

Report: Su-35 Fighter Jets Deal Finalized

UNITED NATIONS (Dispatches) -- Iran has finalized a deal to purchase Sukhoi Su-35 fighter jets from Russia, Iran's mission to the United Nations told Russia's Sputnik news agency on Friday. "Following the end of the Iran-Iraq war in 1988, Iran asked a bunch of countries to review the possibility of selling fighter jets to Iran and Russia said it was ready for their sale," it said. "The Sukhoi Su-35 fighter jets are technically acceptable to Iran. So after October 2020 and the end of Iran's restrictions on conventional weapons purchases (based on the UN Security Council Resolution 2231), Iran has finally agreed to buy them," it added.

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Harshest Punishment for Poisonings

TEHRAN -- Tehran's interim Friday prayers leader Ayatollah Ahmad Khatami said the perpetrators of poisoning attacks against Iranian schoolgirls should receive the harshest punishment. Those who carry out the crime of poisoning are committing "corruption on earth" and the sentence for such a crime is death, Ayatollah Khatami said. The remarks come a few days after Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei described the poisoning as an "unignorable and big" crime, calling on authorities to seriously pursue the issue.

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Viewpoint

Growing Appeal of Imam Mahdi's (AS) Global Government

Iran Reiterates Support for Syria as FM Visits Damascus



Greco-Roman Wrestlers Bag Four Medals at Asia-Pacific Championships



Nasrallah: End of Zionist Regime Near



Shahid Mahdavi, 95 Speed Boats Join IRGC Fleet

TEHRAN -- Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy on Thursday took delivery of a new ocean-going warship and nearly 100 missile-launching speed boats.

Equipped with offensive and defensive systems, the Shahid Mahdavi warship was officially added to the IRGC Navy's fleet in a ceremony in the southern port city of Bandar Abbas.

Also, 95 Ashura- and Tareq-class missile-launching speed boats joined the IRGC Navy's fleet.

Speaking at the ceremony, IRGC Navy chief Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri said the Shahid Mahdavi warship is a heavy, multi-purpose and long-range vessel capable of carrying and operating all kinds of helicopters, drones, and high-speed missile launchers, as well as missile, defense and radar systems.

The 2,100-ton warship has a length of 240 meters and a width of 27 meters, he said, adding that it is equipped with a 3D phased-array radar as well as surface-to-surface and surface-to-air missiles, highly advanced electronic warfare telecommunication systems, and Khordad-3 missile systems, all of which are designed and manufactured by young Iranian technicians.

"Shahid Mahdavi warship is like a mobile maritime city ready to carry out ocean missions ... to create sustainable security of sea communication lines and provide aid to the commercial and fishing fleets of the Islamic Republic and regional countries," The IRGC Navy commander said.

Tangsiri also said the elite military force has converted rocket-launching vessels into missile-launching ones in an "unprecedented" move in the world.

"By the joining of the specialized naval equipment ... and the conversion of Ashura- and Tareq-class rocket-launching vessels into the missile-launching ones with a minimum range of 10 and maximum of more than 180 kilometers, the IRGC Navy has managed to take an important and effective step in upgrading the level of its naval combat power. It is somehow unprecedented in the world," IRGC Navy chief said.

Iranian military experts and

engineers have in recent years made remarkable breakthroughs in manufacturing a broad range of indigenous equipment, making the armed forces self-sufficient.

Iranian officials have repeatedly underscored that the country will not hesitate to strengthen its military capabilities, which are entirely meant for defense, and that Iran's defense capabilities will be never subject to negotiations.

Also speaking at Thursday's event, IRGC chief Major General Hussein Salami said whenever the enemy acts forcefully against the Islamic Revolution, Iranians appear stronger against it.

"The enemy has come to the scene with all its strength, but the more it acts, the less it gains and the farther it gets from its so-called objectives," he added.

Some fugitives portray themselves as benefactors and saviors of the nation while they demand the enemies intensify the embargo and isolation targeting Iran so that medicine and food do not reach the Iranian people, Salami said.

"In the Iranians' mentality, this kind of behavior is disgusting and shameful."

Iran Unfazed: Europeans Liquidate Useless INSTEX

TEHRAN -- Iran said on Friday it never relied on INSTEX, a European financial channel designed to safeguard Iran's economic interests against U.S. sanctions, after the UK, France, and Germany (the E3) issued a joint statement announcing the liquidation of the fruitless instrument.

In a joint statement on Thursday, the E3 announced that the INSTEX shareholders -- Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and the UK -- have decided to liquidate the instrument.

Following the United States' unilateral, illegal withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal in May 2018, European governments made commitments to secure Iran's economic interests under the deal by adopting the required measures. One of the mechanisms that they announced in 2019 was the establishment of INSTEX as a financial channel to facilitate trade between Iran and Europe.

Although the Islamic Republic of Iran "never relied" on this mechanism, it spared no effort to cooperate for activating the channel, Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said on Friday in reaction to the E3 statement.

"Unfortunately, European governments failed in launching INSTEX effectively ... and they did not implement the necessary measures for activating the instrument," he

said.

In this joint statement, the E3 accused Iran of "systematically" preventing INSTEX from fulfilling its mandate.

"Iran only agreed to a single transaction, in early 2020, for the export of medical goods from Europe to Iran. After that, Iran consistently and deliberately blocked other proposals for transactions between the United Kingdom, Norway, the European Union and Iran. This was born from a political determination to impede the use of INSTEX under any circumstance," the statement claimed.

"In light of Iran's persistent refusal to engage with the company, the INSTEX shareholders have reached the conclusion that there is no more ground for maintaining INSTEX operational," it added.

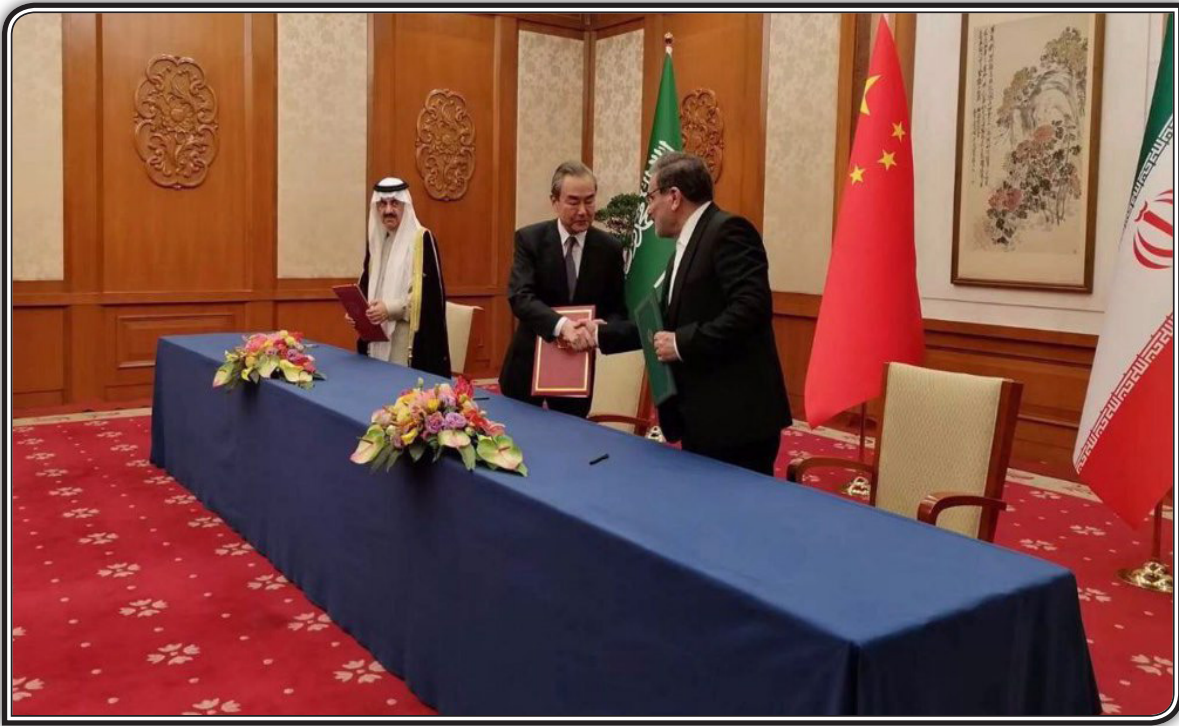
Kanaani said, "Tehran had never pinned hope on INSTEX as it has been conducting its international trade through other international financial and banking channels."

Laying the blame on Iran in the liquidation statement is a "vain attempt to cover up the absolute failure of Europe in having the minimum monetary independence from the U.S.," he added.

The main reasons for the failure of the INSTEX are "lack of serious will" and "inability" on the part of the European governments

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Iran, Saudi Arabia Resume Diplomatic Ties



Iran's security chief Ali Shamkhani, right, his Saudi counterpart Musaid al-Aiban and China's top diplomat Wang Yi attend a signing ceremony in Beijing on March 10, 2023.

TEHRAN -- Iran and Saudi Arabia agreed to resume diplomatic relations and reopen embassies in each other's countries following China-led negotiations in Beijing, both governments announced via their respective state media agencies on Friday.

"As a result of the talks, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia agreed to resume diplomatic relations and re-open embassies and mis-

sions within two months," IRNA news agency reported, citing a joint statement issued by the two countries and China.

Riyadh cut ties with Tehran after Iranian protesters gathered outside Saudi diplomatic missions in Iran in 2016 following the Saudi execution of the revered Shia cleric Nimr al-Nimr.

Nour News, which is linked to Iran's Supreme National Security Council, posted footage of Ali

Shamkhani, the council's secretary, with a Saudi official and China's most senior diplomat, Wang Yi.

"After implementing the decision, the foreign ministers of both nations will meet to prepare for exchange of ambassadors," Iranian national television said.

The agreement has potentially wide implications for the region, and shows the new determination of Saudi Arabia to conduct a

foreign policy independent of the West.

Hussein Amir-Abdollahian, Iran's foreign minister, said: "The return of normal relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia provides great capacities to the two countries, the region and the Islamic world. The neighborhood policy, as the key axis of the government's foreign policy, is strongly moving in the right direction, and the diplomatic apparatus is actively behind the preparation of more regional steps."

The Saudi Press Agency confirmed the agreement, which said the two countries had agreed to respect state sovereignty and not interfere in each other's internal affairs.

The statement also said Riyadh and Tehran had agreed to activate a security cooperation agreement signed in 2001.

Talks between Saudi Arabia and Iran on a potential reconciliation have been continuing for years mainly in Iraq, so it is a surprise for the deal to be sealed in China.

Speaking in London earlier this week, the Saudi foreign minister, Prince Faisal bin Farhan al-Saud, defended Saudi Arabia's links with China, saying: "China is our largest trading partner. It is also the largest trading partner of most countries. And that is a reality that we will have to deal with."

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Pentagon Chief Meets Zionist Leaders at Airport Shooting, Massive Protests Hit Tel Aviv

Shooting, Massive Protests Hit Tel Aviv TEL AVIV (Dispatches) -- At least three settlers were injured, including one critically, when a young Palestinian man opened fire at them in Tel Aviv, hours after Zionist forces martyred three Palestinians in the occupied West Bank.

Israeli police said the Palestinian man opened fire at the settlers outside a cafe on the corner of Dizengoff Street and Ben Gurion Street on Thursday night. He fled the scene before being shot dead in a shootout with police officers.

He was identified as 23-year-old Mutaz Salah al-Khawaja, a Palestinian man from the West Bank town of Ni'lin who had been twice jailed by Israeli forces.

Palestinian resistance movement Hamas said in a statement that Khawaja was a member of its military wing -- the Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades.

It said the attack was a "natural response" to recent Israeli military raids in the West Bank.

"The occupiers wanted to bring the Palestinian people to their knees, but this operation deep in the occupation regime means the determination of the Palestinians to stand against the occupation," Dawood Shehab, a spokesman for the Islamic Jihad movement, said.

Zionist forces stormed Ni'lin shortly after midnight and raided Khawaja's home.

Earlier on Thursday, Israeli forces martyred three Palestinians in a raid in Jenin, less than 48 hours after six others were martyred in another raid by the occupying regime on the city.

The Palestinian Ministry of Health identified the three men shot dead on Thursday morning as Ahmad Fashafsheh, 22, Sufian Fakhouri, 26, and Nayef Malaysheh, 25.

They were fatally shot inside a car in the village of Jaba, south of Jenin, in what has been described by Palestinians as an "execution."

On Friday, a young Palestinian man has died after he was shot by an Israeli settler east of the West Bank city of Qalqiliya.

Health officials identified the victim as 21-year-old Abdul-Karim Badie Sheikh, a resident of Sanniriya town. He was fatally shot outside the illegal Karnei Shomron settlement on Friday morning, official news agency Wafa reported.

The shooting in Tel Aviv came after thousands of demonstrators blocked traffic into the departures area at Ben Gurion airport near Tel Aviv and clashed with military forces, where Pentagon chief Lloyd Austin landed for talks.

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