

QUOTE OF THE DAY

I'M AFRAID THAT IF YOU LOOK AT A THING LONG ENOUGH, IT LOSES ALL OF ITS MEANING
ANDY WARHOL

Azerbaijan remembers Black January tragedy



SHAHIN ABDULLAYEV

Thirty-one years have passed since January 20, 1990 events, which went down the history of Azerbaijani people as Bloody January tragedy. The atrocious act of terrorism committed in that day by military machine of the former Soviet Union against the people of Azerbaijan, will always remain as a black page in the history of civilization, and as one of the worst crimes against humanity.

Acting upon the orders of the USSR Communist Party leadership, 26 000 Soviet troops, heavily armed and equipped with military combat vehicles, attacked Baku to punish people rallying on the streets, protesting against violations of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and demanding freedom. As a result of punitive actions more than 145 civilians were killed and 700 wounded, hundreds of people were arrested and subjected to various forms of physical pressure. Among victims were children, women, young and old men and civilians of different nationalities in Baku.

The strong indignation and protest of the people of Azerbaijan was caused by the prejudiced and biased policy of the Communist Party and the Government of the Soviet Union towards the people of Azerbaijan. Soviet authorities' connivance at the Armenian expansionists, who claimed Nagorno-Karabakh, an integral part of Azerbaijan, had already allowed Armenia to forcibly expel more than 250,000 Azerbaijanis from Armenia in 1988-1989.

The next day, on January 21, 1990, Heydar Aliyev, National Leader of Azerbaijan, at the press conference for the representatives of foreign mass media, organized in the Permanent Mission of Azerbaijan in Moscow, condemned the aggression of Soviet leadership against Azerbaijan and its people. His statement became the first political assessment of Black January of 1990.

Helsinki Human Rights Watch has addressed how the Soviet brutal army intentionally crashed unarmed peaceful civilians under their tanks. According to its reports, "among the most heinous violations of human rights during the Baku incursions were the numerous attacks on medical personnel, ambulances and even hospitals".

The Wall Street Journal editorial of January 4, 1995 stressed that the Soviet leader Gorbachev chose to use violence against "independence-seeking Azerbaijan."

Black January has become the turning point in the history of modern Azerbaijan. The Soviet invasion failed to achieve its aim. The Azerbaijani people confronted the tragedy with strength and dignity. Every bullet that was fired splattered blood across the face of the Soviet regime, undermining the ideals of communism and totalitarianism. The heroism of the people of Azerbaijan on January 20, 1990, made the final collapse of the Soviet Union inevitable.

"Black January" is forever inscribed in the country history as a day of heroic struggle in the name of the freedom and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. The day that led to serious losses and the killing of innocent people demonstrated the readiness for struggle, the pride of people who could not bear the policy of the USSR leadership treacherous towards Azerbaijan, raised their voice to gain freedom and on October 18, 1991 Azerbaijan regained its independence.

Today the victims of the Black January repose in Martyr's Alley in the capital city of Baku. They were among the first to sacrifice their lives for freedom. Those heroes will never be forgotten!

Therefore, every January 20 our nation pays tribute to those killed by the Soviet army in 1990. This is a very tragic and sad day for our people. It was a crime against humanity and a rare case where state used force on such a large scale against its own citizens. But it is also a time to reflect on the value and importance of the independence. Those killed on that day sacrificed their lives for the independence of Azerbaijan and it is our duty always remember and pay our respects to them. My hope is that perpetrators of this crime against humanity will be brought to justice.

(The author is Azerbaijan's ambassador to Saudi Arabia)

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TOP 4 TWEETS

01



India is guided by a human-centric approach that will always work to further global good. #LargestVaccineDrive @narendramodi

02



The Biden-Harris COVID-19 response plan will include: Setting up community vaccination sites nationwide Scaling up testing and tracing Providing paid sick leave to contain spread of the virus Addressing health disparities @KamalaHarris

03



We not only have an economic imperative to act now, we have a moral obligation. In this pandemic, in America, we cannot let people go hungry. We cannot let people get evicted. We cannot watch nurses and educators lose their jobs. We must act. @JoeBiden

04



McDonald's paid its CEO more than \$18 million in 2019. Please don't tell me the company can't afford to pay its workers a living wage. I stand in solidarity with the workers on strike today. Together, we will increase the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour. @BernieSanders

Disclaimer: (Views expressed by columnists are personal and need not necessarily reflect our editorial stances)

Hunt for buried survivors after Indonesia quake



An aerial picture shows damaged office of the governor of West Sulawesi province following the earthquake AFP | Jakarta

Rescuers scrambled to find buried survivors yesterday after a powerful earthquake on Indonesia's Sulawesi island killed dozens, injured hundreds and left more feared trapped in the rubble of collapsed buildings.

At least 45 people died after the 6.2-magnitude quake struck in the early hours of Friday, triggering panic among residents of the island, which was hit by a 2018 quake-tsunami disaster that killed thousands.

Dozens of bodies have been hauled from beneath crumpled buildings in Mamuju, a city of about 110,000 in West Sulawesi province, while others were killed south of the area after the quake struck.

"The latest data we have is 45" dead, said Arianto from the rescue agency in Mamuju, who like many Indonesians goes by one name.

The toll was up from 42 on Friday evening.

5.0 magnitude tremor was felt in the West Sulawesi districts of Mamuju and Majene yesterday but no damage or casualties were reported

Authorities have not given a figure for the number of residents who could be trapped under levelled buildings, including a hospital that collapsed with more than a dozen patients and staff inside.

At least one hotel had partially collapsed, while the regional governor's office also suffered extensive damage.

About 15,000 residents have fled to temporary shelters and nearly 190 people were being treated for serious injuries, local authorities said.

'Go for it in India'

Sanitation worker became

India is initially prioritising nurses, doctors and others on the front line for the vaccine

ANI | New Delhi

Hospital cleaning worker M Kumar became the first person in India to be vaccinated against COVID-19 on Saturday, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched one of the world's largest immunisation campaigns for the pandemic under control.

Kumar received his shot at Delhi's premier All-India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), one of 3,006 vaccination centres established around the country.

"The vaccine will give me strength and motivation to serve my hospital which has been at the forefront of taking care of coronavirus patients," Kumar said. "Since feeling relieved after taking the vaccine, I think everyone should go for it."

India is prioritising nurses, doctors and other frontline workers, and Modi shed tears in his eyes as he addressed health workers via video conferencing.

"The disease separated people from their families, kept mothers away from their children, and those who died of the disease couldn't even get a final goodbye from their families," Modi said.

AIIMS Director Randeep Guleri V.K. Paul, a top COVID-19 adviser to the government, were also given the shots in the presence of Health and Family Welfare Minister

Trump to leave town early Wednesday before Biden inauguration

AFP | Washington

By the time Joe Biden is sworn in as the 46th US president Wednesday, his scandal-tainted predecessor Donald Trump will already be far away, having helicoptered out of the White House a last time earlier that morning, an official said.

Trump will be the first president in a century and a half to snub the inauguration of his successor.

An official who asked not to be identified said Trump would go to his Mar-a-Lago golf club in Florida, which is his legal residence and will become home after the White House.

He is expected to be out of town well before Biden is sworn in on the steps of the Capitol building at exactly noon.

After spending more than two months trying to overturn the results of the November election, pushing false conspiracy theories about fraud, Trump's presence had not been expected at the inauguration.

The final straw came on January 6 when Trump gathered a huge crowd of supporters on the National Mall and once more claimed that they had to fight to stop a fraudulent election. A mob then stormed Congress, halting proceedings underway to certify Biden's win.

For longer than anyone can remember, outgoing presidents have stood by their replacement on the Capitol steps, watching them take the oath -- and in so doing



US President Donald Trump boards Marine One as he departs the White House (file photo)



Trump has also broken with more discreet protocol by refusing to invite Biden and his wife Jill Biden to the White House for a traditional cup of tea in the Oval Office

showing visible support for the peaceful transfer of power.

Trump, who was impeached for a record second time in the wake of the Congress storming, has also broken with more discreet protocol by refusing to invite Biden and his wife Jill Biden to the White House for a traditional cup of tea in the Oval Office.

On Friday, Vice President Mike Pence did make the gesture of telephoning his incoming counterpart Kamala Harris, a source said.

Although this came only five days before inauguration day -- and more than two months after the election -- The New York Times said Pence offered his congratulations and belated assistance to Harris, describing the exchange as "gracious and pleasant."

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