

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- The United States cannot stop Iranian oil exports by imposing sanctions on Tehran, Iran's minister of petroleum said on Tuesday, warning that such restrictions will ensure the market remains volatile.

"As long as America targets Iran, one of the biggest crude producers, with sanctions, the volatility in the oil market will continue," Bijan Zangeneh said. "Iranian oil exports cannot be stopped," Zangeneh said. President Hassan Rouhani also said "the animosity of the current U.S. government towards Iran and the Iranians is unprecedented," but added that Washington would fail to achieve its goals.



ISLAMABAD (AFP) -- Saudi Arabia Tuesday pledged \$3 billion to Pakistan as the South Asian country battles a balance of payment crisis, a statement from Islamabad said.

It also agreed to provide up to another \$3 billion on deferred payment for import of oil, the statement added. The agreement came between the two countries during a visit by Prime Minister Imran Khan to Riyadh where he met King Salman bin Abdulaziz.

Viewpoint

"Davos of the Desert" Indicates the Frailest of All Houses

Iran, Italy Vow to Expand Cooperation on Art



Karimi Claims Bronze at Wrestling World Championships



Car Bomb Kills Six, Wounds 30 Near Iraq's Mosul



India, Iran, Afghanistan Discuss Operation of Chabahar

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- India, Iran and Afghanistan here on Tuesday discussed a full commissioning of the Chabahar port that the three countries are jointly developing.

It was the first trilateral meeting of the Coordination Council of the Chabahar Agreement held in the Iranian capital, coming in the face of fresh sanctions imposed by Washington on the Islamic Republic.

"Detailed discussions were held between the three sides on full operationalization of the trilateral agreement for international transit and transport through Chabahar port," India's External Affairs Ministry said in a statement.

"All sides shared the view that full operationalization of trilateral Chabahar initiative will promote connectivity and economic development of Afghanistan and the region," it stated.

A decision was also taken to form a follow-up committee that would hold its first meeting within two months in Chabahar port.

"It would discuss and aim to finalize protocol to harmonize transit, roads, customs, consular

matters that were shared by the Indian side at the meeting for making the route attractive, decrease logistic costs and pave the way for smooth implementation of the Trilateral Chabahar Agreement," the statement said.

The port project on the south-eastern coast of Iran has come under jeopardy after the U.S. imposed fresh sanctions on the West Asian nation.

India is investing \$500 million to develop the Chabahar port and the road link from there to Afghanistan gives access to that country bypassing Pakistan.

Last year, New Delhi sent 1.1 million tonnes of wheat as aid to Afghanistan through Chabahar and the road link it built to connect it to that country.

The port is also a key link in the International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC), a 7,200-km-long multi-modal network of ship, rail and road routes to move freight between India, Iran, Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Central Asia and Europe.

In Tuesday's meeting, the Indian side was led by secretary for economic relations in the External

Says Khashoggi Murder 'Pre-Planned'

Erdogan Demands Probe Into Highest Saudi Authorities



Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan addresses members of parliament from his ruling AK Party (AKP) during a meeting at the Turkish parliament in Ankara, October 23, 2018.

ANKARA (Dispatches) -- **Jamal Khashoggi was the victim of a "gruesome murder" carried out inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul in an operation planned for several days beforehand, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Tuesday.**

In a speech here, Erdogan said that Turkish investigators were still seeking answers as to who had ordered the journalist's killing on October 2, and indicated that their probe should extend to the highest levels of the Saudi government.

"We have some information that

the murder was pre-planned, not instantaneous. It is clear that this operation did not happen at the drop of a dime, it was a planned operation," said Erdogan.

"On whose orders have these people come? We are seeking answers. Leaving some intelligence and security forces holding the bag will not satisfy either us or the international community."

And he called on Saudi Arabia's King Salman and his government to cooperate more openly, suggesting that they were not in a position to investigate Khashoggi's murder impartially.

"The human conscience will be satisfied only when the person who gave the orders and the people who implemented them are brought to account."

Crime scene investigators have found two suitcases which contained personal belongings of Khashoggi during a search of the Saudi consulate vehicle in Istanbul, broadcaster CNN Turk reported Tuesday.

A Reuters witness said a Saudi team was accompanying the Turkish investigators as they carried out the search in a car park where the vehicle was found

in Istanbul's Sultangazi district Monday.

Erdogan's speech comes with Saudi Arabia facing growing international scrutiny over Khashoggi's killing after seven out of the 15 suspects named by Turkey were revealed to have been members of Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman's personal security team.

On Monday, Middle East Eye also revealed the existence of a hit squad set up by bin Salman to target opponents and dissidents both inside Saudi Arabia and beyond its borders.

Erdogan said that the 15 suspects who had flown into Istanbul in the hours before the killing had been "security, intelligence and forensics people".

He said that members of the team who killed Khashoggi had been notified about the journalist's appointment after he had visited the consulate on the Friday prior to his death and told to return the following week.

Consulate staff had also visited Belgrad forest north of Istanbul to conduct reconnaissance in the days before the killing, Erdogan said.

Turkish investigators have searched a number of sites in Istanbul and surrounding areas, including Belgrad forest in recent days in a hunt for evidence.

On Tuesday, police cordoned off an underground car park where an abandoned car belonging to the Saudi consulate has been found.

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Trump Warns of 'Middle Easterners' Among Migrants

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) -- U.S. President Donald Trump has warned of "unknown Middle Easterners" in the midst of a migrant caravan heading to the U.S. border from Central America.

Trump urged reporters to go into the middle of the caravan and "search".

"You're going to find MS-13, you're going to find Middle Eastern, you're going to find everything. And guess what, we're not allowing them in our country. We want safety, we want safety," he said.

Muslim American advocates slammed Trump's statement as Islamophobic and racist.

The Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) accused Trump of pushing his agenda to create fear "regardless of truth, reality or morality".

"If he actually has evidence to support this racist and Islamophobic dog whistle, he should provide it to the public and explain why 'Middle Eastern' immigrants would be of particular danger to our nation," CAIR executive director Nihad Awad said in a statement.

"It is time for this president to be held accountable for his seemingly endless stream of lies and bigoted rhetoric."

Abed Ayoub, the legal director of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), said contrary to what the assertions of the administration are, migrants have a legal right to come to the border and claim asylum.

Not only are Trump's remarks unsubstantiated "fearmongering"; they are also racist, Ayoub said. "It's a very xenophobic tweet. It's there to perpetuate hatred, bigotry, xenophobia towards Arabs," Ayoub told Middle East Eye.

Trump has made cracking down on immigration - both authorized and undocumented - a focal point of his campaign and presidency.

Trump kicked off his presidential candidacy in 2015 by describing undocumented Mexican immigrants as "rapists".

As a candidate, he also pledged to ban Muslims from entering the United States. And shortly after taking office he imposed a ban on several Muslim-majority countries that was upheld by the supreme court earlier this year.

In January, the U.S. president was rebuked for decrying immigration from Haiti and African nations, which he referred to as "shithole countries".

Official: Iran's Wheat Imports Down to Zero

TEHRAN (Press TV) -- **An official says the Iranian government needs no more wheat imports thanks to favorable crop harvest and procurement from local farmers at a time of diminishing grain stocks around the world.**

Largely self-sufficient in wheat a decade ago, Iran emerged as one of the world's biggest importers a few years ago but a raft of measures taken by the government is returning the country to where it was.

"With the government's measures in recent years, the country has been freed of wheat imports and the volume of imports has reached zero," the man in charge of the program at Iran's Ministry of Agriculture Jihad Esmaeil Esfandiari said.

Iran's last major government-sponsored wheat import in 2011 stood at more than 2.6 million tonnes. Last year, the government purchased about 9 mil-

lion tonnes of wheat from local farmers out of 11 million tonnes planned.

According to state officials, the country usually maintains a carryover from previous wheat crops and past stocks which cover any shortfall.

For the current harvest season, the government planned to locally purchase 10.4 million tonnes of wheat, more than 9.3 million tonnes of which was confirmed by a state official to have realized early last month.

Preliminary official estimates included 13.4 million tonnes of wheat as higher yields in the rest of the country offset decreases in the southern planting areas.

Better than expected precipitations resulted in a national harvest of about 20 million tonnes of cereals, similar to last year and about 10 percent above average.

Wheat is the dominant cereal crop **(Continued on Page 7)**

China Warns U.S. Over Nuclear Treaty 'Blackmail'

BEIJING/WASHINGTON (Dispatches) -- **China warned Tuesday it would "never accept any form of blackmail" after U.S. President Donald Trump said his decision to withdraw from a nuclear pact with Russia was also linked to Beijing's arsenal.**

China is not a signatory to the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF), which the United States signed with the then-Soviet Union in the 1980s, but Trump said Monday that Beijing should be included in the accord.

"Now that the United States want to unilaterally withdraw from the treaty, they start to inappropriately speak about other countries," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told a regular press briefing.

"This approach of shifting the blame on others is utterly unjustifiable and unreasonable," Hua said. She said China had always pur-

sued a defensive national defense policy. "We will never accept any form of blackmail," Hua said.

The landmark treaty was signed by Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev and led to nearly 2,700 short- and medium-range missiles being eliminated.

It put an end to a mini-arms race in the 1980s triggered by the Soviet Union's deployment of SS-20 nuclear missiles targeting Western European capitals.

"Until people come to their senses, we will build it up," Trump told reporters Monday at the White House, referring to the U.S. nuclear arsenal.

"It's a threat to whoever you want. And it includes China. And it includes Russia. And it includes anybody else that wants to play that game," he said, adding that China "should be included in the agreement."

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