

## **Amid US pressures Iran not to slow down missile programme**

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**Tehran:** Iran's defence minister said on Friday that despite the US pressures, Iran will not slow down the pace of development in its missile programme.

"We will vigorously press ahead with the development of missile capabilities within the framework of the country's defense policies," brigadier general Hossein Dehqan was quoted as saying by Tasnim news agency.

"There has been no interruption in the process of designing and manufacturing defensive ballistic missiles," Dehqan said, adding that the Iranian armed forces will employ all indigenous potential and equipment to strengthen the country's defense power, regardless of what foreigners say or do.

Besides, deputy commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) brigadier general Hossein Salami reiterated Friday that Iran will not hesitate a moment to develop its deterrent power against the threats posed by the hegemonic powers.

"We will not stop developing our defense and deterrent power and this is a demand by the Muslim nation of Iran," Salami said.

The remarks by Iranian military officials followed Thursday letter of President Hassan Rouhani to Defense Ministry to proceed with the country's missile program "with high speed and seriously" and expand Iran's missile capabilities in response to the US considered sanctions.

Rouhani's remarks, in turn, were a response to the US Treasury Department's recent announcement that it was considering sanctions against a number of Iranian and international individuals and agencies for their alleged involvement in developing Iran's ballistic missile programme.

The new US move to add individuals and companies to the sanction list is a response to Iran's recent test of a ballistic missile.

In October, Iran announced the tests of long-range Emad missile which could be guided and controlled until hitting the target with high precision.

A UN experts' report in December said that Iran violated UN Security Council Resolution 1929 by test-firing the Emad missile which is capable of delivering a nuclear warhead.

The UN report said the Emad ballistic missile has a range of "no less than 1,000 km with a payload of at least 1,000 kg".

Under Resolution 1929, Iran was prohibited from working on ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear warheads.

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