

Ministry Detects Record Number of Virus Cases

TEHRAN (Dispatches) – The number of people infected with the coronavirus hit 2,311,800 on Wednesday, a Health Ministry spokeswoman said.

Sima Sadat Lari said 24,886 new cases had been detected in the past 24 hours, during which 388 people lost their lives, bringing the overall coronavirus death toll in Iran to 67,913. More than 1,823,950 patients have recovered from the coronavirus infection so far or have been discharged from hospitals across Iran.

Iran's Representative Re-Elected to OPCW Seat

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – The representative of Iran to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons was re-elected as one of the vice-chairs of the Executive Council of the OPCW for the third consecutive year.

During the 65th extraordinary meeting of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in The Hague, Alireza Kazemi Abadi was reelected as the vice-chair of the OPCW Executive Council from the Asia regional group. The meeting was held on the sidelines of the 25th annual Conference of The State Parties.

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Passing Away of the First Lady of Islam

By: Seyyed Ali Shahbaz

Heartfelt condolences to you on a very doleful day. Today we join in grief of the Noblest Lady of all times, Hazrat Fatema Zahra (SA), who became orphan on the 10th of Ramadhan at a very tender age, with the passing away of her beloved mother, Hazrat Khadija (SA). So exalted was the position of this lady in the sight of God that as long as she was alive, no other spouse was taken by Prophet Muhammad (SAWA). Thus, today is the sad day in the annals of history when the Almighty's Last and Greatest Messenger became a widower in his middle age after spending a quarter century of marital bliss with Hazrat Khadija (SA).

Before we present you a special programme in this regard, here is a passage to contemplate upon that shows the exalted status of the First Lady of Islam in the Divine Court.

"O Muhammad! Khadijah is coming to your presence; convey salutations of Allah to her and give her glad tidings that Allah has made a house for her in Paradise wherein there is neither grief nor sorrow."

These were the words of Archangel Gabriel to the Almighty's Last and Greatest Messenger regarding his loyal and virtuous wife, Hazrat Khadijah the *Omm al-Momineen* or the Mother of all True Believers (SA). Accordingly, the Prophet of Islam conveyed to her the Almighty's greetings and the devoted lady thanked God Almighty, glorified Him as the Source of all peace, serenity, and salutations, and prostrated to Him out of gratitude.

Every year on the 10th of Ramadhan our grief is renewed for Hazrat Khadijah (SA). Her departure from the mortal world, shortly after easing of the 3-year economic-social boycott imposed by the Arabs on the Prophet of Islam, was a great blow for the loving husband. It was also an irreparable loss for the orphaned daughter that the virtuous mother having died in a state of poverty after having spent all her proverbial wealth to feed, clothe, and shelter the persecuted Muslim community, was leaving behind no money for even a shroud, let alone inheritance for little Fatema az-Zahra (SA). The aggrieved husband, who was not destined to find a worthy replacement for Khadijah (SA) – despite taking several women as spouses in the last ten years of his life out of social necessity – dug the grave personally. He then descended into it to smooth the earth and bless it, wrapped his faithful wife in the heavenly shroud brought by Archangel Gabriel, and laid her to eternal rest, while their only surviving child watched with tears rolling down her cheeks; nearby stood in profound grief the Prophet's dear ward and teenaged cousin Ali ibn Taleb (AS).

After performing the last rites, the widowed Prophet consoled his orphaned daughter and for a while became speechless to her question: O Father, where has my mother gone? He broke his silence when Gabriel descended, and revealed the following Divine commandment to him:

"Your Lord commands you to inform Fatema that He sends His blessings upon her and says: Your Mother is in a house of brocade, its corners are made of gold, and its poles are of rubies. It is located between the houses of Asiya bint Muzahem (the tyrant Pharaoh's virtuous wife) and Maryam bint Imran – the Virgin Mother of Prophet Jesus (AS)."

Little Fatema (SA) was a picture of profound patience, and expressing gratitude in the Divine Court, she said: **"Surely Allah is Salaam (that is, Eternal Peace), and peace is from Him and to Him."**

Omm al-Momineen Hazrat Khadija (SA), needs no introduction. Daughter of the wealthy monotheist merchant, Khuwailid ibn Assad, she was linked by five generations to the same pedigree as that of the Prophet's clan of Qoraiysh. Known for her wisdom, knowledge, dignity, excellent temperament and spotless character, she was acclaimed as **"Tahera"** (or the Pure and Chaste) even in those pre-Islamic days. Her trade caravans that plied the routes from Mecca to Yemen, Syria and other far off places, earned her the epithet **"Maleekat-al-Arab"** which means the Richest Lady of all Arabia.

On hearing of the reputation of Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) – who had not yet been commanded by God to announce his universal mission of Islam – she entrusted him with management of her trade affairs. Impressed by the 25-year old youth's honesty in discharging his duties and having confirmed his scrupulous handling during a trade trip abroad, through her servants in the caravan that he was really **"as-Sadeq"** (or the Truthful) and **"al-Ameen"** (or the Trustworthy), she proposed marriage to him.

The Prophet consulted his uncle and guardian Hazrat Abu Taleb (AS), and soon the nuptials were solemnized with great rejoicing, to the extent that for over a month the whole of Mecca was entertained to a daily feast.

The two made an excellent "made-for-each-other pair" and fifteen years later when Divine revelation dawned upon the husband the dedicated wife immediately believed in his mission as the Almighty's Last and Greatest Messenger to mankind. Thereafter, she spent all her wealth in the propagation of Islam.

The couple became parents of several children including son Qasem, from whom the Prophet derived his agnomen (*kunya*) Abu'l-Qasem, but all died in infancy except the youngest daughter Fatema az-Zahra (SA), who was conceived after the Prophet's return from **"Me'raj"** (or ascension to the highest point in the heavens and back to Planet Earth in the twinkling of an eye) and his tasting of the fruits of paradise. That is one of the reasons God has referred to Hazrat Fatema (SA) as **"Kawthar"** (or Spring of Perpetual Abundance) in the Holy Qur'an.

Islam will always remain indebted to Hazrat Khadijah (SA). Her house was the cradle of Islam, and it was she who nursed and reared Islam for over ten years till she closed her eyes forever on the 10th of Ramadhan.

As her future son-in-law, the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (AS), who grew up in her house as the Prophet's ward, said decades later in one of his famous sermons titled **"al-Qas'iah"** (Sermon 191 of the famous book Nahj al-Balagha):

"In those days Islam did not exist in any house except that of the Prophet of Allah and Khadijah, while I was the third after these two. I used to see and watch the effulgence of Divine Revelation, and breathe the fragrance of Prophethood."

After her passing away, life would never be the same for the Prophet, though he would marry nine wives in the last ten years of his life in Medina – out of social necessity and to break the customs of Jahiliyya. This is evident by the famous hadith mentioned in the book "Sahih Bukhari" of our Sunni brethren when a certain wife tried to taunt him for always cherishing the memory of the Late Khadija (SA), and calling herself a better one. The Prophet felt annoyed and said:

"By God, the Almighty did not grant me a better wife than her. She believed in me when the people used to mock at me and she acknowledged me when the people denied me. She shared her wealth and property with me, and she bore me children which I was not destined to have through other women."

Even after a millennium and four centuries after her death, although the Godless Wahhabis destroyed her holy tomb in 1925, Khadijah (SA) reigns supreme. In every era and place, it was her offspring, who rose to the defence of Islam, as is evident by the tragic martyrdom of her grandson, Imam Husain (AS) in Karbala.

In our own times, the Father of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeini (RA), who delivered Iran from domestic despotism and US hegemony and revived Islam, was a descendant of Hazrat Khadijah (SA). And so is the present Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

We offer heartfelt condolences on the passing away of Hazrat Khadijah (SA), and this time to her virtuous descendant, the Lord of the Age, Imam Mahdi (may God hasten his reappearance to rid the planet of all vestiges of oppression and corruption by establishing the global government of peace, prosperity and justice.

Massive Blast at Zionist Regime's Missile Factory



The explosion happened at the Tomer factory which develops rocket engines and houses various types of missiles.

TEL AVIV (Dispatches) -- A large explosion occurred at a rocket factory owned by the occupying regime of Israel in central Occupied Palestine on Tuesday morning.

The blast sent up a massive plume of fire and smoke outside the central town of Ramle, which could be seen from miles away.

The explosion took place at the Tomer military firm, which manu-

factures propulsion systems for a variety of rockets and missiles.

Videos of the blast were widely shared on social media, prompting speculation that that it was the result of a malfunction or sabotage, especially in light of ongoing tensions between the Zionist regime and Iran. Some of the posts suggested that it may have been a form of retaliation by Tehran for the recent

sabotage at its Natanz nuclear facility that has been partially attributed to the occupying regime of Israel.

The Zionist war contractor claimed that the images were misleading and that it was a deliberate explosion as part of a trial, prompting ridicule among many observers. "This was a controlled test, without any irregular incidents," a spokeswoman for the firm claimed.

The explosion was not announced in advance or reported after the incident by the war ministry or the company.

Tomer, which was formed in 2015, serves as the main producer of propulsion systems for some of the Zionist regime's most important missiles and rockets, including the Arrow air missile system, the Shaivit satellite launcher and the EX-TRA artillery rocket.

The occupying regime's Arrow-2 and Arrow-3 missile systems are already operational to intercept incoming missiles in the atmosphere and space.

Back in February, Israel announced that it was developing the Arrow-4 with the United States.

"The development of Arrow-4 together with our American partners will result in a technological and operational leap forward, preparing us for the future battlefield and evolving threats in the Middle East and beyond," Zionist war minister Benny Gantz said in a statement at the time.

The Zionist officials' claim of a controlled test does not corroborate with the extent of the explosion at such a sensitive site.

The factory is located in close proximity to residential areas. Locals said they heard a massive explosion and saw a mushroom cloud, with some filming it.

Third Iran-Pakistan Border Crossing Opens

TEHRAN (Press TV) -- Iran and Pakistan on Wednesday opened their third official border crossing with the aim of facilitating business and trade exchanges and creating new job opportunities for their border residents.

Pakistani Minister for Defense Production Zubaida Jalal and Iran's Minister of Roads and Urban Development Muhammad Eslami traveled from their capitals to the border to open the Pishin-Mand crossing.

This is the second border crossing being opened between Iran and Pakistan since they threw open the Rimdan-Gabd gateway in December.

The new opening comes as Pakistan's Minister of Foreign Affairs Shah Mehmood Qureshi is visiting Tehran.

"The opening of the Pishin-Mand crossing is a great and historic achievement for the two countries, which shows the commitment of the government of Imran Khan to strengthen relations with Iran," IRNA news agency quoted Jalal as saying at the opening.

It will serve the common interests of Iran and Pakistan, she

said, pledging to use the capacity of the Pakistan ministry of defense to expand comprehensive cooperation on border management and boosting economic and defense relations.

Jalal said Tehran and Islamabad are on the path of deepening long-standing relations, and the increase in their border crossings manifests their determination and commitment to strengthen relations and improve the lives of their border residents.

"One of the goals of Pakistan's foreign policy and the government of Prime Minister Imran Khan's vision is to develop relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran. We see the opening of the third official border with our neighbor as part of achieving this goal," IRNA quoted her as saying.

The general Baluchistan area is an extensive plateau of rough terrain situated between Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan, rife with a number of militant groups which often engage in armed banditry, drug trafficking and other subversive acts.

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U.S. Police Kill Black Girl Just Before Floyd Verdict

COLOMBUS, Ohio (Dispatches) -- A Black teenage girl was fatally shot by police in Columbus, Ohio on Tuesday afternoon, shortly before a U.S. jury found former Minneapolis officer Derek Chauvin guilty of third-degree murder in the May 2020 death of George Floyd.

The shooting was confirmed on Twitter by the city's mayor, Andrew Ginther, who said there was police body camera footage of the incident, calling on residents to remain calm as protesters descended on the scene.

"This afternoon a young woman tragically lost her life," he said. "It's a tragic day in the city of Columbus. A horrible, heartbreaking situation. I'm not just the mayor, I'm a father. The city of Columbus lost a 15-year-old girl today."

He went on to say that "we do not know all of the details. There is body-worn camera footage of the incident. We are working to review it as soon as possible."

Officers were responding to a call about an attempted stabbing when the shooting happened around 4:45 pm in the southeastern part of Columbus, according to The Columbus Dispatch.

The verdict in the Chauvin case was announced in Hennepin County court about 20 minutes later.

"It is clear the officer took action to protect another young life," Ginther said.

Following the shooting, the girl, identified by her family as Ma'Khia Bryant, was taken to Mount Carmel East in critical condition where she was pronounced dead.

Meanwhile, Public Safety Director Ned Pettus said the death of Bryant is "devastating."

"She could be my grandchild," Pettus said. "My heart breaks for the family tonight. No matter what the circumstances, that family is in agony and they are in my prayers." Ma'Khia Bryant was shot multiple times by a White police officer on Tuesday.

The Dispatch interviewed a woman who identified the victim as her niece. The woman, Hazel Bryant, told the newspaper Ma'Khia got into an altercation with someone else at the home.

She said her niece had a knife, but noted the teen had dropped the knife before the officer shot her

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