new cold war" against China with upgrading tricks to subvert the current regime of China and to maintain the hegemony of the US.

As to the second question, some so called "scholars" and "think tanks" have fabricated many reports on Xinjiang which are laced with lies. Now I'll take Adrian Zenz as an example to illustrate how he has churned out falsehoods about Xinjiang.

It is known that Adrian Zenz, a member of Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, was a far right-wing organization set up by the US government in 1983. As a mainstay in "Research Group on Xinjiang Vocational Education and Training Centers", he claims he is "led by God" to be against China. He is keen on spreading misinformation about Xinjiang and slandering China which have been proved to be fake. His so-called reports don't have the slightest of credibility and academic integrity in it. I'd like to name some of his tricks to cook up falsehood for your reference.

First, fabrications out of thin air. Adrian Zenz fabricated a so-called "Moyu List" where the most frequently



cited interment reason was a violation of birth control. In fact, most of the people in the list are local residents of the Moyu county, who have been leading a normal life there. Only a very small number of people who have been affected by religious extremism and committed minor crimes have received vocational education and training in accordance with the law.

Second, groundless speculations. In his reports, normal police recruitments in Xinjiang were speculated as preparing enforcement personnel for so-called "detention operations;" the "Fanghuiju activity" which is popular among all ethnic groups, was conceived as a decision-making basis for "detention operations;" boarding school and pre-school education was imagined as "means to take care of the left behind children" for "detention operations;" and voluntary employment by ethnic minorities outside their villages was portrayed as "forced labor." Such far-fetched, ridiculous imaginations have only revealed that he talks nonsense, and exposed his arrogance and unreasonableness.

Third, numbers game. Adrian Zenz claimed that the natural population growth of Han ethnicity in Gulbagh Residential District is nearly eight times higher than that of Hotan County in 2018. The comparison of natural population growth rate between a residential district and a county is of no academic value demographically. Actually, in recent years, the total population of Xinjiang has continued to grow steadily; the growth rate of the Uygur population is higher than the average growth rate in Xinjiang. The statistical data show that from 2010 to 2018, the population

of ethnic minorities and Uyghurs in Xinjiang has steadily increased, the population of Han nationality in Xinjiang has slightly increased. From 2010 to 2018, the permanent population of Xinjiang increased from 21.8158 million to 24.8676 million, an increase of 3.0518 million, or 13.99%. Among them, the population of ethnic minorities increased from 12.9859 million to 15.8608 million, an increase of 2.8749 million, or 22.14%; the Uygur population increased from 10.1715 million to 12.7184 million, an increase of 2.5469 million, or 25.04%; the population of Han nationality increased from 8.8299 million to 9.0068 million, an increase of 176,900 people, an increase of 2.0%. The growth rate of the Uygur population is not only higher than that of the in Xinjiang, but also higher than other ethnic minorities, especially than Han population.

We hope that friends from the media and people in other sectors can distinguish right from wrong, respect the facts, and do not be deceived by people like Adrian Zenz.

CGTN: According to ASPI's report, the forced labor implemented in Xinjiang is an extension of "reeducation camp" policy, and what is your comment on that?

Ilijan Anayat: First of all, there is no such a thing as "forced labor", and the vocational education and training center is nothing like "reeducation camp", and there is nothing called "re education camp policy". On December 9, 2019, Mr. Shokrat Zakir, governor of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region had announced to all that the all trainees who received courses including standard spoken and written Chinese, ... **P3**

By Vandana Mishra

Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement: Challenges for India

On December 28, 2020 the Minister of Industry and Commerce of Afghanistan Nisar Ahmad Ghoryani and Minister of Commerce and Investment of Pakistan, Abdul Razak Dawood, met in Islamabad to revise the existing transit trade relations between the two countries.

Both the representatives also explored the possibilities of entering into Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) and plan for establishing border markets to facilitate bilateral trade. They also discussed the opening of new corridors and ports of entry/exit for Afghan transit trade to provide maximum relief to the Afghan traders. The bilateral trade dialogue is aimed at shared prosperity and peace between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The three-days dialogue that began on December 28, 2020 is formally addressed as Afghanistan Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA). Currently trade between two countries is to the tune of less than US\$ one billion.

The existing transit trade agreement was revised in 2010, which was signed between the two countries in 1965. Pakistan claims to finalize

the PTA with Afghanistan by the end of January 2021. According to newspaper reports there are nearly 21 outstanding trade related issues pending between the two countries, for which the Dialogue has been initiated and endeavors would be to resolve most of the impending trade related issues.

The important points that were discussed in the meeting were

- Pakistan has extended invitation to the Afghan investors to take part in the economic activities related to the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as it considers this project to be an important game changer for the entire region.

- Afghan Minister showed willingness to boost trade and cooperation for the mutually beneficial relationship and that 80 percent of the negotiations have already been completed. This will be signed and formalized soon.

- Pakistan officials also requested Afghanistan to remove the unnecessary check points inside Afghanistan and simultaneously ensure that extortion of money from traders by the Afghanistan officials is stopped.

- The establishment of border entry point for trade at the Wakhan border was also proposed by Pakistan which opens its gate to Central Asia.

- Pakistani officials also claimed that the promotion of trade and linkages will also further the socio-economic development.

Strategic Importance of Afghanistan: Afghanistan, though is a landlocked country, yet is of tremendous strategic importance for all the regional players like Pakistan, China and India. It is a gateway to Central Asia. All three regional players wish to extend the outreach of their connectivity projects to Central Asia, where lies the tremendous economic opportunity as all the five Central Asian republics are in need of massive investment in projects related to their infrastructure development. Through Afghanistan one may enter Central Asia and from Central Asia one may also reach Europe and Eurasian landmass. Thus, land route through roads and railways could boost trade in the entire region, provided Afghanistan is politically stable and socially peaceful.

Afghanistan too is well aware of its significance for regional big players and accordingly, is trying to expand its trade base and access to sea. Hence, it is looking for an alternative trade route alongside India in its proximity. Afghanistan may have access to sea through Pakistan, India as well as China. However, through Pakistan it may have easiest and shortest access to Sea. Since China is working on CPEC project through Baluchistan, Afghanistan may be interested to join CPEC to enhance its access to sea for the purposes of trade and commerce.

Both China and India are active with their economic projects inside Afghanistan. However, China for present has an edge as it is moving very fast on CPEC which would really be a game changer for the entire region, unless India too comes-up with another matching connectivity project. India presently is working on its INSTC (International North-South Corridor) in the Central Asian Region which requires connectivity access through Afghanistan. India requires to pursue this project aggressively before China starts looming large all over the region. Since China has greater accessibility with Pakistan it has advantages over India.

Advantages of PTA:

- It will maximize chances of regional

economic integration;

- It will enhance the connectivity among neighboring countries;

- It will give Pakistan market access to Central Asian Republics (CARs) via Afghanistan;

- It will also enhance the trade and investment opportunities in Afghanistan as well as Pakistan.

- China with Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in place may expand its outreach at a later stage by joining PTA between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Pakistan's Erstwhile Initiatives:

Pakistan has already extended the facility of using its Gwadar port for transit trade as was demanded by Central Asian republics that would provide them access to Arabian Sea, in the near future. Pakistan has also extended this facility at Bin Qasim port. Pakistan claims it to be a goodwill gesture to enhance economic ties with Afghanistan. This indeed ensures greater and enhanced integration of Pakistan and Afghanistan through deepening of economic engagement.

Implications for India:

India has been deeply involved into rehabilitation and reconstruction works in Afghanistan since a duly elected government came to power in Afghanistan. India has made tremendous economic ... **P3**

Afghan Women Business Owners to Receive Lands in Kabul

Afghan government will distribute lands to Afghan women business owners, according to Afghan Women Chamber of Commerce and Industries (AWCCI).

In a meeting between AWCCI Chief Manizha Wafeq and President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, President Ghani said women business owners will receive lands in Kabul and other provinces.

The President also instructed the AWCCI officials to enhance efforts to strengthen women's businesses. Lack of a proper place to sell products is a major challenge facing Afghan women challenges, said Wafeq in an interview with Radio Liberty.

Presently, 2,471 Afghan women investors have businesses in Kabul and other provinces.



Afghanistan-Pakistan...

and emotional investment in view of its expectations of a peaceful neighborhood. India also has a 'Connect Central Asia' foreign policy which could become meaningful and feasible only when India has better strategic and bilateral relations with Afghanistan. Accordingly, India has been engaging Afghanistan economically and culturally. India has also been expanding its soft power into Afghanistan. India has also shown its eagerness to become a part of APTTA which has been continuously rejected by Pakistan. Afghanistan has been looking for a trade route to India through Wagah border. Pakistan has consistently refused it arguing that transit trade was meant for bilateral agreement and that it could not discuss any trilateral issues at this forum. This smacks of Pakistan's design of developing strategic integration in the region in a manner that India is naturally excluded and isolated. Since, Pakistan has better relations with China, and has political control over Afghanistan through Taliban the road to Central Asia going to be rough and tough for India. Under such circumstances India needs to tread-in cautiously.

Taliban accuse...

Kandahar operation are not stopped as soon as possible and the bombings and operations against the Mujahideen continue contrary to the provisions of the treaty, the Mujahideen of the Islamic Emirate will be forced to react seriously and the responsibility will be on the shoulders of the US government," the group said. This statement came just hours after US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the Taliban had not targeted American soldiers in Afghanistan in almost a year - since the signing of the US-Taliban deal. However, the Afghan government responded sharply to this and a senior presidential official said on Sunday that the reason why the US has not suffered casualties among its forces in the past 10 months is because the foreign forces are no longer fighting. Dawa Khan Meenapal said this was not because of the US-Taliban deal as Pompeo stated but because the US was no longer actively involved in the war on the ground. Meenapal said the casualties are being sustained by the Afghan security forces and that the Taliban is now at war with the Afghan people and with the country's own security forces. Meshrano Jirga head Fazl Hadi Muslimyar meanwhile noted his dismay at the high levels of violence being meted out by insurgents against the Afghan people. Sarcastically he said: "I want to congratulate the Taliban that no Americans have been killed in the past year, but dozens of Afghan soldiers have been killed."

Press Conference...

understanding of the law, vocational skills and deradicalization had completed their courses and left the centers. These graduates are the citizens of People's Public of China protected by law and secured to employment at their free wills. The accusation of "factories in inland China using trainees sent from the reeducation camps" or "forced labor is the extension of reeducation camp policy" is absolutely ridiculous. There is a clear and precise definition on forced labor commonly accepted by the international community for long. According to the Forced Labor Convention of the International Labor Organization, the term "forced labor" means "all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily. Judging from this definition, there is no forced labor in Xinjiang. The white paper Employment and Labor Rights in Xinjiang published by State Council Information Office on September 17 has given out a comprehensive explanation of the general situation of employment in Xinjiang, active labor and employment polices enacted by local governments that have effectively safeguarded the local people's basic right to employment, and the achievements they have made. Here, I would like to reiterate the following facts: On safeguarding the basic right of people of all ethnic groups to employment, first all, all their labor rights are under protection of law. Xinjiang has always been abide by the spirits advocated by the Charter of the International Labor Organization and other related conventions, strictly implemented related laws and regulations, such as Labor Law of People's Republic of China, Implementation Opinions on Labor Law of People's Republic of China in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, and Measures on Implementation of Regulation on Labor Security Supervision in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, etc., and put the issues of establishment, operation, supervision, adjustment and treatment of labor relations under the framework of rule of law. Labor inspection of law

enforcement has been carried out intensively and regularly to severely prohibit the forced labor through violence, threat or illegal restriction of personal freedom. Secondly, they enjoy total freedom in labor and employment. The principles adopted by Xinjiang to promote employment realize the coordination between voluntary employment of laborers, market adjustment, government assistance and self-employment encouragement. the labor force resources are effectively allocated by the market so that labors of all ethnic groups and employers could establish labor relations based on free and voluntary wills and mutual choices. Workers of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang have full freedom to choose what kind of job they would like to do and where they want to go. What the governments do is to create a sound labor and employment environment which could serve as the precondition for people of all ethnic groups to find satisfied jobs with stable incomes, and to ensure that all rights of labors are under protection in maximum. Thirdly, establish actively the employment information platforms. Employers at all sectors are contacted extensively to collect their demands for posts and vacancies, and job opportunity information are publicized through human resources markets, public employment service agencies and on-line platforms, broadcasts and TV programs, village and urban community's billboards, etc., for the reference of laborers. As for governments at various levels, all measures taken is to create a sound labor and employment environment which could serve as the precondition for people of all ethnic groups to find satisfied jobs with stable incomes. In the first place, understand thoroughly the situation of labor force resource. Based on the fundamental work done by local labor security offices set up at villages and town-ships, and urban communities and districts, general information, such quality, age, gender, educational background, employment status, etc., of labors available at the market are gathered and analyzed, and as a result, targeted employment promotion plans could be worked out based on the actual situation.


Secondly, understand promptly the employment wills and requirements of the labor forces. Employment will survey are conducted regularly to understand in time the labor's requirements for location, posts, payment, working condition, living environment, career prosperity, etc. to improve the efficiency of employment service. Thirdly, establish actively the employment information platforms. Employers at all sectors are contacted extensively to collect their demands for posts and vacancies, and job opportunity information are publicized through human resources markets, public employment service agencies and on-line platforms, broadcasts and TV programs, village and urban community's billboards, etc., for the reference of laborers. Fourthly, strengthen continuously the public employment service. A five-level public employment service system of clear goals, complementary functions and coordinated actions has been established in Xinjiang to cover the whole region with products of policy consultation, employment and unemployment registration, professional guide, job opportunity introduction, professional skills training, entrepreneurship training, etc., are provided to serve both the labors as well as the employers. By the end of 2019, there are 144 human resource markets above county level, 8,668 labor security offices at grassroots across the region, providing various employment services to 21.7284 people times in accumulation, which were general well received by people of all ethnic groups. As a matter of fact, the ASPI is an institute actually involved with forced labor. According to an article published by APAC, an independent news website in Australia, among its founding sources of several million US dollars, a large amount of it comes from a company which profits directly from forced labor. At least 11 financial supporters of ASPI are directly or indirectly related with prison, prison labor, or even human trafficking. Turning a blind eye to its own terrible record, the institute, however, vilifies Xinjiang's labor employment policies. It is an institute without any sense of shame.

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U.S. carrier to stay in Gulf due to Iranian 'threats': Pentagon

The United States has reversed a decision to bring an aircraft carrier home from the Gulf, with the Pentagon saying that due to "recent threats" by Iran, the USS Nimitz would stay in position.

The Nimitz has been patrolling Gulf waters since late November. In a statement on December 31, acting US Defense Secretary Christopher C Miller ordered the vessel to "transit directly home to complete a nearly 10-month deployment".

The New York Times newspaper, quoting US officials, said the move was part of a "de-escalatory" signal to Tehran to avoid a conflict during President Donald Trump's last days in office.

However, Miller issued a new statement changing course on Sunday.

"Due to the recent threats issued by Iranian leaders against President Trump and other US government officials, I have ordered the USS Nimitz to halt its routine redeployment," said the statement.

"The USS Nimitz will now remain on station in the US Central Command area of operations. No one should doubt the resolve of the United States of America."

While he did not elaborate on the threats involved, the statement came on the first anniversary of a US drone raid in Baghdad that killed Iran's revered commander Qassem Soleimani and his Iraqi lieutenant, Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis.

On Sunday, thousands of Iraqi mourners chanted "revenge" and "no to America" as they marched in capital Baghdad ... **P2**



A look at the world

Assange cannot be extradited to US, British court rules

WikiLeaks co-founder Julian Assange will not be extradited to the US, a British court ruled Monday after a months-long case. The Central Criminal Court or otherwise known as the Old Bailey delivered its judgement and said Assange cannot be extradited because of concerns over his mental health.

"The overall impression is of a depressed and sometimes despairing man fearful for his future," Judge Vanessa Baraitser said. The US government will have 14 days to appeal the decision.



Assange would face 18 counts of hacking the US government computers and violating the espionage law if he was to be extradited to the US and a potential prison sentence of 175 years.

The US is accusing Assange of espionage after WikiLeaks published hundreds of thousands of pages of government documents, emails, and other communications, including the US troops' war crimes in Afghanistan and Iraq wars in 2010 and 2011.

Prosecutors argue that Assange assisted defense analyst Chelsea Manning, but the 49-year-old WikiLeaks co-founder denied the allegations.

He was dragged out of Ecuador's embassy building in London in 2019, where he took refuge for more than seven years.

The British police said he was arrested for skipping his bail in 2012 and on behalf of the US due to an extradition warrant.

Later, he was found guilty of breaking his bail terms in 2012 after failing to surrender to security services by the Westminster Magistrates' Court and given a 50-week prison term.

U.S.: Nancy Pelosi reelected speaker of House



Democrat Nancy Pelosi has been reelected Speaker of the US House of Representatives as the 117th US Congress convened on Sunday. The meeting is broadcast on the website of the legislative body.

The 80-year-old representative of the Democratic Party received the support of a majority of Congressmen. She defeated 55-year-old Republican Kevin McCarthy. Pelosi has been elected speaker of the lower house for the fourth time: she held this post in the 116th Congress, and from January 2007 to January 2011 (110th and 111th convocations).

At the end of the general election on November 3, 2020, the US Democratic Party lost part of its mandates, but still retained its majority in the House of Representatives. One of the first tasks of the new Congress will be to approve the results of the presidential elections at a joint meeting of both chambers on January 6.

On December 14, the US Electoral College convened and confirmed Biden's election victory. The Democrat received 306 votes, while incumbent President Donald Trump secured 232 votes. With 538 electors, a candidate needs to get 270 votes to be elected to the office of President of the United States. Nevertheless, Trump has not conceded, filing a multitude of lawsuits claiming irregularities and voter fraud in a number of key states. Trump's legal battles have failed to gain any ground, being rejected in state courts, as well as by the US Supreme Court. The inauguration of the next head of the US administration will take place on January 20.

Tehran: 100% sure about 20% enrichment

In the latest sign that time is running out for the West to save the Iran nuclear deal, the UN nuclear watchdog has formally announced that it is informed by Tehran that Iran has decided to start enriching uranium to 20%, a major development that could spell the end of a deal that has long been on life support.

Following the leakage of an Iranian letter to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) outlining Iran's intention to resume 20% uranium enrichment, the UN nuclear body put out a statement confirming that Iran has actually informed it of its decision



to substantially raise the level of uranium enrichment up to 20 percent, which is well beyond the 3.67% purity limit set by the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"Iran has informed the Agency that in order to comply with a legal act recently passed by the country's parliament, the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran intends to produce low-enriched uranium (LEU) up to 20 percent at the Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant," the IAEA statement said.

Iran has confirmed that it intends to increase its nuclear activities, saying it will raise the level of uranium enrichment "as soon as possible."

"We have sent a letter to the representative of the Islamic Republic to the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna to submit it to the Agency. This letter was submitted to the Agency on Friday, informing it that we want to start 20% enrichment in accordance with the parliament law," Ali Akbar Salehi, the head of Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), said in a televised interview on Friday.



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