

TEHRAN -- President Ebrahim Raisi on Wednesday warned the United Nations nuclear agency against the consequences of its "unconstructive" attitude towards Iran. Raisi made the remarks during a phone call initiated by European Council chief Charles Michel, which he had officially requested to hold with the Iranian chief executive. "Instances of Iran's serious cooperation with the (International Atomic Energy) Agency serve as shining examples of its will to observe transparency in its nuclear activities," the president said. However, "the agency's unconstructive attitude will be disruptive of (Continued on Page 7)

LaPLACE, La. (AP) — Hundreds of thousands of homes and businesses in Louisiana, most of them outside New Orleans, still didn't have power Tuesday and more than half the gas stations in two major cities were without fuel nine days after Hurricane Ida slammed into the state, splintering homes and toppling electric lines. The disparity in power restoration between New Orleans, where nearly 3/4 of the city had electricity again, and other communities where almost all residents were still in the dark prompted frustration and finger-pointing.

Iran Rejects IAEA's 'Political' Report



Beijing Expels U.S. Destroyer From China's Territorial Waters



Iran Thrash Iraq 3-0 in 2022 World Cup Qualifier



Yemeni Army Kills Dozens of Mercenaries in Ma'rib



Imam Baqer (AS) Preserver of Azadari

"The height of perfection is excellence in the understanding of the religion, endurance in hardships and administration of the affairs of life according to one's means, in the right measure."

The above-mentioned bezels of wisdom are not the words of any ordinary scholar, trying to acquire some grains of knowledge after trial and error. These are in fact guidelines for preservation of the essence of the dynamic code of life, called Islam, in all matters, without letting distortion to creep in, as one strives for perfection in the various spheres of life.

The one who expressed these wise words was the most knowledgeable person of his age, to the extent that he was called **Baqer al-Uloom** or Splitter and Spreader of Sciences. He was among the select group to whom God refers in the holy Qur'an as "**Rasekhouna fi ilm**" or Repositories of Knowledge. It means whatever wisdom he possessed was God-given for the guidance of human societies.

For those still in doubt about his identity, these initial days of the month of Safar ought to be an indicator, in view of the events related to him and his family. For example, on the 1st of Safar in the year 61 AH, as a mere boy of 4 years, he was among the innocent rope-bound prisoners who were dragged to the court of a Godless ruler in Damascus, along with the severed heads of the male members of his household.

If the 3rd of Safar (according to a narration) is to be considered his birthday in Medina in 57 AH, the 2nd of Safar was the exact date his younger brother Zayd was martyred in battle near Kufa in 121 AH – seven years after his own martyrdom through poisoning in his hometown in 114 AH.

He was the namesake of Prophet Muhammad (SAWA). He was descended on both sides (that is, paternal and maternal) from the Messenger of Mercy; and was the recipient of a unique greeting from God's Last Emissary to mankind – entrusted to Jaber ibn Abdullah al-Ansari some five decades before his birth.

Alas, on completing four years on the 3rd of Safar, 61 AH, the boy, who was none other than Imam Muhammad al-Baqer (AS), saw the ghastly spectacle of the severed head of his grandfather, Imam Husain (AS), placed in a tray before the tyrant Yazid amid celebrations and festivities in the court of Damascus.

the shocking sight for the child! But he carried himself with dignity, like his father Imam Zain al-Abidin (AS), his mother Hazrat Fatema (SA), the daughter of Imam Hasan Mujtaba (AS), his grand aunt Hazrat Zainab (SA), and especially his paternal aunt of his own age, 4-year old Hazrat Ruqayya (SA).

Shortly, Imam Baqer (AS) had to witness the martyrdom in prison of Hazrat Ruqayya (SA), who unable to endure the scolding and rough treatment of the heartless captors, left the world with her sobbing head placed on the severed head of her father, Imam Husain (AS), the Immortal Martyr of Karbala.

The noble family was eventually set free, returned to Medina, and Imam Baqer (AS), lived to the age of 57 years, diligently carrying out the mission of the Prophet to enlighten mankind – till 95 AH under the shadows of his father, and for the next 19 years as the Immaculate Imam himself.

He passed the mantle of Divine leadership to his eldest son and successor, Imam Ja'far Sadeq (AS) who revived in society the pristine "**Sunnah**" and "**Seerah**" (or behaviour and practice) of the Prophet that has come to be known as the Ja'fari School of Jurisprudence.

It was on the authority of Imam Muhammad al-Baqer (AS) as the 5th Heir of the Seal of Prophets that various scholars, not just of the School of the Ahl al-Bayt but also from among the fresh converts to Islam – such as Abu Hanifa of Iranian Zoroastrian stock from Kabul – recorded Islamic history and laws, which until then had been banned from being penned down by the successive regimes.

Space do not permit us to detail his firm censuring of Abu Hanifa for distorting jurisprudential rulings on the flimsy base of "**qiyas**" (analogy or guesswork). Likewise, we are short of time in referring fully to the Omayyad caliph, Omar Ibn Abdul-Aziz's lifting of the ban around 100 AH on the recording of hadith that was imposed by Omar Ibn Khattab almost nine decades ago in order to prevent Muslims from putting on paper the Prophet's eloquent elucidation of the God-given merits and prime position of the One and Only Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali Ibn Abi Taleb (AS).

Since we are passing through the equally tragic aftermath of the tragedy of Karbala, it should be pointed out that the 5th Imam kept alive his father Imam Zain al-Abidin's (AS) and his great aunt, Hazrat Zainab's (SA) tradition of the correct manner of commemorating the heartrending martyrdom of his grandfather, Imam Husain (AS). He thus ensured that other than what the Infallible Imams have taught of the exact occurrences of the world's most heartrending tragedy, he rest are unrealistic and unnatural additions by the enemies in a bid to deflect attention from the facts of the universal message of Ashura.

In these **Majalis al-Aza** or mourning ceremonies, along with the expounding of the tenets of Islam and explanation of the God-given merits of the Ahl al-Bayt, the bloodcurdling events of Ashura and its aftermath were recounted by preachers to the weeping audience. Such gatherings would also see poets recite elegies to instill the sense of justice and resistance against tyranny among the believers, who with tears streaming down their eyes used to beat their chests (often rhythmically) with bare hands as natural expression of grief (and not with instruments to willfully injure themselves).

Among the famous poets of the days of Imam Baqer (AS) was Kumayt al-Assadi who wrote the epic lengthy ode titled "**al-Hashemiyyat**" in praise of the Ahl al-Bayt, and as a result was imprisoned by the Omayyad regime.

The 5th Imam also specified in his last will that mourning ceremonies be held every year at the plain of Mena near Mecca during the annual Hajj so that pilgrims from different parts of the Islamic world (most of them neo Muslims) will be acquainted with the sufferings of the Ahl al-Bayt for the sake of Islam and for safe-guarding of the pure and pristine teachings of their ancestor, Prophet Muhammad (SAWA). He even set aside a sum of money to ensure that such gatherings could be held without interruption for at least a decade after his death to recount the calamities he faced throughout his life to keep alive the genuine teachings of Islam.

During his 19-year imamate that saw at least five Omayyad caliphs rise and fall, the Prophet's righteous successor left no stone unturned to enlighten the Ummah by grooming dedicated disciples, who would rise to great heights under his son and successor, Imam Ja'far as-Sadeq (AS), in whose famous academy of Medina, 4000 scholars used to learn different branches of science – including the Father of Chemistry, Jaber ibn Hayyan (Gebr to Medieval Europe).

Imam Muhammad al-Baqer (AS) stressed the importance of the famous **Ziyarat-e Ashura**, to his companion Alqama al-Hadhrami, by saying: "**With face turned towards the shrine of Imam Husain (AS), first send salaams upon him and imprecate (la'n) his killers. Then after performing a two-rak' at prayer, recite it.**"

"**O Alqama! If you recite this Ziyarat in this manner, it is as if you have performed the pilgrimage of Imam Husain (AS) in the manner of angels, and Allah will write for you thousands and thousands of rewards and forgive your thousands and thousands of sins. The one who recites this Ziyarat will be exalted by 100,000 degrees while his reward would be equal to those martyred along with Imam Husain (AS), to the extent that he will share the rewards of the martyrs (of Karbala) and will be recognized as from among them. His rewards will also equal the rewards of pilgrims performed by every Prophet and Apostle since the martyrdom of Imam Husain (AS) till this day. O Alqama, if possible, perform the pilgrimage of Imam Husain (AS) every day by (recitation of) this Ziyarat.**"

Shall We Expect More Instability in Afghanistan?



Afghan demonstrators shout slogans during an anti-Pakistan protest, near the Pakistan embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan, September 7, 2021.

TEHRAN – Iran's top security official on Wednesday criticized Afghanistan's new government after the Taliban named ministers whose inclusion raised doubts over its willingness to address the ethnic and religious diversity of the country.

Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani said he was concerned by the Taliban "ignoring the need for inclusive government, [permitting] foreign intervention and using military means instead of dialogue".

Afghanistan's wait for a new government ended on Tuesday with the Taliban announcing a caretaker cabinet to govern the country, seven days after the last American troops left Afghanistan.

However, there was no non-Taliban name in the government lineup, a big demand of the international community.

"Afghanistan's first priority is stability and peace," Shamkhani tweeted, implying the potential for more instability.

"Afghanistan stands at a crossroads," Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said in a video conference with Taliban leaders and representatives from Pakistan, Iran, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. "The U.S. and its allies withdrew hastily and the so-called 'democratic transformation' has ended in failure."

"We must seize this moment of chaos to exert a positive impact on the development of Afghanistan in a way that respects its sovereignty and territorial integrity," he added.

But Wang laid down preconditions for Afghanistan receiving infrastructure investment, saying Kabul needed to control security and prevent drug trafficking before announcing any Belt and Road projects in the country.

Iran's Foreign Minister Hussein Amir-Abdollahian called for efforts to tap Afghanistan's potentials from its diverse ethnic and religious pool and use the aid its neighbors to achieve lasting peace in the country.

The use of military force would only be a repetition of the same mistake that has happened several times in the contemporary history of Afghanistan, he said after unconfirmed reports that Pakistan's military assets including its helicopters and drones had been used in attacking anti-Taliban forces in Panjshir Valley.

"Mr. Amir-Abdollahian emphasized in this meeting that everyone should stick to dialogue as a fundamental principle, and the neighboring countries should also help prevent foreign interference in this country," Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said.

He said the next meeting of the foreign ministers of Afghanistan's neighboring countries will be held in person in Tehran within a month or two if the coronavirus pandemic allows it.

Elsewhere across the world, the EU said on Wednesday that the (Continued on Page 7)

Syrian Troops Enter Daraa al-Balad as Terrorists Leave

BEIRUT (Dispatches) -- Syrian forces Wednesday entered part of a southern city retaken from holdout terrorists under a ceasefire deal brokered by Russia, official media and a war monitor said.

Daraa province and its capital of the same name, the cradle of Syria's foreign-backed secession, returned to government fold in 2018 under a previous Moscow-backed ceasefire.

But terrorists remained in some areas, including the southern part of the city called Daraa al-Balad.

Russian mediation efforts throughout August led to the evacuation of dozens of terrorists to Syria's terrorist-held north, and a final ceasefire deal on Wednesday last week.

State news agency SANA said army units on Wednesday entered Daraa al-Balad.

They "hoisted the national flag and started setting up positions and combing the area towards announcing it free of terrorism", it said.

The latest version of the surrender deal provides for Russian military police to deploy around Daraa al-Balad and the Syrian army to set up checkpoints inside.

It will also allow militants and young men who avoided mandatory military service to sign up to stay in the city.

Radio broadcaster Sham FM reported that around 900 men had already signed up to do this.

Those who refuse the terms of the surrender are expected to be evacuated at a later date.

The so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based war monitor close to Kurdish militants with sources inside Syria, said the army was expected to deploy at nine positions inside Daraa al-Balad.

It was also to inspect homes inside the former terrorist-held neighborhood and continue registering people who wished to stay.

The Observatory and "activists" from Daraa however said (Continued on Page 7)

Statue of Slave Trader Cut to Pieces in Virginia

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — A crowd erupted in cheers and song Wednesday as work crews hoisted an enormous statue of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee off the pedestal where it has towered over Virginia's capital city for more than a century.

One of America's largest monuments to the Confederacy, the equestrian statue was lowered to the ground just before 9 a.m., after a construction worker who strapped harnesses around Lee and his horse lifted his arms in the air and counted, "Three, two, one!" to jubilant shouts from a crowd of hundreds. A work crew then began cutting it into pieces.

"Any remnant like this that glorifies the Lost Cause of the Civil War, it needs to come down, said Gov. Ralph Northam, who called it "hopefully a new day, a new era in Virginia." The Democrat said it represents "more than 400 years of history that we should not be proud of."

Sharon Jennings, an African American woman born and raised in Richmond, said she had mixed

feelings seeing it go.

"It's a good day, and it's a sad day at the same time," Jennings, 58, said. "It doesn't matter what color you are, if you really like history, and you understand what this street has been your whole life and you've grown up this way, you're thinking, 'Oh, my God.' But when you get older you understand that it does need to come down."

Some chanted "Whose streets? Our streets!" and sang, "Hey hey hey, goodbye." One man with a Black Lives Matter flag was escorted out by police after running into the fenced-off work area. No arrests were reported, and there was no sign of a counter protest.

Workers used a power saw to cut the statue in two along the general's waist, so that it can be hauled under highway overpasses to an undisclosed state-owned facility until a decision is made about its final disposition.

The job was overseen by Team Henry Enterprises, led by Devon Henry, a Black executive who (Continued on Page 7)