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Climate change impacts

A new report released by the Environmental Protection Agency projects the devastating health impact of climate change on children. Effects include higher rates of respiratory disease, reduced academic achievement, higher rates of infections and risk of housing insecurity in coastal cities.

Assyrian martyr: A son and brother to us all

Social Desk

EXCLUSIVE

Jani Bet Oushana was a child of Iran's Assyrian community, born on a hot summer day in August of 1964. As a member of the ancient ethnic group, he was raised in the bustling Makhsoos neighborhood of Tehran, where the streets were then alive with the sounds of commerce and chatter. From a young age, Jani displayed a deep reverence for the Christian faith, which was shared by the vast majority of his Assyrian peers.

From an early age, Jani was determined to make the most of his education. He poured himself into his studies, earning a diploma in literature from his high school. His love for knowledge and literature was evident to all who knew him, and he often spent hours lost in the pages of books.

But Jani's true strength lay not only in his intellect but also in his unwavering moral compass. He was known among family and friends as a young man of great character and integrity, always willing to lend a helping hand or offer a kind word to those in need.

Jani had always been passionate about serving his country, and when the Iraqi-imposed war broke out, he knew that someday he had to do his part. When the time came, he enlisted in the army and was assigned to the 55th Air-



borne Brigade of the Iran Army. Jani was a skilled soldier. He was determined to defend his homeland and protect his fellow countrymen from the invading Iraqi forces. In 1985, Iran launched a massive offen-

sive known as Operation Badr. Jani and his fellow soldiers were tasked with recapturing lost territory and pushing back the Iraqi forces. They were given advanced weaponry and sent into battle with a fierce determination to

succeed. The fighting was intense, with heavy casualties on both sides. Jani and his comrades fought bravely, pushing forward despite the danger. They advanced through several key Iraqi cities

including Basra and Baghdad, dealing a devastating blow to the enemy's military capabilities.

But tragedy struck during the operation. Jani was martyred in eastern Tigris, and his remains were left behind enemy lines. He was considered missing in action for a long time, and his mother awaited his return until the time of her passing.

Finally, a probing task force uncovered Jani's remains last winter, and after DNA testing was conducted, his identity was confirmed. The nation held its breath in anticipation of his long-awaited homecoming. For years, Jani had been missing in action, leaving his family and fellow soldiers in a state of perpetual grief and uncertainty. Sadly, Jani's immediate family members had all passed away in the intervening years, leaving no one to welcome him back with open arms. His parents and three brothers had gone on to the next life, leaving Jani to be mourned by a nation that had never forgotten his sacrifice.

But even in death, Jani was not alone. His compatriots, those who had fought alongside him and those who had only heard of his bravery, came together to honor him at a glorious funeral. It was a bittersweet moment, for while Jani was finally laid to rest with the dignity and respect he deserved, none of his immediate family members were there to pay their respects.

Yet, the funeral was a testament to the fact that all the martyrs of the country are esteemed the same, regardless of their faith or background. Jani had given his life for his country, and in death, he had become a symbol of its strength and resilience.

Iran faces overlooked environmental quandary: Soil erosion

EXCLUSIVE



Social Desk

Iran faces significant challenges related to soil erosion, with the country ranking first globally in this regard. Despite the magnitude of the threat, environmental hazards such as soil erosion are often overlooked when discussing the impact of human activities and development methods on the environment. Soil erosion is caused primarily by water and wind, and it results in the detachment of soil particles from their substrate, resulting in a loss of fertility. This phenomenon can lead to the depletion of agricultural lands and fields, deforestation, and a decline in underground water levels.

Soil is a non-renewable resource that takes thousands of years to replenish. It takes about 500 years to produce one centimeter of soil on the ground, but a staggering 2 billion tons of fertile soil can be destroyed in just one year in Iran, with direct consequences for the nation's food security. While water resources can be managed by spending huge sums on building dams and transferring water, there is no such possibility for the loss of soil. The soil required for agriculture and the growth of species in nature is only 20 to 30 cm thick, underscoring the pressing need for soil preservation.

Experts outside of government suggest that soil erosion costs around \$50 billion annually in Iran. The head of the Iranian Chamber of Agriculture has said that the rate of soil erosion in Iran is three to five times high-

er than the world average, with Lorestan Province experiencing three times the country's average. Unfortunately, the country lacks a comprehensive plan to prevent soil erosion, which has resulted in an alarmingly high annual average of soil erosion in recent years. Laws and programs to tackle the issue are still nonexistent, with no comprehensive plan for soil protection in place.

To counter soil erosion, experts emphasize the importance of strengthening vegetation and developing gardens in sloping lands, preventing the wastage of surface water, building dams and diverting dams, and transferring water to sloping lands for orchard development. The implementation of aquifer and watershed management plans are also crucial in mitigating soil erosion. The most scientifically sound and cost-effective approach to safeguarding the soil is through the execution of natural resources and watershed management practices, afforestation, and strengthening of vegetation. Preventing livestock from entering pastures too early, restraining land destruction, and plowing in sloping lands in the direction of slope are also important.

A Natural Resources Department official says the implementation of watershed structures, including the erection of stone-mortar and gabion check dams, plays a crucial role in preventing soil erosion and ensuring its preservation. Watershed management and operations are fundamental strategies in the

realm of water and soil conservation. By recognizing the distinct capacities and capabilities of a geographical area within a watershed, various ecological, infrastructural, human, and biological problems can be resolved for the betterment of the residents and the sustainable development of the watershed. The extravagant pumping of groundwater has escalated soil exploitation, leading to the depletion of water resources and the detrimental subsidence of the earth. Environmental activists believe that this practice will persist, leading to the loss of pastures and cultivated lands. The destiny of water and soil are inseparable, and people must play an active role in ensuring their conservation. As water users, people often exhibit inappropriate behavior, leading to a decline in groundwater and land subsidence. Hence, changes in behavior are necessary to ensure that people have a correct understanding and recognition of the vulnerability of groundwater.

Soil erosion constitutes a significant peril and environmental quandary in Iran. It is imperative that comprehensive plans and programs are developed and implemented to prevent manmade phenomena and ensure its preservation.

Addressing soil erosion requires a multi-faceted approach that takes into account environmental, social, and economic factors. By taking action now, we can ensure the sustainability of our soils and secure a better future for generations to come.

Spanish translation of Leader's book unveiled in Colombia



Arts & Culture Desk

The Spanish translation of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Seyyed Ali Khamenei's book 'Cell Number 14' (in Spanish "Celda n.º 14") along with its audio file were unveiled in a ceremony held at the Colombian Congress.

The unveiling ceremony, held on the sidelines of the 35th edition of the Bogota International Book Fair (FILBo) in Colombia (April 18 to May 2), was attended by over 200 cultural, political and religious figures, as well as Colombian parliamentarians and Iran's Ambassador to Colombia Ahmadreza Kheirmand, IRNA reported.

The book contains Ayatollah Khamenei's memories of resistance from the periods he spent in prison and exile during his fight against the Pahlavi regime.

Mary Anne Perdomo, a representative of Congress and head of the Colombian Foreign Relations Committee, said, despite some negative news that is published in the media against the Islamic Republic of Iran, the fact is that stability and peace in the Middle East region is due to Iran's peaceful efforts.

Alberto Bati, the special representative of the supreme adviser of the Colombian president on religious affairs, also stated the book introduces Iran from the perspective of a religious and political leader.

The collection conveys the message that "we, revolutionary and justice-seeking nations, need to communicate with each other."

Victor, a professor at the University of Bogota and a Colombian Middle East expert, expressed the historical and cultural background of Iran and the key role of this country in the implementation of peace and stability in the Middle East.