

This Day in History

(March 8)

Today is Sunday; 17th of the Iranian month of Esfand 1393 solar hijri; corresponding to 17th of the Islamic month of Jamadi al-Awwal 1436 lunar hijri; and March 8, 2015, of the Christian Gregorian Calendar.

1156 lunar years ago, on this day in 280 AH, the Iranian linguist and poet of Arabic language, Abu'l-Fazl Ahmad, known as Ibn Abi Taher Tayfur, passed away at the age of 76. Born in Baghdad to Tayfur, who hailed from the Khorasani city of Marv (presently in Turkmenistan), he played an important role in revolutionizing Arabic literature. He was the first writer to devote a book to writers. He was buried in the Bab ash-Sham cemetery in the section reserved for notables. His works include "Kitab al-Manthour wa'l-Manzoum" (Book of Prose and Poetry), in three volumes, which is the first attested multi-author anthology. He wrote "Kitab Baghdad" (Book of Baghdad), in 6 volumes, of which only one volume has survived. He also compiled "Balaghat an-Nisa" (Eloquence of Women), in which he has cited the famous sermon of Omm Kolthoum (SA), Prohet Muhammad (SAWA) granddaughter, and the daughter of the Hazrat Fatema Zahran (SA) and Imam Ali (AS), delivered in the aftermath of the tragedy of Karbala.

1155 lunar years ago, on this day in 281 AH, the Iranian polymath, Abu Hanifah Ahmad ibn Dawoud Dinawari, passed away at the age of 70 in his birthplace Dinawar - a Kurdish region half-way between Hamadan and Kermanshah in western Iran. He studied astronomy, mathematics and mechanics in Isfahan and Arabic philology and poetry in Kufa and Basra. He also excelled in agriculture, botany, metallurgy, history and geography. His most renowned contribution is "Kitab an-Nabaat" (Book of Plants), for which he is considered the founder of Islamic botany, for his scientific classification and listing of thousands of varieties of different plants, with detailed discussion from their evolution to birth and subsequent death. He is also among the very first writers to discuss the ancestry of the Kurdish people. He wrote a book on this subject titled "Ansaab al-Akraad" (Ancestry of the Kurds). All his works are in Arabic including "Kitab al-Kusouf" (Book of Solar Eclipses), "Kitab al-Akhar at-Tiwaal" (General History), "Kitab al-Boldaan" (Book of Geography), and "Kitab ash-She'r wa'sh-Shu'ara" (Book of Poetry and Poets). Dinawari's works also deal with astronomy and meteorology to agriculture. It describes the astronomical and meteorological character of the sky, the planets and constellations, the sun and moon, the lunar phases indicating seasons and rain, the atmospheric phenomena such as winds, thunder, lightning, snow, floods, valleys, rivers, lakes, wells and other sources of water.

1005 solar years ago, on this day in 1010 AD, Iranian poet, Abu'l-Qassem Mansour ibn Hassan, famous by his penname "Ferdowsi", completed his masterpiece "Shahnameh" (Book of Kings) that records in verse, Iran's history, and till this day is considered a world famous epic.

939 solar years ago, on this day in 1075 AD, the Iranian Sunni Muslim exegete of the holy Qur'an, hadith expert, and linguist, Mohammad Ibn Omar Zamakhsari, was born in Zamakhsar, in the historical Iranian land of Khwarezm - divided today between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. He studied in Samarqand and Bukhara, and later lived in Baghdad for some years. He followed the Mu'tazili doctrine and was known as "Jarallah" (God's Neighbour), since he stayed for several years in the city of Mecca, spending his time at the holy Ka'ba, the symbolic House of God Almighty. In his works, he acknowledged the merits and peerless position of the Prophet's Ahl al-Bayt. He wrote both in Persian and Arabic, and is best known for "al-Kashshaaf", a commentary on the holy Qur'an, which is famous for its deep linguistic analysis of the ayahs. Another of his famous books is "Rabi al-Abraar", a voluminous reference work.

612 solar years ago, on this day in 1403 AD, the 4th Ottoman sultan, Bayezid I, died in captivity in Samarqand at the age of 43, some eight months after his defeat and capture in the Battle of Ankara by the Central Asian Turkic conqueror, Amir Timur, after a reign of 14 years during which he conquered most of southwestern Europe - Greece including Thrace (except the Byzantine capital Constantinople), Macedonia, Bulgaria, and parts of Serbia. An impetuous warrior, who succeeded to the Ottoman Throne at the Battle of Kosovo in the Balkans in 1389 on assassination of his victorious father, Murad I, by strangling to death his brother Yaqub, he acquired the title "Yildirim" (lightning) during his campaign against fellow Turks and Muslims, the Karamanids, in the east. Bayezid's forcible expansion into Muslim territories in Anatolia endangered Ottoman relationship with the ghazis, who were an important source of warriors for his dynasty on the European frontier, so he began the practice to secure fatwas (legal rulings) from court mullahs to justify wars against fellow Muslim states. At the same time, he laid siege to Constantinople in 1394, making the Byzantine Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus appeal for a crusade against Muslims by King Sigismund of Hungary (the future Holy Roman Emperor), whom he defeated. In 1402, Bayezid had to lift the siege of Constantinople when Timur appeared in the east and succeeded in rousing the Anatolian Turkic states to join him against the Ottomans. The Battle of Ankara that followed - the only instance when an Ottoman sultan has been captured in person - was culmination of years of insulting letters between the two powerful rulers. Although the victorious Timur appointed his captive's third son, Mohammad as sultan, civil war raged for eleven years among Bayezid's five sons - Eisa, Suleyman, Mohammad, Musa and Mustafa, each claiming the throne for himself - until the Battle of Jamurlu on 5 July 1413, when Mohammad emerged as victor and crowned himself sultan.

298 solar years ago, on this day in 1717 AD, Abraham Darby who played an important role in the Industrial Revolution, died in Britain. He developed a method of successfully smelting ore with coke in a blast furnace, instead of using charcoal.

293 solar years ago, on this day in 1722 AD, after two centuries and two decades of glorious rule, which bestowed Iran national unity, religious identity, territorial integrity, and cultural affinity, the Safavid Empire was dealt a serious blow by Hotaki Ghilzai rebels from Qandahar, in what is now Afghanistan, in the Battle of Gulnabad that led to the capture of the imperial capital Isfahan. For seven years, the occupiers, (Mahmoud and after him his cousin, Ashraf), plunged the country into anarchy, cold-bloodedly murdered the last Safavid king, Shah Sultan Hussain, and terrorized the people, until they were driven out from Iran by the general Tahmasp Quli, who defeated them in the Battle of Damghan in 1729 and later usurped the throne by taking the title of Nader Shah.

279 solar years ago, on this day in 1736 AD, the Safavid general, Tahmasp Quli, who rose to rescue Iran from the anarchy by driving out the Hotaki Ghilzai occupiers, crowned himself as Nader Shah - of the short-lived Afsharid dynasty. He conducted many successful campaigns, by reclaiming Iranian territories in the Caucasus, in Iraq, in Central Asia, on the Arab side of the Persian Gulf and in what is now Afghanistan. He also attacked the Mughal Empire of India, where the fleeing Ghilzai rebels had sought refuge, took Delhi, and returned to Iran with rich booty, including the famous Peacock Throne, the Koh-e Noor Diamond, and the Tent of Pearls.

233 solar years ago, on this day in 1782 AD, the Gnadenhütten massacre took place in the US, when ninety-six native Amerindians in Gnadenhutten, Ohio, who had converted to Christianity were cold bloodedly killed by the American revolutionaries of Pennsylvania militiamen.

98 solar years ago, on this day in 1917 AD, Ferdinand Adolf August Heinrich Count von Zeppelin, the German inventor, engineer and manufacturer who was the aviation pioneer that built the first rigid dirigible airships, named Zeppelins, died at the age of 78. After retiring from a military career in 1890, he devoted ten years to the designing and building of his first successful light-than-aircraft, the LZ-1. He patented his idea in 1895 and formed a company to build airships in 1898. Many thought his invention incredible and called him "Foolish Count." His first airship took off on 2nd July 1900. Eventually, he produced more zeppelins, which were first flown commercially in 1910 by Deutsche Luftschiffahrts-AG (DELAG), the world's first airline in revenue service. During World War I, he produced more than 100 Zeppelins for military uses, including the bombing of Britain. After the war, he continued to improve the design and built a fleet of airships for commercial passenger service, which included transatlantic flights. Zeppelin use ended after the 6 May 1937 Hindenburg fire disaster at Lakehurst, New Jersey, USA.

81 lunar years ago, on this day in 1355 AH, the Source of Emulation, Grand Ayatollah Allamah Mirza Mohammad Hussain Na'ini, passed away at the age of 79. Born in Na'in in a religious family, he completed preliminary studies in his hometown before leaving for Iraq for higher studies at the famous seminary of holy Najaf. He studied under such prominent ulama as Ayatollah Mirza-e Shirazi, whose historic fatwa against tobacco saved Iranian economy from British exploitation. Besides theology, Na'ini was well versed in mathematics, philosophy, and mysticism. Among his most important books are "Tanbih al-Ummah va Tanzih al-Millah" which outlines the duties of ulama and people and the necessity of campaign against tyrannical regimes. This was an effective step in awakening the Iranian people, whose struggles against local despotism and foreign hegemony triumphed under the guidance of the Father of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeini (RA). Among his other books is "Wasilat an-Najaf".

47 solar years ago, on this day in 1968 AD, the Moro National Liberation Front started its armed struggles against the despotic regime of President Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines - a US stooge who killed thousands of Muslim Filipinos. After the dismissal of Marcos in 1986, and following negotiations with the government, a ceasefire was agreed and a peace treaty inked, but not fully implemented. In 1996, a new agreement was inked between Moro National Liberation Front and the government, according to which Muslims in Mindanao attained autonomy.

30 solar years ago, on this day in 1985 AD, a failed assassination attempt in Beirut on Lebanon's leading religious scholar, Allamah Seyyed Mohammad Hussain Fazlollah, killed 45 innocent people and injured 175 others. The US was behind this assassination attempt which was masterminded for the CIA by Robert Gates, who recently retired as US Defence Secretary.

5 solar years ago, on this day in 2010 AD, Iranian researcher and anthropologist, Dr. Mahmoud Rooh ul-Amiri, passed away at the age of 82. Born in Kerman, after getting MA in Sociology, he left for France, where he received PhD in anthropology in 1968. On returning to Iran, he lectured at Tehran University and devoted himself to development of anthropology, resulting in the opening of the Museum of Anthropology at Golestan Palace. He wrote several books.

(Courtesy: IRIB English Radio - <http://english.trib.ir>)

75 Nations Eying Khayyam Photo Festival



Second Khayyam international photo festival poster.

TEHRAN (IRIB) - A total of 2,800 photographers from 75 countries have submitted their works to the Second Khayyam International Photo Festival.

The festival focuses on the renowned Persian polymath Omar Khayyam. The photos will be in four main categories: color, black and white, creative and journey.

The event will be organized by International Federation of Photographic Art in cooperation with Culture Ministry.

The opening ceremony is scheduled for March 9 at Tehran's Milad Tower. Khayyam is recognized worldwide as one of the most wildly acclaimed Persian poets and astronomers. He

was popularized in the West through the translation of his magnum opus 'Rubaiyat'.

Khayyam's fame as a poet has caused some to ignore his scientific achievements, which are significant. His contributions to mathematics include his Treatise on Demonstration of Problems of Algebra, which gives a geometric method for solving cubic equations by allowing a hyperbola to intersect a circle.

Khayyam was also the chief contributor to the Jalali calendar, the predecessor to the current Iranian calendar. It is believed to have been introduced on March 15, 1079 by Seljuk Sultan Jalal al-Din Malik Shah I, based on Khayyam's recommendations.

Nowruz Education Pack for British Schools

TEHRAN (IRNA) -- The British Council is providing primary schools in the UK with an educational pack on Nowruz (The Iranian New Year) festival, to begin March 21.

The educational pack is a key part of the British Council's UK-Iran 'Season of Culture' which aims to celebrate cultural links between the UK and the Islamic Republic of Iran, britishcouncil.ir reported.

The pack is being presented concurrent with photo exhibition 'The Spirit of Nowruz' available in London and online (#SpiritOfNowruz) between March 5 and May 15.

Nowruz is an opportunity for

children in the UK to learn more about the people and culture of a part of the world around which there is much misunderstanding.

Nowruz, which originated in Persia and is the major annual cultural festival in Iran and in surrounding countries is also celebrated across large parts of the world, from China to North Africa.

The UN has proclaimed International Nowruz Day to demonstrate the global importance of this ceremony which holds a central place in the homes and communities of many people around the world.

New York City Adds Muslim Holy Days to Public School Calendar

TEHRAN (IQNA) - New York will become the United States' first major metropolis to close its public schools in observance of the two most sacred Muslim holy days, Mayor Bill de Blasio said, a watershed moment for a group that has endured suspicion and hostility since the Sept. 11 attacks.

Several municipalities across the country - including in Massachusetts, Michigan and New Jersey - have moved in recent years to include the holy days, Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, in their school calendars. But New York City, with its 1.1 million schoolchildren, dwarfs the others in its size and symbolism, NY-Times reported.

Mr. de Blasio, a Democrat who has pledged a more tolerant and inclusive city, described the policy that begins in the coming school year as a simple "matter of fairness." But the announcement was all the more striking for its timing, as Muslim-Americans face fresh scrutiny in the wake of terrorist attacks in Europe and new violence in the Middle East.

In January, Duke University abruptly canceled plans to start broadcasting the Muslim call to prayer from the school's chapel bell tower after threats of violence. And the shooting deaths of three Muslims last month in North Carolina prompted fears about an anti-Muslim backlash.

"When these holidays are recognized, it's a sign that Muslims have a role in the political and social fabric of America," said Ibrahim Hooper, a spokesman for the Council on American-Islamic Relations, the nation's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy group. At least six school districts na-

tionally, including Cambridge, Mass.; Dearborn, Mich.; Burlington, Vt.; and Paterson and South Brunswick, N.J., have granted days off for the major Muslim holidays. Many more districts recognize the holidays in other ways, such as noting them on the school calendar or granting excused absences for observant students.

Dubai to Build 'Museum of Future'

DUBAI (DAWN) - Dubai announced plans to build an oval ring-shaped "Museum of the Future" to showcase innovation and solutions to challenges facing cities of the coming decades.

The museum is to be built on a

permanent home for the world's greatest innovations".

It will "work to stimulate and incubate imaginative solutions to the challenges of future cities. It will bring together the brightest researchers, designers, inventors and



A computer generated image shows the exterior of the Museum Of The Future to be built in Dubai

grassy hill near the Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest tower, with a 500-million-dirham (\$136m) price tag and aiming to open in 2017.

The Museum of the Future will "actively produce futuristic inventions," and provide a "per-

financiers under one roof". The museum will house "innovation labs" focused on health, education, smart cities, energy and transport, and provide a platform for inventions by world-leading technology giants and start-ups.

Picture of the Day



The spring Festival - Kish Island - Iran

Courtesy: FNA