The Leader's speech in Mashhad on the first day of the New Year - 22 /Mar/ 2018

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei addressed a mass gathering of pilgrims and locals at the Shrine of Imam Reza (Peace be Upon Him) in the holy city of Mashhad on Wednesday. He pointed to the solidity and liveliness of the Revolution in its 40th year and the foiling of the malicious US plot for the region and elucidated the reason, necessity and approaches for the realization of the motto of the year, namely, “Support for Iranian Products,” and stressed that “all of the problems can be solved by looking inside [the country]”. He underlined the need for ever more attention to and utilization of youths in various fields, including in management sectors, adding, “The proud and youthful generation of this land will fly the flag of Iran’s independence, dignity, greatness and honor higher than any other time.”

At the beginning of his speech, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution extended his congratulations to the Iranian nation over the arrival of the new Iranian calendar year and Nowruz; and further expressed condolences over the martyrdom of Imam Hadi, the tenth Shia Imam, and expressed hope that the concurrence of the New Year with the martyrdom of that Imam would pave the ground for Iran to benefit from divine guidance more than before.

Ayatollah Khamenei devoted the first part of his speech to a general review of the 40-year achievement record of the Islamic Republic of Iran with regard to the slogans, values and fundamental principles as well as an assessment of the performance of officials.

In the area of safeguarding the Revolution’s values and principles and following up on its goals, he said, “The Iranian nation has achieved good results in this area and has succeeded in preserving until today the main mottoes of the Revolution with the same initial solidity and vigor.”

The Leader of the Revolution cited “independence, freedom, democracy, national self-confidence, and self-belief, justice and the realization of the rulings of religion and religious law” as the fundamental principles of the Revolution and added, “With regard to ‘independence’ that was in fact the reaction of the Iranian nation to 200 years of foreign domination it must be said that the country enjoys genuine independence and today no country is as independent as Iran and the only country whose views are not influenced by any power is the great nation of Iran.”

Also Regarding “freedom” as one of the main slogans of the Revolution, Ayatollah Khamenei said, “Abusing freedom, some unjust people say there is no freedom in the country and foreigners reflect this in their propaganda, whereas there is freedom of thought, freedom of expression and freedom of choice in the country.”

He reiterated, “Today no one in the Islamic Republic is prosecuted or put under pressure due to having opposing views to the government, and there is no intention of doing so; however, there is a framework to freedom in the Islamic Republic, as in the rest of the world.”

Explaining this issue, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution stressed, “The framework of freedom in the Islamic Republic is ‘the Constitution and the country’s laws’ and all of these regulations have been inspired by Islamic laws.”

Ayatollah Khamenei said “democracy” is another fundamental principle of the Islamic Republic, adding, “In the past 40 years, there has been an election approximately every one or two years and the people have participated [in the elections] freely, passionately and enthusiastically which resulted in administrations with various political orientations taking office in the past four decades.”

He cited “national self-confidence and self-belief” as another fulfilled slogan of the Revolution and pointed to the issue of justice, adding, “A few weeks ago, I made a few statements about justice, and ill-wishers created the impression that the Islamic Republic has apparently done nothing in the area of justice whereas some very good things have been done with regard to justice but the expectation level of the Islamic Establishment concerning justice is much higher than the current situation.”

In this regard, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution cited two global statistics, saying, “According to statistics by international centers, the Gini coefficient, which shows the social gap in society, was over 50 prior to the Revolution but reached 38 in the [Iranian calendar year] 1394 (March 21, 2015 – March 19, 2016). Furthermore, according to another statistic, prior to the Revolution the percentage of people in absolute poverty was 46, whereas in the year 1393 (March 21, 2014 – March 20, 2015) this figure reached 9.5.”

Also regarding “the implementation of religion and religious laws,” Ayatollah Khamenei reiterated, “Courtesy of the Guardian Council, this issue has been realized in the laws over the past 40 years and that is why all of the tyrannical powers are against the Guardian Council.”

Concerning the track record and executive performance of the officials, he also said, “Over the past 40 years, the performance of officials in providing security and stability, science and technology, infrastructure (such as connecting routes and building dams, power plants and ports), non-oil exports, per capita Gross National Product and social development has been very good and there are pleasant statistics; however, the enemies seek to conceal this reality in their propaganda so that the people would grow pessimistic toward the Revolution and the Establishment in their hearts.”

The next part of the speech of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution concerned the necessity and manner of better tapping into the plentiful natural and human talents and capacities for Iran’s progress.

“Educated and diligent youths” was the first potentiality that Ayatollah Khamenei referred to.

He pointed to the 23-fold rise in the student population compared to the pre-Revolution era and the presence of active and influential in seminaries and other scientific, industrial, cultural and educational sectors, saying, “Unfortunately, these youths have not been properly utilized and that is why I insist that the youths themselves take action toward employment, establishment and innovation wherever possible.”

He said recommendation to carry out “fire-at-will” activities is not limited to cultural activities, adding, “Beloved youths can act and play a role in all of the necessary areas for the progress of the country. Indeed, officials must devise a comprehensive plan regarding the youth.”

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution said “demographic wave” is another important possibility for Iran and criticized the opponents of population growth, saying, “The policy of population growth must certainly be pursued and implemented.”

He recalled the Western problems emanating from the implementation of the policy of “population control” and added, “The result of this policy in Islamic countries is also the deprivation of countries of the young population whereas human workforce cannot be imported and the country must be able to fulfil its future needs to active and efficient youths.”

“Geographical advantages” and “valuable natural resources” such terrestrial vastness, adjacency to the high seas, being a neighbor to 15 countries and being located in the West to East and North to South junction were among the other strong points of the country that the Leader of the Islamic Revolution referred to.

He said, “Beloved Iran ranks first in the world in terms of total oil and gas reserves; of course, these resources are being sold abroad without value-added [tax]; however, this volume of resources is an important potential and for this reason the enemies are always seeking to dominate Iran.”

Summing up the country’s capacities and potentialities, Ayatollah Khamenei stressed, “If these great capacities are accompanied by the innovation and presence of youths and active and diligent managers in the field, Iran’s economy will become one of the 12 top advanced economies.”

He then went on to elaborate on the obstacles to and reasons for the failure to fully tap into the capacities.

The first impediment pointed out by the Leader of the Revolution was “lack of belief in or failure to attach significance by some officials in various administrations to the capacities of the country.”

He pointed to the stunning progress of the youth in moderns industries and technologies, adding, “The day when the nuclear industry went on stream, even some older generation scientists did not believe in the capability of the youths involved in this industry; however, the day when the nuclear industry reached its summit, the same people admitted that Iranian youths had the will to do it and succeeded.”

Ayatollah Khamenei said the most important challenge facing the country is the mental challenge and the unawareness of the public and some officials of the human and natural riches of Iran, adding, “The enemy uses this unawareness and creates the impression that Iranians ‘cannot’ and Iran does not have sufficient resources at its disposal; however, in contrast, I insist that ‘we can’ and Iran enjoys plentiful facilities.”

He reiterated, “The officials must have faith in the power and ability of the youth and the youth must continue the job with innovation and indefatigably and not be discouraged by inappreciation.”

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution said another impediment to the progress of the country is the “laxity” and “laziness” of some officials, saying, “The country needs relentless and powerful action; therefore, officials must step up their efforts.”

“Trusting foreign versions” was another obstacle that the Leader of the Islamic Revolution referred to and said, “The people are not passive in the face of foreigners; however, some officials have more trust in foreign versions than domestic versions.”

He said “implementing the policies of the World Bank, economic adjustment policies and some international treaties” and in contrast “disregard for endogenicity and Resistance Economy” is another barrier in the path of the country’s progress, adding, “Endogenicity means the creation of wealth through internal activities in the country not set eyes on foreign hands.”

Ayatollah Khamenei added, “Throughout the previous years, various governments repeatedly sought to take out loans from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, but I did not give permission, because borrowing from foreigners and commitment to them is a big mistake; of course endogenicity does not mean shutting the doors of the country and the economy must be endogenous and outward-looking.”

He described “political and factional tribalism” as a plight and another obstacle to progress and added, “Whoever carries out a good deed, it must be promoted at the management and decision-making level, and it would be wrong to disregard a good action simply because it was done by the opposite faction.”

“The absence of a serious campaign against corruption” was another obstacle to the country’s progress which the Leader of the Islamic Revolution pointed out.

He, meanwhile, added, “There is no corruption at the level rumored and promoted today and most of the country’s managers are faithful and upright individuals; however, the least amount of corruption is detrimental and requiring of serious campaign and it should not be the case that actions are abandoned after some commotion following the highlighting of the campaign against corruption.”

Ayatollah Khamenei cited “the country’s reliance on oil” as one of the biggest obstacles to progress and stressed that Iran must be released from an “oil economy,” adding, “We must make the country’s economy independent from oil such that we control oil not oil control us. We should not allow the enemies to make matters difficult by exploiting this ploy, imposing sanctions and policies such as lowering the price of oil.”

Some fundamental flaws present in the people’s lifestyle such as “prodigality, consumerism, hedonism and aristocracy” and “consuming foreign products” were the other obstacles to which the Leader of the Islamic Revolution referred in the area of the progress of the Iranian nation.

He reiterated, “Everyone must be passionate about national economy and the consumption of domestic products and if the youths would have as much zeal about domestic economy and using national products as they do about football and supporting the Reds and the Blues or some foreign clubs, the economy of the country would be reformed.”

In another part of his speech, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution elucidated the importance of, grounds for and approaches to the fulfilment of the motto of the year, namely, “Support for Iranian Products.”

In the prelude to this discussion, he rejected a viewpoint which contends that the designation of yearly mottoes is useless due to officials’ failure to observe and execute the motto. He said, “The announcement of yearly mottoes takes place with two objectives: “giving direction to the executive and performance policies of government officials” and “focusing public opinion on the country’s important issues and needs.”

Ayatollah Khamenei reiterated, “Of course, the officials are trying and working to the best of their ability and, indeed, if these endeavors are increased, better results will ensue.”

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution described Iranian products as great and important on the grounds that “they are the final product of planning, investment, endeavour and innovation by various strata of the people and officials.” He added, “Economic agents and producers through ‘investment,’ official through ‘planning,’ youths through ‘science and designing’ and workers through ‘effort and endeavor’ offer a product to the society and the people must, besides playing a role in production, support the final product of this chain of effort and endeavour with zeal and pride and purchasing and consuming Iranian products.”

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution raised some practical points on how to support Iranian products. “Planning for increasing production,” “promoting the quality of products,” “conformity with the needs of the day and taste of the people” and “Inexpensiveness and competitiveness of Iranian products with foreign items” were some of these points.

He cited “export marketing” as another path to support Iranian products and pointed to the heavy responsibility of the Foreign Ministry, commerce officials and economic agents, adding, “If we could provide 20 percent of the needs of the markets of the 15 neighbors of Iran with quality Iranian products, we would take an important step toward job creation and increasing national wealth.”

After elucidating the reasons and ways to support Iranian products, Ayatollah Khamenei explored the issue of necessities and grounds for the materialization of the motto of the year.

“Action by the administration to seriously manage imports (whether government imports or private-sector imports),”

and “complete abstention from the imports of items that are produced or can be produced inside the country” were the first emphasis of the Leader of the Revolution in this regard.

He described as very fundamental the detrimental effect of imports on production, adding, “Foreign merchandise floods the country and then we also criticize unemployment.”

Ayatollah Khamenei cited “serious battle against smuggling” as the second serious requirement for supporting Iranian products and added, “The people should also studiously avoid purchasing and consuming smuggled goods so that smuggling would not pay off for anyone.”

He strongly urged economic agents to invest in production, adding, “As well as being profitable, the investment, if carried out with pure motives and for the progress of the country, will also be considered as worshipping.”

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution concluded his remarks on the motto of the year with this statement, “We officials, economic agents, salespeople and consumers, each and every one must be after supporting Iranian products with zeal and devotion.”

In the final segment of his speech, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution pointed to regional issues and the malice of the Americans, saying, “In the year that passed, the Islamic Republic succeeded to fly the flag of the Iranian nation’s might and dignity in the region and have an important share in the breaking the back of Takfiris and establishing security.”

Stressing that the Islamic Republic, through this great deed of its, foiled the Americans’ plot in the region, adding, “Now, international powers, who are always meddling in the internal affairs of various areas across the world, are critical of the Islamic Republic and say, ‘Why is Iran interfering in regional issues?’ and in response we say that this issue has nothing to do with you.”

He stressed that the Islamic Republic of Iran’s presence in some regional countries has taken place at the request of governments and nations, reiterating, “We have neither bullied [anyone], nor meddled in the internal affairs of any country. The asked for help and we helped and we provided this assistance with reasonable motives and very prudent calculations, not based on emotions.”

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution pointed to the US designs for the region, saying, “Through the creation of “vicious, tyrannical and blasphemous” groups such as Daesh, the Americans sought to engage regional countries with civil wars and distract their attentions from the occupying Zionist regime, but with God’s grace we managed to foil this plot.”

Ayatollah Khamenei pointed to the American’s claims about their role in cracking down on Daesh, stressing, “This claim is a lie, because US policy is to preserve Daesh and its likes; of course, in a way that they would be under the control of Americans.”

He stressed that the Americans had no motive to destroy Daesh, adding, “Other than this issue, the US is incapable of providing security in the region and the clear example of this is its 14-year presence in Afghanistan, which not only has not brought about any security of the people of Afghanistan but has deteriorated security conditions.”

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution stressed that the Islamic Republic has succeeded to establish security in the region, saying, “Such will also be the case henceforth and undoubtedly, the US will not achieve its goals in the region and by the grace of God the Islamic Republic will attain all of its goals in the region.”

In conclusion and summing up, Ayatollah Khamenei outlined five important points:

1. There is no problem that cannot be solved in the country and the key to solve the problems is in the hands of the officials and Iranian nation and not in the hands of foreigners.

2. The Islamic Revolution is moving forward with might and vigor and by maintain the mottoes and fundamental principles and the 40th year of the Revolution is the era of its maturity and liveliness not the era of old age and retreat.

3. Youths are the country's' valuable asset and hope and are present in important field such as top industries, culture and arts, military affairs, commandership and management and more use must be made of this valuable resource in management [positions].

4. Despite the delusive hopes of the enemies on the disillusionment of the third and fourth generations with the Revolution, the gravitation and commitment of these two generations is very deep and if not more than [those of] the first generation is no less.

5. The enemy is making great efforts to overly exaggerate the problems, but all of these problems can be solved at the hands of the youths and with God's grace and therefore, the enemy is extremely furious and irritated at the growth of the youthful generation.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution concluded his remarks with this statement, "Beloved Iranian youths will build the country better than the previous generation had imagined and will hoist the flag of the country's independence, dignity, greatness and honor higher than before."

Prior to the speech by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Hojjatoleslam Seyyed Ebrahim Raeisi, the trustee of Astan Quds Razavi, an organization which manages the affairs of the Holy Shrine of Imam Reza (PBUH), provided a report on the activities of Astan Quds Razavi in the provision of services to the underprivileged and impoverished sectors for the facilitation of pilgrimage, the expansion and development of the concept of serving the court of Imam Reza (PBUH), the deployment of diligent and motivated groups to deprived areas, the undertaking of cultural and promotional activities and support for Islamic art and revolutionary artists.