

## Ministry: COVID-19 Takes Another Life

TEHRAN – The number of deaths from the coronavirus pandemic in Iran increased to 144,735 with one more Iranian killed by the deadly disease over the past 24 hours, Iran's Health Ministry announced on Sunday.

The ministry said 112 new cases of infection with COVID-19 were found over the past 24 hours, 60 of whom were hospitalized. It said 7,337,064 patients out of a total of 7,563,385 infected people have recovered or been discharged from hospitals.

# Kayhan International

## Treatment of New Zealand's Ex-PM Ardern 'Abhorrent'

WELLINGTON (AFP) – New Zealand's incoming prime minister Chris Hipkins criticized the "abhorrent" treatment endured by Jacinda Ardern and vowed on Sunday to shield his own family, three days after her shock resignation.

Hours after being unanimously endorsed by Labor Party MPs as the party's leader and the nation's next prime minister, Hipkins attacked the personal abuse suffered by Ardern during her more than five years in the top job.

VOL NO: LV 11902 TEHRAN / Est.1959

Monday, January 23, 2023, Bahman 3, 1401, Rajab 1, 1444, Price 200,000 Rials

### Viewpoint

## Sweden's Sacrilege Against Sanctity of Holy Qur'an

## President Raisi Sees 'Very Bright Future' for Iran



## Iran's Ice Climber Wins Silver at UIAA World Cup



## Tens of Thousands Hold Largest Protest Against Netanyahu



## Imam Baqer (AS) Repository of Celestial Knowledge

By: Seyyed Ali Shahbaz

The above statement is from Prophet Muhammad's (SAWA) namesake and 5th Infallible Heir, who was prophesied by the Seal of Messengers as "Baqer al-Uloum" or the Splitter and Spreader of Sciences.

Born in the Prophet's city Medina, 57 years after the Prophet's hijra or migration from Mecca to Medina, and 46 years after the passing away of the Prophet from the mortal world, Imam Muhammad Baqer (AS), was knowledge personified.

Descended on both sides from the Prophet he was inheritor of the celestial knowledge bequeathed by the Prophet, on the commandment of God, to his great-grandfather, Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (AS).

If his father Imam Zain al-Abedin (AS) was the son of the Prophet's younger grandson Imam Husain (AS), his mother Fatema (SA) was the daughter of the Prophet's elder grandson, Imam Hasan al-Mujtaba (AS).

It was Divine Providence that he was born on the First of the month of Rajab, which starts today and which is one of the four sacred months of the Islamic calendar – the month in which the All-Merciful, in addition to the regular conduits of mercy, opens up special passageways to His creatures for attaining greater heights of virtue.

Indeed, fortunate are those who grab this opportunity to strive towards the bounties of the Hereafter. Last night on the eve of Rajab, most of the faithful may have performed the special prayers and recited the exclusive supplications in the Divine Court. Today many are fasting and are observing the special prayers of the First of Rajab.

The faithful are humbly beseeching God to firm up their faith, enlighten their minds, illuminate their hearts, purify their souls, strengthen their spirits, make them worthy recipients of the bezels of knowledge specified by the 5th Imam, and above all, alleviate the sufferings of all believers.

God's promise is true. He will surely make the true believers triumphant no matter the magnitude of atrocities committed by the hypocrites and the faithless. He has indeed preserved for the salvation of humanity the Last Infallible Heir of Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) – the Qa'em al-Mahdi (AS), who will reappear in the end times to rid Planet Earth of all oppression through establishment of the global government of peace, prosperity and justice. Amen

No wonder, Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) and 11 of his Infallible Heirs have given us tidings of the eventual emerging out of the long occultation of the 12th Infallible Imam for fulfilling God's promise.

For his part, Imam Muhammad Baqer (AS), who as a 4-year old witnessed history's most heartrending in Karbala on the Day of Ashura (10 Muharram 61 AH), and who in its equally tragic aftermath despite his tender age, suffered imprisonment in Damascus along with his parents, aunts and Grand Aunts, Hazrat Zainab (SA) and Omm Kulthoum (SA), has said:

**"The Master of the Affair was named as the Mahdi because he will dig out the Torah and other heavenly books from the cave in Antioch. He will judge among the people of the Torah according to the Torah; among the people of the Evangel according to the Evangel; among the people of the Psalms in accordance with the Psalms; and among the people of the Qur'an in accordance with the Qur'an."**

These words from the Imam on whose authority scholars wrote accounts of the prophets of the past, the Sunnah and Seerah (behaviour and practice) of Prophet Muhammad (SAWA), the meaning of the Ayahs of the holy Qur'an, and the jurisprudential principles of the Shari'ah, provide solace to the hearts of not just Shi'a Muslims, but also of our Sunni brethren. Their books are replete with countless narrations from him.

In fact, all monotheists take comfort from the words of the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt, who as the righteous heirs of Prophet Muhammad (SAWA), preached peace, friendship and fraternity. Their humanitarian behaviour is in sharp contrast to the usurper Omayyad and Abbasid caliphs, who like the satanic Salafis of our own days, divided Muslims into sects, massacred people, terrorized countries, destroyed the heritage of the nations of the past, and looted the masses to fill up their coffers.

Those in doubt, are invited to study the fruitful life of the 5th Infallible Imam, who during his 19-year mission, resisted against five tyrannical Omayyad caliphs (whose empire that stretched from Spain in the west to Pakistan in the east has long evaporated), in order to pass on to posterity the ethereal values of universal brotherhood.

## Iran to Put European Armies on Terror List

Withdrawal From NPT Not Ruled Out



Soldiers of a Eurocorps detachment carry the European Union flag to mark the inaugural European Parliament session on June 30, 2014, in front of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, eastern France.

TEHRAN – Iran on Sunday warned the European Union it would take "reciprocal" measures after the European Parliament voted to list the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist group.

"The parliament is working to place elements of European countries' armies on the terrorist list" of the Islamic Republic, Foreign Minister Hussein Amir-Abdollahian said on Twitter.

Members of the European Parliament voted on Wednesday to include the IRGC on the 27-nation

bloc's terror list. The vote is non-binding but comes with EU foreign ministers already due to discuss tightening sanctions on Iran next week.

Amir-Abdollahian and IRGC chief Major General Hussein Salami attended a closed-door parliament session on Sunday morning to discuss the European Parliament's move.

"The European Parliament shot itself in the foot," Iran's top diplomat said, adding that the response would be "reciprocal".

Later asked if Iran would consider withdrawing from the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) or expel United Nations nuclear inspectors, Amir-Abdollahian said all options were on the table.

If European diplomats "who have no experience in diplomacy... do not correct their positions, every possibility is conceivable", he was quoted as saying by IRNA.

Iran has been a signatory to the NPT since 1970, the year it came into force. Its nuclear energy program was a target of West's hos-

tile policies toward the Islamic Republic until a deal was reached in 2015, providing Iran sanctions relief in exchange for curbs on its nuclear activity.

But the deal has been hanging by a thread since 2018 when the United States unilaterally withdrew and reimposed biting sanctions, prompting Tehran to begin rolling back on its commitments.

Iran and world powers have been engaged in on-and-off talks to restore the deal, but discussions have been in deep freeze since last year.

Iran's parliament speaker Muhammad Baqer Qalibaf also said on Sunday that the legislature would "retaliate immediately and decisively" if the EU upholds and ratifies the European Parliament's vote.

Qalibaf, who is himself a former commander of the IRGC air force, added that parliament would "recognize the armies of the European countries... as terrorist groups".

He said the latest resolution showed that European countries, under the influence of pro-Zionist lobby groups, have made miscalculations and taken a wrong path against their national interests.

The top Iranian lawmaker went on to say that Iranians consider the IRGC an integral part of their nation, which has protected their security and served people during tough times such as natural calamities and the COVID-19 pandemic.

(Continued on Page 7)

## Project to Build Satellite Constellation Begins

TEHRAN -- The head of the Iranian Space Agency on Sunday announced the launch of a project to build a satellite constellation, named after the late legendary anti-terror commander General Qassem Soleimani.

Hassan Salarieh made the announcement on the agency's official website as he elaborated on the latest implementation status of General Soleimani's project, which is part of Iran's ongoing 10-year space program.

"Based on the 10-year space program and in order to provide services to people, government institutions, and organizations as well as to provide services to private sector companies, the Iranian Space Agency has been tasked with placing a telecommunication satellite constellation in Earth's orbit," Salarieh said.

"The implementation of the project, which is called Martyr Soleimani Project and is considered to be the first satellite constellation project of our country, is of great importance owing to

the achievements in the production of satellite series and their network formation," he added.

He said that the Iranian Space Agency had prepared the operational plan of the project and codified the executive program of a narrowband telecommunication system with limited service long ago and even before the finalization of the country's 10-year space program.

"In less than a month since the approval of the 10-year space program, one of the most important clauses of which is the implementation of the Martyr Soleimani Project, ... the implementation phase of the project was officially launched," Salarieh said.

Praising steps taken by the agency to build small satellites, Salarieh said, "It is axiomatic that upon success in this step, the way to complete and develop satellite systems and provide more services will be paved in the next steps."

Iran launched its first satellite Omid (Continued on Page 7)

## Fifth Mass Killing in U.S. This Month At Least 10 Killed in California Shooting

MONTEREY PARK, Calif. (Dispatches) — A man fatally shot 10 people at a venue where people were celebrating the Chinese Lunar New Year late on Saturday in a city on the eastern edge of Los Angeles, and he was still at large after fleeing the scene, police said.

Another 10 people were taken to local hospitals to be treated for injuries, and at least one was in critical condition, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department said early on Sunday morning, about five hours after the attack in Monterey Park.

When local police first arrived, people were "pouring out of the location screaming," department captain Andrew Meyer told reporters in a news briefing at the scene.

There was no immediate information about a motive for the shooting or a description of the suspect or kind of gun used.

The shooting took place after 10 p.m. PST (0600 GMT on Sunday) around the location of a Chinese Lunar New Year celebration where

many downtown streets are closed for festivities that draw thousands of people from across Southern California. Police said the festivities planned for Sunday were now cancelled.

Monterey Park is a city of about 60,000 people around 7 miles (11 km) from downtown Los Angeles. About two-thirds of its residents are Asian, according to U.S. Census data, and the city is known for its many Chinese restaurants and groceries. The sheriff's department said it did not know whether the attack was racially motivated.

Footage posted on social media showed injured people on stretchers being taken to ambulances by emergency staff. Around the scene of the shooting police guarded cordoned-off streets, the video showed.

Seung Won Choi, who owns a seafood barbecue restaurant near the site of the attack, told the Los Angeles Times that three people rushed into his restaurant and told (Continued on Page 7)