

President Hails Iran's Medical Efforts

TEHRAN (Dispatches) – President Hassan Rouhani on Tuesday highlighted the major role of the country's medical staff in containing the coronavirus epidemic and said Iranians will definitely make it through these tough days together.

In a telephone conversation with the president of Qom University of Medical Sciences, Rouhani was briefed on the latest efforts to contain the coronavirus and treat infected patients in the Qom province. He praised efforts by physicians, nurses and all hospital staff to treat coronavirus patients, as well as measures taken by the Ministry of Health to screen people in various provinces.

Kayhan International

Iran Scientists Scramble to Find Corona Cure

TEHRAN (Tashim) – Iranian Vice President for Science and Technology Sorena Satatri said Tuesday local researchers are working on the most complicated pharmaceutical products to prevent and cure the novel coronavirus.

Sattari said the outbreak of the coronavirus in Iran made the country focus on a vital aspect of biotechnology, namely biosecurity. Iranian researchers and knowledge-based companies have manufactured homegrown diagnostic tests kits that will be mass produced by next week, he said.

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Viewpoint

Iraqis Determined to Kick Out CENTCOM Terrorists

Chinese Actor Makes Donations to Iran's Coronavirus Fight



Iran Karate Secures Four Olympic Quotas



Yemeni Forces Seize Major Military Base in Ma'rib



Virtues of the Ahl al-Bayt & New Year Greetings

By: Seyyed Ali Shahbaz

"Tomorrow I will give the standard to a man who loves Allah and His Messenger and whom Allah and His Messenger love; the intrepid attacker (Karrar) who does not flee (ghayra farrar); one who will stand firm and will not return till victory is achieved."

We are on the eve of the blessed 24th of the sacred month of Rajab, on which in the year 7 AH Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) gave the above tidings of a grand victory for Islam over the ever-intransigent Israelites.

He foretold to his despondent companions (who for the past few days had been fleeing in the face of the thunderous threats of the Jewish warlord Marhab), the fall of the impregnable fortress of Qamous in the Khaiber region.

They listened to this prophecy of the person who never says anything by himself but it is Divine Revelation, in a state of doubt and disbelief, since they were cent percent sure of their inability to win the war against a formidable enemy, and moreover the valiant Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (AS) who had been saving Islam and Muslims in crucial encounters from the day he had volunteered to sleep on the Prophet's bed seven years ago in Mecca so that his dear cousin safely migrates to Medina, was not present because of sore eyes.

the 24th of Rajab dawned, to the surprise of the gathering, the Prophet expressed the famous phrase: "Nad-e Aliyan, Mazhar al-Aja'eb (Call Ali, the Manifestor of Wonders)."

Imam Ali (AS) immediately appeared, and the Prophet by applying his saliva to his cousin's eyes cured him of the ailment and then handed him command of the army.

To quote the Sunni scholar, Abdul-Haq Muhaddith Dehlavi in his book "Madarij an-Nubuwwah": "Then (Imam) Ali started with the standard in his hand and on approaching the fort of Qamous, planted it on a rock. A Rabbi on the ramparts asked, 'O standard-bearer! Who are you? He was replied, 'I am Ali son of Abu Talib.' The Rabbi told the Israelites, 'By the Torah, you will be defeated! This man will not go back without winning the battle.'

The rest is history. Imam Ali (AS), introduced himself to Marhab as "Haydar" (Lion), thereby sending shivers down his opponent's spine for the Israelite warlord had been told not to fight a person named as such.

The Imam then shattered the myth of invincibility of the Israelites by sending Marhab to the netherworld with a lighting stroke of his famous sword "Dhu'l-Feqar". He then, aided by spiritual force and divine strength, leapt across the moat and tore from its hinges the door of the gateway to use as a bridge for the Muslim army to cross.

The Battle of Khaiber is thus a permanent landmark in the history of the world, and in view of its global significance, it is an immortal lesson for all nations – far more important than any regional battle or national episode that no longer yields any influence on people living in modern day states. It is also an undeniable proof of the fact that without flocking to the banner of Imam Ali (AS) and the Imams of his household – as practically shown by the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Hezbollah of Lebanon, the Ansarallah of Yemen, and the Hashd ash-Sha'bi of Iraq – Muslims cannot defeat Zionism and its godfather, US imperialism.

Furthermore, Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) and his universal message of Islam cannot be fully understood unless we follow the footsteps of his divinely-designated Vicegerent, who was as a ten-year old boy was present near Cave Hera atop Mount Noor on the blessed 27th of Rajab (Mab'ath) when Archangel Gabriel descended with the first ayahs of the Holy Qur'an. The Imam says in one of his sermons in the book "Nahj al-Balagha":

"I used to see and watch the effulgence of Divine Revelation and Message, and breathed the scent of prophethood. When the revelation descended on the Prophet of Allah (SAWA), I heard the moan of Satan. I asked: 'O Prophet of Allah, what is this moan?' and he replied, 'This is Satan who has lost all hope of being worshipped. O' Ali, you see all that I see and you hear all that I hear, except that you are not a Prophet, but you are Vicegerent..."

This is the reason Iranian Muslims believe that Nowrouz or the new solar hijri calendar year (dated like its lunar counterpart from the Prophet's migration from Mecca and Medina), will be devoid of any significance if its ceremonies are not associated with Imam Ali (AS).

Since we are on the threshold of the Iranian New Year 1399 that starts on Friday March 20, the Spring Equinox, at exactly 7:19:37 hours local time, which this year happens to be the tragic martyrdom anniversary of Imam Musa al-Kazem (AS), and hence without festivities, it will be appropriate to mention the following statement regarding Nowrouz from the Prophet's 7th Infallible Heir, as recorded in "Bihar al-Anwar" by Allamah Majlisiti:

"This day is the first day that the fertile wind blew and the flowers on the earth appeared. The Archangel Gabriel appeared to the Prophet (of Islam), and it is the day that Abraham broke the idols. The day Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) held Imam Ali (AS) on his shoulders to destroy the idols the Quraish had placed atop the (symbolic) House of God, the Ka'ba."

We turn towards the direction of Kazemayn in Baghdad, where Imam Kazem (AS) rests in eternal peace and where this year because of the coronavirus scare his shrine like the shrines in Iran, are without pilgrims, to recite the 7th Imam's prayer when he was forcibly taken from Medina on the 27th of Rajab as prisoner to Iraq by the tyrant Haroun Rasheed:

"O Allah, guide us to the right path and let our place of rest in Your vicinity be the best of resorts, in deep shade! For indeed You are sufficient for us and You are an excellent trustee. May peace be to His elect servants, and may His blessings be upon all of them."

Wishing a Corona-Free World in Iranian New Year



TEHRAN (Dispatches) – **Iranians will be ringing in the new Persian year of 1399 on Friday amid the coronavirus outbreak.**

For the next 15 days or so, most Iranians are expected to restrict their travels and exercise self-quarantine.

The Iranian new year or Nowruz is traditionally a time of travel and visiting family and friends, but not this year.

Social distancing is what is being prescribed by officials, encouraging people to avoid close contact in order to slow the spread of the virus and keep hospitals from being overwhelmed with a sudden deluge of patients.

Iran's Health Minister Saeed Namaki said on Tuesday 14 million people have been screened for the

novel coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms as part of a national mobilization plan to curb the disease.

"Out of the 14 million monitored for the coronavirus infection, some 73,435 had symptoms. After evaluations, 3,415 of them were referred to hospitals, out of whom 1,605 were hospitalized and the remainder were either discharged with prescriptions or sent to other centers," he said.

The screening process, he added, helped the ministry reduce hospital referrals by diagnosing and suitably addressing the cases of those vulnerable to infection, the individuals carrying the virus without symptoms and the people in contact with the infected.

Namaki also expressed hope that the program would be extended to

provide nationwide coverage in the coming days.

Iran has closed the holy shrines of the eighth Shia Imam in Mashhad and his sister in Qom and Shah Abdol-Azim in Tehran until further notice.

The country has temporarily freed about 85,000 prisoners, including political prisoners in response to the coronavirus epidemic, a judiciary spokesman said on Tuesday.

The death toll in Iran from the coronavirus has reached 853 and a total of 14,991 people have been confirmed infected across the country.

Judiciary spokesman Gholamhusein Esmaili said only those serving sentences of less than five years had been freed, while political prisoners and others charged

with heavier sentences linked to their participation in riots remained in jail.

"Also in the jails we have taken precautionary measures to confront the outbreak," Esmaili said.

Iranian officials have rejected locking down cities but they have urged people to avoid traveling ahead of Persian new year on March 20 amid concerns over further spread of the virus.

Some citizens have ignored calls by the health authorities to stay at home, and shops and restaurants remained open in the country.

Officials have blamed U.S. sanctions, reimposed on Tehran since Washington quit Iran's 2015 nuclear agreement with six powers, for hampering Tehran's fight against the coronavirus.

Tehran has called on other countries to back its call for lifting of U.S. sanctions. Sources told Reuters on Monday that Washington was unlikely to ease sanctions on Iran despite an appeal from China that it do so because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Last week, Iran said it had asked the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for \$5 billion in emergency funding to combat the outbreak.

The United Arab Emirates has put aside differences to lend support by sending two planes carrying 32 tonnes of medical supplies, including gloves and surgical masks.

Russia on Tuesday lashed out at the United States' "inhuman" sanctions against Iran in the middle of its battle against the deadly coronavirus.

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Shutdowns Sweep Across U.S.; Gun Sales Soar

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – **Shutdowns swept across the United States, with nearly 7 million people in the San Francisco area all but confined to their homes Tuesday, even as spring break crowds flooded a Florida beach and dozens lined up to pose for pictures in front of the world-famous "Welcome to Las Vegas" sign.**

The official reaction to the coronavirus emergency varied dramatically from place to place in the U.S., despite new, more urgent warnings from the Trump administration, which called on Americans not to gather in groups of more than 10 and advised older people to stay home.

The number of infections in the U.S. climbed to nearly 4,500. Worldwide, more than 7,100 have died. The death toll in the U.S. reached at least 88,

with more than half of the victims from Washington state.

With the U.S. economy shuddering to a near-halt, the Dow Jones Industrial Average plummeted nearly 3,000 points Monday, or 13%, its biggest one-day percentage loss since the Black Monday crash of 1987.

The rapid work stoppage had Americans fretting about their jobs and their savings, threatened to overwhelm unemployment benefit programs, and heightened fears the country could plunge into a recession.

The president acknowledged for the first time that the outbreak may send the economy into a recession and suggested that the nation may be dealing with the virus until July or August.

Meanwhile, millions of Americans were holed up at home, with

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Zurfi Named New Iraqi PM as U.S. Burden Looms

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – **Iraq's president named former regional governor Adnan al-Zurfi as prime minister-designate on Tuesday in another bid to overcome months of unrest and deadlock.**

Zurfi now has 30 days to try and form a government which must then survive a vote of confidence in Iraq's deeply divided parliament.

He is the second man chosen to succeed Adel Abdul Mahdi, who resigned as prime minister in November amid riots. The next candidate, Muhammad Allawi, quit on March 1, accusing parties of obstructing him.

Lawmakers told Reuters that President Barham Salih had named Zurfi only after political parties failed to agree on one candidate.

Some of those same groups rounded on the new candidate, who is head of the small Nasr par-

liamentary group of former prime minister Haider al-Abadi.

"We hold the president fully responsible for the repercussions of these provocative steps," read a statement from the Fatih alliance, which represents mostly anti-terror leaders in parliament.

Zurfi lived in the United States as a refugee in the 1990s after fleeing the regime of Saddam Hussein. After Saddam's overthrow, he served as governor of the Najaf province during the U.S. occupation.

President Salih called on Zurfi to work

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Holiday Notice

Wishing our Iranian readers a happy Nowruz, we would like to inform our dear readers that the next issue of Kayhan International will be on the newsstands on Saturday, April 4, 2020.