

This Day in History

(February 26)

Today is Thursday, 7th of the Iranian month of Esfand 1393 solar hijri; corresponding to 7th of the Islamic month of Jamadi al-Awwal 1436 lunar hijri; and February 26, 2015, of the Christian Gregorian Calendar.

2762 solar years ago, on this day at noon in 747 AD, the "Anno *Nobonassar*" began in the reign of King Nabu-Nasir of Babylon, which the ancient Greco-Egyptian astronomer, Claudius Ptolemy, calls in his work "Almagest", as beginning of the world's first recorded calendar based on astronomical calculations. The Babylonian Chronicle covering the years 747 to 668 BC, the best preserved exemplar of this genre, was possibly collated from Babylonian astronomical diaries. The lists of celestial phenomena started with the lunar eclipse of 747-746 BC, a spectacular conjunction of the moon and the planets that may have inspired the commencement of recording of accurate astronomical observations. Although it is claimed that it was from the reign of Nabu-Nasir onward that the movements and duration of the stars were recorded, according to Islamic texts, it was Prophet Idris (Enoch), who centuries before the Great Deluge of the days of Prophet Noah, taught astronomy and devised the calendar. This is more or less confirmed by the 3rd century BC Hellenized Babylonian priest, Berossus, who in his work *Babyloniaca*, writes: "Nabu-Nasir gathered the records of his predecessors and destroyed them, thus ensuring that the history of the Chaldean kings began with him." In view of these facts, it could be said that Nabu-Nasir's reign marks the reform of the Babylonian calendar, introducing regular calculated intercalary months, the eighteen-year cycle texts and perhaps even the zodiac. Over two centuries later with the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus the Great of Persia, the astronomically advanced calendar of the Mesopotamian civilizations was adopted and fully Persianized by the Iranians.

861 solar years ago, on this day in 1154 AD, King Roger II of Sicily died at the age of 59 in his capital Palermo. Sicily, which for over three centuries was a Muslim island and part of the empire of the Fatimid Shi'ite Muslim Dynasty, was seized by his father, Roger I – a Norman adventurer from Normandy in northern France. Influenced by the rich culture and civilization of Islam, Roger II drew around him distinguished Muslim scientists, architects, statesmen, and even soldiers. The famous Islamic geographer Seyyed Mohammad al-Hassani al-Idrisi and the Spanish Muslim polymath Abu Salt al-Andalusi – who had formerly served the Fatemids in Egypt – were among the dignitaries at the Norman court in Palermo. Idrisi – a descendant of Imam Hasan (AS), the elder grandson and 2nd Infallible Heir of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA) – wrote for Roger the book "Nuzhat al-Mushtaaq fi-Ikhteraaq al-Afaaq". Known in Latin as "Tabula Rogeriana", it is a description of the world and the first world map ever drawn in Europe that later enabled navigators like Christopher Columbus, Amerigo Vespucci, Ferdinand Magellan and others to rediscover the Americas. It took Idrisi fifteen years to write this monumental work which contains commentaries and illustrations as well as the first perfect map of the Eurasian continent including its link to North Africa. Roger II also hired many Muslims who were trained in long-established traditions of centralized government. These included Abdur-Rahman an-Nasrani, a Greek convert whose name was Latinized as Christodulus and who served as the Emir of Palermo with the title ammiratus-ammiratorum (a corruption of Amir al-Omara), and later Amir al-Bahr (navy commander), which gave rise to the English word Admiral.

213 solar years ago, on this day in 1802 AD, the acclaimed French poet and author, Victor Hugo, was born. He was a freedom-seeker and a supporter of social reforms in favor of the disadvantaged strata. He joined the French Academy at the age of 25, and was concurrently elected as a lawmaker. During the reign of Napoleon III, he stepped aside from the political scene due to his opposition to the repressive monarchic rule, and spent 20 years in exile. During this period, Hugo penned valuable works and can be considered as the pioneer of the Romanticism style. His important works include "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" and "Les Miserables". He died in 1885.

200 solar years ago, on this day in 1815 AD, Napoleon Bonaparte, along with 1,200 of his men, escaped from his 10-month confinement on the Island of Elba in the Mediterranean Sea, to start the 100-day re-conquest of France, before his final defeat in the Battle of Waterloo on June 15 and the exile to St. Helena Island in the southern Atlantic Ocean, where he died in May 1821 – presumably by poison administered by the British.

155 solar years ago, on this day in 1860 AD, white-skinned European encroachers massacred a band of Wiyot Amerindians at the village of Tuluwat on Indian Island near Eureka, California. At least 60 women, children and elders were killed in cold blood. The US has a bleak and bloody record of genocide and ethnic cleansing of the native people.

112 solar years ago, on this day in 1903 AD, Richard Jordan Gatling, US inventor of the Gatling Gun, the forerunner of the machine gun, died at age of 84. In 1861 he invented his gun, a crank-operated, rapid-fire multi-barrel design combining reliability, high firing rate and ease of loading into a single device. The outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861 spurred him to design firearms.

94 solar years ago, on this day in 1921 AD, the Soviet Union entered into an agreement with Iran four years after triumph of the Bolshevik Revolution by declaring all treaties imposed on Iran by Czarist Russia as null and void. The Soviet Union was under threats from all directions and the main purpose of the treaty was to ensure prevention of any anti-communist activities from Iranian soil. However, despite canceling all Czarist imposed treaties, the Soviet Union did not return to Iran the lands which the Czars had seized in the Caucasus, including what is known today as the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Autonomous Republic of Nakhichevan, Daghestan, and parts of Central Asia such as the region of Merv in what is now the Republic of Turkmenistan.

79 solar years ago, on this day in 1935 AD, the feasibility of 'RADAR' (Radio Detection And Ranging) was demonstrated for the first time at Davenport, England, by Scottish physicist Robert Watson-Watt. While working on methods of using radio-wave detection to locate thunderstorms in order to provide warnings to airmen, he realized that it could be used to track enemy aircraft for air defence. The test showed that a British bomber flying in the main beam of a BBC short-wave radio transmitter gave back reflected signals to the ground on three occasions that the aircraft passed overhead. By 1939, the outbreak of WW II, the military installed a chain of radar stations along the east and south coasts of England to prevent a German invasion.

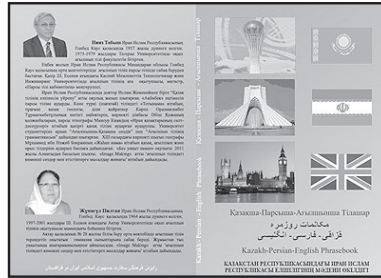
59 solar years ago, on this day in 1956 AD, the great Iranian lexicographer, Ali Akbar Dehkhoda died at the age of 76. Born in Tehran, after completing his studies he went to Europe for higher studies, and on returning to Iran five years later, he actively involved himself in the Constitutional Movement against the decadent Qajarid dynasty. He launched his literary career by writing critical and satirical articles in the Persian newspapers and magazines against the unjust conditions of the time. He was an authority on Iran's culture and Persian language, and wrote the 4-volume work "Imaal wa Hakam" which contains over 4,000 proverbs and their meanings. His magnum opus is "Lughat-Namah", a voluminous lexicon of the Persian language.

23 solar years ago, on this day in 1992 AD, Armenian militiamen and the 366th rifle regiment of the Russian army massacred in cold blood at least 613 Muslim men, women, and children in the town of Khojaly in the Qarabagh autonomous region of the Republic of Azerbaijan on its seizure by Armenia. As confirmed by Human Rights Watch and other international observers, the "Khojaly Genocide" and its aftermath shocked the civilized world, and later many dead bodies of Azeris trying to flee the massacre were found in the surrounding mountains and forests as a result of freezing temperatures. In addition, the Armenians imprisoned the survivors of the tragedy. The Caucasus region, including the republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan, were an integral part of Iran's successive empires for over two millenniums until the occupation by Russia in the 19th century.

22 solar years ago, on this day in 1993 AD, the prominent jurist, Ayatollah Mirza Hashem Amoli, passed away in Iran. He was from the city of Amol in Mazandaran Province, and after completing his religious studies in holy Qom he left for Iraq for higher religious studies at the famous seminary of holy Najaf. He reached the degree of Ijtihad and his classes were attended by a large number of scholars and students. He was known for his piety and among his works is the book "Kashf al-Haqa'iq". Ayatollah Mirza Hashem Amoli was the father of Iran's present judiciary chief, Ayatollah Sadeq Amoli Larjani, and Iran's current Speaker of the Legislature, Dr. Ali Larjani.

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

Persian, Kazakh and English Conversations Unveiled



The book, *Persian, Kazakh and English Conversations* was unveiled at Caspian University in Kazakhstan.

ASTANA (ICRO) - The book, *Persian, Kazakh and English Conversations* was unveiled at Caspian University in Kazakhstan.

At a ceremony which was attended by cultural, scientific, political and economy figures in Caspian State University of Technologies and Engineering, the book *Persian, Kazakh and English Conversations* by Niaz Tabesh was publicly introduced.

Referring to the significance of

cultural relations in developing economic and political cooperation, the author of this work, Niaz Tabesh said: "From several centuries ago, cultural cooperation between Iran and Kazakhstan has been continued, and by compiling this book I hope to assist the traders of the two countries to boost bilateral economic ties."

He pointed out that literary figures and characters play a role in forming the common features in language-

es: "There are about 3000 original Persian words in Kazakh language, moreover, the Iranians generously welcomed about 15,000 of Kazakh refugees during the World War II who settled in the northern cities of Gorgan and Bandar Turkmen.

The other Professor of Persian language Jouma Piltan assisted Niaz Tabesh in compiling this work which has been printed in 296 pages by Irans Cultural Attaché in Kazakhstan.

High Level Meeting in Tehran

TEHRAN (un.org.ir) - UNESCO and its national partners marked Mobile Learning Week (23-27 February 2015) in Iran in a high-level meeting today which sought to illuminate how increasingly popular, affordable and powerful mobile technology can be leveraged to accelerate high quality education, especially for women and girls.

The high-level meeting brought together the Minister of Education HE Dr. Ali Asghar Faani; Secretary General of the High Council for Education Dr Mehdi Navid and a number of other key policy-makers from the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, the Ministry of Health and Medical Education and the Ministry of Information and Communication Technologies.

UNESCO National Programme

Officer for Communication and Information Mr. Tooraj Akbarlou, speaking on behalf of the UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office said UNESCO sought to help countries in finding local solutions to addressing the challenges that women were facing in using information and communication technology (ICT) to unlock educational opportunities, by facilitating their access to mobile devices and internet connectivity as well as training them on how to utilize mobile technology effectively. "If girls are to leave school ready to participate equally in the knowledge economy, then they too [like boys] will require the benefits of ICT-assisted instruction, including the knowledge, skills and attitudes imparted by using these tools", he said.

In his statement, Mr. Akbarlou

expressed the hope that the participants in the high-level meeting would walk away from the event with a deeper understanding of how mobile technology could be used to improve educational opportunities for women and girls around the world, and also proposed that the meeting would focus on and seek to find answers to four central questions:

How mobile technologies should be integrated into formal and informal learning environments; how mobile technology supported the professional development of teachers and in particular, assisted them working in resource-poor settings; how teachers and students could tailor and develop their own mobile learning resources and share these resources with others; and finally, what policy environments would



Left to right: UNESCO CI Officer Mr. Tooraj Akbarlou; Secretary General of the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO Dr. M.Reza Saeidabadi; Minister of Education Dr. Ali Asghar Faani; Secretary General of the High Council for Education Dr Mehdi Navid

help teachers effectively leverage new mobile technologies and improve educational outcomes.

100 Teams Selected for Round Two

TOULOUSE (unesco.org) - After a thorough evaluation process by over 50 Airbus experts and innovators judging more than 500 ideas, Airbus has selected the 100 teams that have made it into Round Two of the fourth edition of the global student competition Fly Your Ideas organized in partnership with UNESCO.

The 100 teams comprise of 413 students representing 48 different nationalities. The competition is dominated by teams registered in India (17 teams), UK (10), USA (8), France (7), as well as China (6) and Australia (5). Thanks to a strong drive from Airbus to encourage more diversity, 71% of teams are made up of a mix of students from different countries, studying different subjects, or male and female, all of which Airbus sees as essential ingredients for innovation.

"I am impressed by the diversity of the teams that have made it through to Round Two this year," said Charles Champion, Airbus Executive Vice President Engineering. "It is very telling of a generation who no longer thinks in silos but instead aspires to collaborate across traditional boundaries such as gender, nationality and discipline. This reflects Airbus' ambition to work with greater agility across the company, and I hear our Airbus mentors and experts are very excited about the fresh way of thinking they are getting during these 100 days before the next round." He adds: "Now the race has started – best of luck to all!"

"The diversity of these students' ideas is an inspiration. They remind us of the need to train more engineers to develop the skills needed to put science into practice", said Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, reflecting on the wealth of ideas submitted from over 11 000 students in 100 countries for previous editions of Fly Your Ideas.

Each of the teams has been attributed an Airbus mentor and an Airbus expert to help take their ideas further and share their insights of real-life aviation constraints over a 100 day period. Just the top five teams will make it to the final and present their ideas at a live event at

Airbus facilities in May 2015. The winning team will receive a €30,000 prize, the runner up team €15,000.

Supported by UNESCO, Airbus Fly Your Ideas is a biennial competition which challenges students worldwide to develop ideas for a more sustainable aviation industry. What sets Fly Your Ideas apart from other global student competitions is the deep and company-wide engagement of the Airbus teams. The mentors and experts are drawn from right across the business, and include non-technical professionals as well as engineers and aviation experts.

Iranian Universities Ready for Cooperation With Italian Physics Center

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The minister of science, research and technology called for increase in cooperation between Iranian universities and Italy's Trieste Theoretical Physics Center.

Mohammad Farhadi in a meeting with Director of Italian Trieste Theoretical Physics Center known as International Center for Theoretical Physics Fernando Quevedo, who is in Tehran to attend the first meeting of Non-Aligned Movement Science Ministers, said that establishment of an ICTP regional bureau in Tehran can lead to promotion of bilateral cooperation.

Quevedo, for his part, expressed pleased with his presence in Tehran and

attending NAM meeting, adding that this is his second visit to Tehran over the past one year, announcing that ICTP intends to increase cooperation with Iran.

He added that ICTP plans to establish offices in other countries and try to create a network of scientists in different fields such as confrontation with climate warming.

Meeting of NAM Ministers of Sciences with the slogan of 'Science, technology and Innovation for Development' wrapped up its 3-day work on Tuesday.

Representatives from 58 countries and nine scientific and international bodies attended the conference while 31 countries were represented at ministerial level.

Picture of the Day



The two-story restaurant in Shiraz, southern Iran, is made entirely from locally sourced salt.

Courtesy: YJC