

Congratulating the occasion of Eid al-Adha, Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Hossein Baqeri hoped for stronger unity among Muslim states and their victory over the global hegemony, Tasnim wrote.

Leader urges Muslims to resist Western aggression in Hajj message

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Naturally, America and its cohorts are sensitive about the word "resistance" and have decided to show all kinds of hostility to the "Islamic Resistance Front." Some regional governments' cooperation with them is a bitter reality that strengthens those malicious acts as well.

The straight path shown to us by the Hajj rituals, by "Saiy," "Tawaf," "Arafah," "Jamarat" and the jubilation and unity in Hajj, is to rely on God, to pay attention to the never-fading power of God, to have national self-confidence, to believe in struggle and endeavor for religion, to show firm determination when moving forward and to have abundant hope for victory.

The truth of the realities in the Islamic region bolsters this hope and builds up this determination. From another perspective, the bitter events in the world of Islam, scientific backwardness, political dependence, and economic and social problems direct us toward a great duty and an untiring endeavor.

Usurped Palestine is calling for our help. Innocent, bloodied Yemen torments every heart. The plight of Afghanistan concerns everyone. The bitter events in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and some other countries – where the interfering, malevolent hand of the US and its cohorts is completely visible – is stimulating the zeal and determination of all the young people.

On the other hand, the emergence of the Resistance Forces throughout this sensitive region, the awakening of nations, and the motivation of the young, enthusiastic generation, is making hearts overflow with hope. Palestine is wielding the Sword of Quds in all its territories. Quds, Gaza, the West Bank, the 1948 Lands and the Palestinian camps all rose up and bravely defeated the aggressor over the course of just 12 days.

Yemen, which has been besieged and alone, has endured seven years of war, crimes, and the murder of innocent people by the evil, stone-hearted enemy. It has not surrendered despite a lack of food, medicines and other basic needs. On the contrary, Yemen has perplexed the enemy with its power and ingenuity.

In Iraq, the Resistance Forces are pushing back the occupying US and its puppet Daesh. With their loud cries, they are eloquently expressing their firm decision to confront every act of interference and malice on the part of the US and its cohorts.

The American propaganda effort to distort the will, demands and actions of the brave youth and forces of the Resistance in Syria, Lebanon and other countries and to ascribe them to Iran or any other reference point, is an insult to those valiant, vigilant youth. And this stems from America's deep ignorance about regional nations.

This ignorance led America to be humiliated in Afghanistan. After that raucous invasion 20 years ago and after having used weapons and bombs against defenseless people and civilians, it became stuck in a quagmire and eventually withdrew its forces from that country. Of course, the vigilant Afghan nation should remain watchful concerning America's tools for gathering intelligence and its soft-war weapons, and it must vigilantly fight them.

Regional nations have shown that they are awake and vigilant and that their path is different from the path of those governments that are even prepared to go as far as to give in to US demands over a vital matter – the Palestinian cause – in order to keep it satisfied. These are governments that overtly and covertly create ties of friendship with the usurping Zionist regime. In other words, they deny the right of the Palestinian nation to their historic land. This is an act of stealing Palestinian assets. They did not find it sufficient to ransack the natural resources of their own countries, and they are now ransacking the resources of the Palestinian nation.

Brothers and sisters,

Our region and the swift, diverse events taking place in it are an exhibition showing us lessons and examples. On the one hand, we can learn the lesson of gaining power using resistance against the transgressing aggressors. On the other hand, we can learn the lesson of humiliation that results from submitting to them and showing weakness.

The true, divine promise is assistance for the fighters in the way of God, "If you aid the cause of Allah, He will aid you, and plant your feet firmly." [Holy Qur'an, 47:7]

The primary result of this struggle in the way of God will be to prevent America and other international aggressors from interfering in the affairs of Islamic countries, God willing.

I ask God, the Exalted, to assist the Muslim nations, I send greetings to the Imam of the Age (may our souls be sacrificed for his sake), and I ask God to elevate the status of the great Imam Khomeini and our illustrious martyrs.

Greetings to God's righteous servants.

Rouhani: Administration to remain responsible toward people until last hour

National Desk

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani gave the assurance that his administration will remain responsible toward the country's people until the very last hour of its term in office and will continue to be at their service.

In an address to a ceremony to inaugurate a number of national projects belonging to the Agriculture Ministry, the president added people have every right to be very discontented with the problems caused by the drought and water shortage, IRNA reported.

Praising the domestic agriculture sector's progress over the past eight years, Rouhani said the statistics announced by the Agriculture Ministry shows that the country's farmers, agriculture sector officials and engineers have made great achievements, the outcomes of which are evident in people's lives and the country's self-sufficiency in some sectors.



Iranian President Hassan Rouhani attends a ceremony in Tehran on July 19, 2021 to inaugurate a number of Agriculture Ministry's projects.

He said the agriculture sector managers have provided valuable services over the past eight years.

Under normal circumstances where the country is not grappling with a drought, Rouhani added, Iran can be self-sufficient in terms of producing certain crops, such as wheat, rice and sugar.

However, he noted, under drought conditions, "we cannot be self-sufficient as a major part of our farmland are rainfed".

The president regretted that the country is in a very difficult situation in the current Iranian calendar year, which started on March 21, in terms of its water resources; as the drought it is currently struggling with has been unprecedented in the last 50 years.

Precipitation since the beginning of the year has declined by 52 percent year-on-year, he said, adding it is why the country is concurrently suffering from the water and electricity shortage.

"Our dear people in [the southwestern province of] Khuzestan and many other southern provinces are suffering from a shortage of water for their activities in the field agriculture and animal husbandry."

He added his administration passed good enactments on Sunday to resolve Khuzestan's problems and compensate its people.

Raesi meets SNSC secretary, martyr foundation's head separately



Iran's President-elect Seyyed Ebrahim Raesi (R) meets Secretary of Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Ali Shamkhani in Tehran on July 19, 2021.



Iran's President-elect Seyyed Ebrahim Raesi (R) meets Chairman of the Foundation of Martyrs and Veterans Affairs Saeed Ohadi in Tehran on July 19, 2021.

National Desk

Iran's President-elect Seyyed Ebrahim Raesi held separate meetings with Secretary of Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Ali Shamkhani and Chairman of the Foundation of Martyrs and Veterans Affairs Saeed Ohadi at his office on Monday.

Shamkhani wished success for Raesi and his administration during their four-year term in office and presented a report of the SNSC's latest activities and measures, IRNA reported.

In his meeting with Ohadi, the president-elect stressed that families of the country's martyrs, war veterans and those wounded in action are of great value and importance to Iran's people and government.

It is a collective responsibility of the country's officials to provide these families with any service that would contribute to the alleviation of their concerns, he said.

"We are required to undertake all-out efforts to remove their worries in different sectors of housing, health and treatment and employment."

He also highlighted the necessity of identifying these families' problems and difficulties and resolving them through working out appropriate solutions.

Ohadi also wished success for the president-elect and his government and presented a report of his foundation's latest activities and measures.

Raesi, the former Judiciary chief of Iran, won the June 18 presidential election by a landslide to become the country's eighth president succeeding Hassan Rouhani who has served two terms in office.

Tehran Grand Bazaar, banks closed for six days to curb COVID pandemic

National Desk

Tehran Grand Bazaar and banks as well as all public and private organizations and offices in the Iranian capital will be closed for six days, starting today, in an effort to curb the COVID-19 pandemic in the province mainly sparked by the spread of the Indian coronavirus variant, known as Delta, said a provincial official.

The same closures and COVID restrictions are enforced in the northern province of Alborz, neighboring Tehran, IRNA reported.

Speaking to IRNA on Monday, Gholamreza Abbas-Pasha, the deputy governor-general of Tehran Province for management and resources development, added the restrictions will be imposed following the approval by the National Task Force for Fighting the Coronavirus and a directive by Iranian President Hassan Rouhani.

He added that the closures will also apply to less-essential and nonessential businesses in the twin provinces.

The official said based on the anti-coronavirus task force's approval, travel to and from the two provinces are also prohibited, warning that a failure to comply with the ban will result in forfeiture.



SEYED MOSLEH PIRKHEZRIAN/IRNA

Earlier in the day, the Iranian government's spokesman Ali Rabiei announced the closures saying they will be in force until July 25.

Based on the official Iranian calendar, Wednesday is a holiday on the occasion of Eid al-Adha and the country's state-owned organizations and offices have also been decided to be closed on Thursdays by late August as part of efforts to control the coronavirus spread and electricity consumption, he added.

Rabiei stressed that the closures are aimed at preventing public gatherings at any level to bring down the COVID death toll and infections, saying, any travel as well as family and public gatherings can result in being infected with the deadly virus.

On Sunday, Iran's Health Ministry announced that an increasing trend is being reflected by the coun-

try's number of daily COVID-19 deaths and infections as new coronavirus variants have spread into most provinces.

The Health Ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadar Lari said this comes as compliance with the health protocols has decreased significantly.

She noted that over the past seven days, the number of the people referred to hospitals with COVID-19 symptoms witnessed a growth of 25 percent, adding hospitalizations and deaths also increased by 35 percent and 18.5 percent respectively in this period.

Lari said the highest number of hospitalizations during last week pertained to the provinces of Ilam (western Iran), Kerman (southeastern Iran), Yazd (central Iran), Mazandaran (northern Iran) and Hormuzgan (southern Iran).

She regretted that observance of the health protocols in the country has reached an unprecedentedly low level (48 percent) since the beginning of the outbreak in late February 2020, listing as having the least compliance levels the provinces of Gilan (northern Iran), Alborz (northern Iran), Kerman, Fars (southern

Iran), Hormuzgan and Sistan and Baluchestan (southeastern Iran).

Casualties

The Health Ministry announced in a statement on Monday that the country's daily COVID-19 deaths and infections reached 213 and 25,441, respectively, in the past 24 hours.

According to the statement, the total COVID-19 death toll and infections since the beginning of the outbreak in the country stand at 87,374 and 3,548,704, respectively.

It added that 4,361 COVID-19 patients are in critical condition, and of the newly-detected cases, 2,740 individuals have been hospitalized.

The ministry said 3,152,653 COVID-19 patients have so far either recovered from the disease or have been discharged from hospitals.

It also announced that 25,118,248 coronavirus diagnostic tests have so far been carried out in the country, and 8,818,372 doses of COVID vaccines have been administered.

The Health Ministry said 169 cities in the country are coded red (very high-risk), while 166 are in the orange zone (high-risk).

Based on a decision by the National Task Force for Fighting the Coronavirus, travel to and from these cities is prohibited.

The number of the country's yellow (medium-risk) and blue (low-risk) cities are 113 and zero, respectively, according to the ministry.

Iran warns UAE of Israel's regional presence fallout

Taking a swipe at the UAE for opening its embassy in Tel Aviv, the Iranian Foreign Ministry's spokesman warned the Arab country that it will be held accountable for the negative consequences of the Zionist regime's regional presence.

In comments at a weekly press conference on Monday, Saeed Khatibzadeh also deplored the UAE for establishing formal diplomatic relations with the Zionist regime, Tasnim News Agency reported.



IRNA

He noted that the Israeli regime occupying Al-Quds is at the lowest point of legitimacy and social, economic and political conditions.

"It perceives that it can acquire legitimacy with such measures," the Iranian spokesman said.

Naturally, as a regime that is the source of violence, troubles and terror in this region Israel will not gain any legitimacy through such course, he added.

The UAE must also be mindful that it will be held accountable for the unrest and the consequences of the presence of the occupying regime in this region, Khatibzadeh warned.

The UAE on July 14 inaugurated its embassy in Israel, less than a year after the announcement of establishing formal diplomatic relations with the regime.

Lebanon economic woes

Commenting on the situation in Lebanon, the spokesman assured the Arab state's people of Tehran's preparedness to provide whatever assistance it can in dealing with the economic pressures.

Asked by reporters about the decision by Lebanese prime minister-designate, Saad Hariri, to abandon efforts to form a new government, Khatibzadeh added it is the people of Lebanon who should decide their country's fate.

"We have never backed off from offering help to the Lebanese sides, including the government, groups and parties, and have provided assistance whenever they have requested," the spokesman added.

Iran has expressed readiness to help the Lebanese people in their struggle against the economic pressures, Khatibzadeh noted, stressing that Tehran will spare no effort in this regard.

What is important is that the Lebanese government would be formed as soon as possible, the Iranian diplomat added.

Hariri stepped down on Thursday after failing to form a government for over the past eight months.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi