

Indonesia calls for preserving Iran nuclear deal

Political Desk

Indonesian Vice President Jusuf Kalla on Wednesday voiced support for the 2015 nuclear deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) which was reached between Iran and the major world powers.



"My country stresses that the JCPOA must be preserved," Kalla told visiting Iranian Vice President for Women and Family Affairs Masoumeh Ebtekar in Jakarta, IRNA reported.

He said Indonesia is interested in promoting economic ties with Iran particularly in energy fields.

Ebtekar also said the nuclear deal has led to preserving global peace and security.

The Iranian and Indonesian vice presidents discussed bilateral economic, commercial and banking relations as well as global developments. Ebtekar delivered a message of President Hassan Rouhani on the JCPOA to her Indonesian counterpart Joko Widodo to Kalla.

Earlier, she held talks with Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi who also supported the JCPOA.

"The Indonesian government has always backed diplomacy as the most important mechanism to settle international problems. It has been a supporter of the JCPOA and wants all signatories to the deal to remain committed to it in a bid to contribute to global peace and stability," Marsudi said.

On Tuesday, Ebtekar delivered Rouhani's letter regarding the JCPOA to Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad.

On May 8, US President Donald Trump withdrew Washington from the JCPOA which was signed between Iran and the P5+1 in 2015.

Leader's aide in Moscow...

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Velayati described Trump as an "unreliable individual... in relation to international law, which necessitates more and more cooperation (between Iran and Russia)."

Apart from the United States, the other signatories to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal - Russia, China, Germany, France and Britain - have said they still support the accord.

But European firms are reluctant to risk far-reaching US financial penalties they would face for doing business in Iran.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who strongly backs Trump's decision to quit the nuclear deal, was also visiting Moscow on Wednesday. Netanyahu has said he wants to discuss Iran's "threat" with the Russian president.

Asked about Netanyahu's visit, Velayati said: "His presence or absence in Russia has no effect on our strategic mission in Moscow."

He called Netanyahu a "vagabond" who makes "baseless and illogical" remarks, saying "nobody cares about his words."

Reuters contributed to this story.



Bus-tanker collision leaves 13 dead in western Iran

At least 13 people were killed in Iran's western city of Sanandaj after a fuel tanker collided with a passenger bus, causing a big explosion.

The bus bound for Tehran departed from the bus terminal of Sanandaj, capital of the western province of Kurdistan, a few minutes after midnight on Wednesday.

When the bus pulled over to take in more passengers, a fuel tanker struck it from behind, causing a huge explosion that burnt not only the bus and the truck, but also three other vehicles in the vicinity.

One of the two bus drivers who survived in the crash said that bus had stopped to pick up passengers when it was suddenly hit by the tanker.

An official with the fire department of Sanandaj said 13 people have been killed in the crash, including 12 bus passengers and the tanker driver.

Mez News Agency reported early on Wednesday that the tanker was carrying tar.

The governor of Kurdistan Province has declared three days of public mourning, urging an immediate and detailed report on the cause of the incident.

A number of officials, including president and Parliament speaker, in separate messages consoled with the families of the victims.

President Hassan Rouhani ordered the province's governor general to launch an investigation into the accident.

"The tragic and terrible accident in Sanandaj passenger terminal that left a number of our fellow Iranians in Kurdistan dead and injured caused great grief and sorrow", the president said in his message.

Iran has a poor record on traffic safety, with such accidents killing thousands of people each year.

IRNA, Tasnim News Agency contributed to this story.



Police chief:

Terrorist activities on the rise along Iran's borders

Iran's Police Chief Brigadier General Hossein Ashtari warned that Takfiri terrorists have recently increased their activities along the Islamic Republic's borders with the support of certain countries.

Speaking to reporters in Tehran on Wednesday, Ashtari pointed to recent attacks against Iranian border guards in various parts of the country and said the activities of anti-revolutionary agents and terrorist groups have surged due to the support they receive from some countries, Tasnim News Agency reported.

"Of course, the border guards are powerfully defending the borders and standing against these attacks and activities," the commander stressed.

He added that some of these terrorist attacks have led to the martyrdom of a number of the country's border guards.



In recent years, the Middle East has been plagued with Takfiri terrorist groups like Daesh, which are believed to have

been created and supported by the West and some regional Arab countries. However, Iran is considered by many

experts as the "island of stability" in a region which faces many security challenges.

On Sunday, armed assailants killed an Iranian border guard in the northwest province of West Azarbaijan.

During an exchange of fire in the border region of Piranshahr in the early hours of Sunday, armed outlaws killed a border soldier.

Two attackers were also killed in the incident, which occurred at Tamarchin border post.

The assault came three weeks after another attack on a border post in the same province, during which two Iranian police forces were martyred.

Security posts in West Azarbaijan Province, which borders Turkey and Iraq, have frequently come under cross-border attacks in recent months.

Russia, Iran, China, Pakistan discuss Daesh threat in Afghanistan

Moscow said the heads of intelligence services of Russia, Iran, China and Pakistan have sat down in Islamabad for talks on the rising threat of Daesh in Afghanistan after the terrorist group lost its strongholds in Iraq and Syria.

Sergei Ivanov, the chief of the press bureau of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service, told the TASS news agency on Tuesday that the officials had stressed the need for "coordinated" measures against the Daesh relocation to Afghanistan.

The quadripartite discussions in Islamabad "focused on the dangers arising from a buildup of Daesh on the Afghan territory," he said.

"The conference reached understanding of the importance of coordinated steps to prevent the trickling of IS (Daesh) terrorists from Syria and Iraq to Afghanistan wherefrom they would pose risks for neighboring countries," he added, Press TV reported.

Ivanov also noted that the intelligence chiefs, among them Director of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Ser-



vice Sergei Naryshkin, had underlined the need for more active regional cooperation to settle the conflict in Afghanistan.

The US and its allies invaded Afghanistan under the guise of the war on terror. Some 17 years on, the Tali-

ban terrorist group has only boosted its campaign of violence across the country, targeting both civilians and security forces in bloody assaults.

More recently, Daesh has also taken advantage of the chaos and established a foothold in eastern and northern Af-

ghanistan. The group has stepped up its terror attacks in the war-torn state despite the presence of thousands of foreign troops on Afghan soil.

Recently, there have been reports suggesting that the US military is allowing Daesh elements to infiltrate into Afghanistan following their defeats in Syria and Iraq.

In February, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said that by transferring Daesh to Afghanistan, Washington was seeking "to justify the continuation of its presence in the region and to create security for the Zionist regime."

Daesh started a campaign of terror in Iraq and Syria in 2014, occupying territory in the two Arab countries and establishing a self-proclaimed "caliphate" there.

Soon, the Iraqi and Syrian armies galvanized to retake Daesh-held territory and the terror outfit was gradually stripped of all the land it had occupied in the two Middle Eastern states.