

# This Day in History

(August 31)

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Today is Saturday, 9th of the Iranian month of Shahrivar 1392 solar hijri; corresponding to 23rd of the Islamic month of Shawwal 1434 lunar hijri; and August 31, 2013, of the Christian Gregorian Calendar.

**801 lunar years ago**, on this day in 633 AH, Cordoba (Qurtuba in Arabic), the former capital of the Omayyad state of Andalusia or Islamic Spain, fell to King Ferdinand III of Castile after a 7-month siege, thus ending 520 glorious years of Muslim rule, which saw the city win worldwide acclaim as a centre of science and civilization at a time Christian Europe was immersed in darkness. Although Cordoba's political and administrative decline had begun half-a-century earlier when the Almohad Dynasty shifted the capital to Seville after defeating the Almoravid Dynasty, it was still the cultural centre of Andalusia, with its libraries and schools that over the centuries produced outstanding scholars in various fields such as Ibn Hazm the poet and grammarian, Ibn Saffar the mathematician, al-Bakri the historian and geographer, al-Ghaffiqi the botanist, az-Zahravi the physician, al-Qurtubi the exegete of the holy Qur'an, and Abbas ibn Firnas, the polymath who experimented with a flying machine some thousand years before the airplane was invented. The decline of Muslims in Spain was the result of fratricide and treachery. The death of Yusuf II in 621 led to a crisis of succession, providing the Christian rulers an opportunity for intervention, especially when the claimant, Abdullah al-Adel, began to ship the bulk of his forces across the straits to Morocco to contest the succession with his rival there, leaving Andalusia undefended. At this, al-Adel's cousin, Abdullah al-Bayyasi appealed to Ferdinand III for military aid and with the help of the Christian army was installed as Amir in Cordoba, in return for surrendering strategic frontier strongholds. Soon, when al-Bayyasi was killed by a popular uprising of the people of Cordoba, Ferdinand occupied more Muslim territory. In 625 AH when the Almohad ruler in Seville, Abdul-Alaldris I, made the fatal mistake of abandoning Spain, and left with the remnant of the Almohad forces for Morocco, Andalusia was left fragmented in the hands of local strongmen, led loosely by Mohammed ibn Yusuf ibn al-Judhami. At this, the Christian kings - Ferdinand III of Castile, Alfonso IX of Leon, James I of Aragon and Sancho II of Portugal - immediately launched a series of raids. Houd's army was destroyed and the Christian armies romped through the south virtually unopposed, as Muslim cities fell one by one, with little or no prospect of rescue from North Africa. Ferdinand seized Badajoz and Mérida, followed by Cazorla, Ubeda and Cordoba, from where he continued his march over the next 12 years to occupy Murcia, Cartagena and finally Seville, the Almohad capital, leaving only a rump Andalusian state, the Emirate of Granada, unconquered.

**795 solar years ago, on this day in 1218 AD**, al-Malik al-Adel I, the Ayyubid ruler of Egypt and Syria, died at the age of 73 after a reign of 18 years during a campaign against the European Crusader invaders, and was succeeded by his son, al-Kamel - who ruled for the next two decades. The younger brother of the famous Kurdish ruler, Salah od-Din Ayyubi, he was an able administrator and successful general, known as a strategist, to whom the foundation and persistence of the Ayyubid state was as much indebted as it was to Salah od-Din. He first achieved distinction as an officer in Noor od-Din Zengi's army during his uncle Shirkuh's third and final campaign in Fatemid Egypt in 1168-1169. Following Noor od-Din's death in 1174, some three years after the overthrow of the Ismaili Shi'ite Muslim dynasty of Egypt-North Africa-Syria, he governed Egypt on behalf of his brother, mobilizing that country's vast resources in support of Salah od-Din's campaigns in Syria and wars against the Crusaders. He was governor of Aleppo (1183-1186) but returned to administer Egypt during the Third Crusade (1186-1192). He suppressed the revolt of Izz od-Din of Mosul following Salah od-Din's death in March 1193, and played the role of kingmaker during the succession dispute among his two nephews, al-Aziz and al-Afzal. He was named governor of Damascus and used it as a base to expand his power, and championed the faction opposed to al-Afzal's inept rule following al-Aziz's death in 1198. Although he was closely besieged in Damascus (1199), he defeated al-Afzal at the Battle of Bilbeis in 1200 and was proclaimed Sultan.

**444 solar years ago**, the 4th Great Moghul Emperor of the Subcontinent, Mohammd Salim Nour od-Din, titled Jahangir (or World Grasper), was born in Agra to Emperor Jalal od-Din Akbar and the Rajput Princess, Jodhabai. He was a patron of arts, paintings and literature, and was fluent in both Persian and Turkic languages. His wife Noor-Jahan was Iranian and the daughter of Mirza Ghiyas Beg TehraniE'temad od-Dowla. Jahangir maintained a regular correspondence with Shah Abbas the Great, the Safavid Emperor of Iran. His capital was Lahore in today's Pakistan, where he is buried in a magnificent mausoleum along with his wife, after a reign that lasted 22 years. An opium addict and alcoholic, his most disgraceful act was signing of the death verdict, on false charges, of the great Iranian scholar, Qazi Seyyed Nourollah Shushtari, the Chief Justice of the state and the author of several works including the voluminous "Ahqaaq al-Haq" (Confirmation of Truth) on the merits of Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (AS). Known as Shaheed Salles (Third Martyr), he attained martyrdom in 1610 in Agra, where his mausoleum is the site of pilgrimage.

**322 lunar years ago**, on this day in 1112 AH, the famous Islamic scholar, Seyyed Ne'matollah ibn Abdullah al-Jaza'eri, passed away in Shahr, Khuzestan, southwestern Iran, at the age of 62. An expert in theology, hadith, exegesis of the holy Quran, and Arabic literature, he made every effort to promote the teachings of the Prophet's Ahl al-Bayt. After initial studies in Hoveiza, he moved to Shiraz, where for nine years he studied under the leading ulama including Shaikh Ibrahim, the son of the famous philosopher, Mullah Sadra Shirazi. To pursue higher studies he went to the Safavid capital Isfahan, where his teacher was the celebrated Allamah Mohammad Baqer Majlisi. After 8 years he left for Iraq but because of the restrictions placed by the Ottoman occupiers did not stay there for long. On return to Iran, he was appointed Shaikh al-Islam or Chief Religious Scholar of Shushtar, where he breathed his last. He groomed many scholars and was a prolific writer. His works include "al-Anwaar an-Nu'maniyah", "Qissas al-Anbiyya" (Accounts of the Prophets), "Madinat al-Hadith", "Hedayat al-Mo'menin" and a commentary on "Sahifat as-Sajjadiyya", the collection of supplications of Imam Zain al-Abidin (AS), the 4th Infallible Heir of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA).

**106 solar years ago**, on this day in 1907 AD, the British and Russian empires concluded a pact to divide Iran into three regions, taking over the southern and northern parts respectively, and leaving the central region as independent under the weak Qajarid dynasty. The Iranian people were enraged and Iran's national parliament opposed this pact. A decade later in 1917, following the revolution in Moscow, Russian forces left Iran.

**56 solar years ago**, on this day in 1957 AD, Malaysia became independent from British colonial rule. The Malay people in what is now Malaysia and Indonesia had gradually converted to Islam as of the 13th century. With the infiltration of Europeans, the Malay speaking lands were occupied in the 17th century by Holland, which in 1824 was forced to give up to Britain several sultanates that joined together as Malaysia, while it kept Indonesia under its control as the Dutch East Indies. The Federation of Malaysia is a constitutional monarchy. It covers an area of nearly 330,000 sq km, and shares borders with Thailand, Brunei and Indonesia.

**51 solar years ago**, on this day in 1962 AD, the island state of Trinidad & Tobago in the Caribbean Sea gained independence from Britain, which had seized it from Spain and made it part of the West Indies Federation. The Republic of Trinidad & Tobago covers an area of almost 5128 sq km.

**35 solar years ago**, on this day in 1978 AD, the Iranian religious scholar and leader of Lebanon's Shi'ite Muslims, Imam Seyyed Musa Sadr, went missing during his visit to Libya. Born in 1928 in the holy city of Qom, where he studied at the Islamic seminary, he later graduated from Tehran University. He was invited to Lebanon following the passing away of the famous scholar Allamah Seyyed Sharaf od-Din Musawi. At the time, the Lebanese Muslims were living under the worst social, political, and economic conditions. Hence, Imam Musa Sadr took a number of important measures to improve their status, and set up the Supreme Shi'ite Council. He backed the Palestinians' struggles against the illegal Zionist entity, Israel. He fell victim to the sedition of Libyan dictator, Mo'ammarr Qadhafi, who after officially inviting him to Tripoli, imprisoned and tortured him to death.

**22 solar years ago, on this day in 1991 AD**, the Central Asian country of Uzbekistan gained independence from the Soviet Union. As of 6th century BC, this region was part of successive Iranian empires, and was the seat of power of the Iranian-Muslim Samanid Dynasty in the early centuries of Islamic rule. In the 13th century, the region saw an influx of Turkic peoples, followed by the Mongol onslaught of Genghis Khan that destroyed the rich civilization of the Persian-speaking cities of Samarqand and Bukhara. Later the stage was set for domination of Uzbek ethnicity in this land, before its occupation by the Russians in the 19th century. Uzbekistan covers an area of more than 447,000 sq km and shares borders with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Afghanistan.

**22 solar years ago, on this day in 1991 AD**, the Central Asian Muslim country of Kyrgyzstan became independent from the Soviet Union. The entry of Kyrgyz ethnicity to what is now Kyrgyzstan started during the Mongol Empire in 13th century. As of the year 1876, Kyrgyzstan came under the domination of Russia. The Kyrgyz Muslim people launched several uprisings and continued to resist till 1922, when they were brutally suppressed by the Soviets. Kyrgyzstan covers an area of 198,000 sq km and shares borders with China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan.

**8 solar years ago, on this day in 2005 AD**, over two thousand Muslim pilgrims lost their life during a general stampede on hearing rumours of bomb blasts on the Jaser al-Aimmah Bridge over the River Tigris connecting the Baghdad suburbs of Kazemain and Azamiyya, on 25 Rajab the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Musa al-Kazem (AS), the 7th Infallible Heir of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA).

**2 solar years ago**, on this day in 2011 AD, 14-year old Ali Jawad ash-Sheikh was brutally martyred on Bahrain's Sitra Island by forces of the repressive minority regime of the Persian Gulf Island state, during a peaceful protest rally. The boy who died in the hospital had injuries under his chin and bruises on his face, hand, knees and pelvic area.

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

# Qazvin Hosts 3rd International Calligraphy Biennial



3rd edition of International Calligraphy Biennial logo

TEHRAN (Press TV) - The 3rd edition of International Calligraphy Biennial has been held in two competition and non-competition categories, in the Iranian city of Qazvin.

Over 400 works selected from among 800 submitted calligraphy art pieces have been showcased at the exhibition.

The participating calligraphers have presented their works in various styles including Nast'aliq,

Persian Cursive Nast'aliq, Tulu-th and calligraphy painting.

Considered one of the highest Islamic art forms, calligraphy became an indispensable part of Persian society in the beginning of the Islamic era so that it was not only practiced by professional artists but also by royalty and nobility.

In the 11th century six basic calligraphy styles became popular,

which were referred to as, Naskh, Thuluth, Muhaqqaq, Rihani, Tauqi, and Riqa.

Nastaliq and Cursive Nastaliq are known as the most attractive Persian calligraphy styles, broadly used in copying Arabic words, romantic and epic Persian poetry and literary manuscripts.

The 2014 calligraphy biennial in Qazvin kicked off on August 28 and will run until September 2.

## Exhibition on 99 Names of Allah Opened in Kazan

KAZAN (IQNA) - An exhibition of "99 Names of the Almighty God" opened at the Kazan Kremlin in Tatarstan.

It features works of classical Islamic art of IX-XIX centuries.

Organized with the assistance of the Support Fund for cultural programs named after Sh. Mardzhani, it presents 99 world masterpieces in accordance to the number of the names of God.

The exhibits have been delivered from countries and regions such as Syria, Iran, Iraq, Central Asia and Asia Minor, and North Africa.

## German Artist to Showcase Photos in Tehran Gallery

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Photographs by German artist Zible Bergman will be displayed in the Silk Road Gallery in Tehran.

Anahita Qabaeian, the director of the gallery, said the show will be held jointly with the German Embassy in Tehran as well as the IFA Institute.

The event will run through October 11 featuring three collections of photos by the artist.

The IFA or Internationale Funkausstellung Berlin (International radio exhibition Ber-



Silk Road Gallery logo

lin, aka 'Berlin Radio Show') is one of the oldest industrial exhibitions in Germany. Between 1924 and 1939, it was an annual event, but as of 1950 it was organized on a two-yearly basis until 2005.

Meanwhile, Qabaeian also said that photos by eight Iranian photographers will be showcased at 'Paris Photo 2014'.

She said her gallery is the only one from Iran to take part in 'Paris Photo 2014' which will open November 12.

## New Zealand Gov't to Prioritize Mandarin in Asian Language Push

WELLINGTON (Xinhua) -- The New Zealand government announced Wednesday that it would attempt to improve the country's low level of Chinese Mandarin and other Asian language education with an investment of 10 million NZ

dollars (8.36 million U.S. dollars) over five years.

Education Minister Hekia Parata said the government would prioritize Mandarin as the primary focus of the new funding for schools.

Mandarin was taught at fewer than 40 high schools, despite China being the country's second largest export market and bilateral trade quadrupling since the signing of a free trade agreement in 2008.

Japanese was taught at about 160 high schools and Korean at just two high schools, Parata said in a statement.

"We need to provide young New Zealanders with opportunities to learn the languages of countries that we have strong trade relationships with," Parata said in a statement.

"Our next generation needs to be able to work in different cultural environments and communicate in different languages as our international and trading links grow -- particularly with Asian countries," she said.

"Our long term goal is that all New Zealand students will develop reasonable proficiency in a second

language. Not only are there cognitive benefits, it also helps develop cultural awareness and enables New Zealanders to communicate around the world."

Organizations promoting trade and cultural links with Asia have long bemoaned New Zealand's lack of Asian-language education. In March, Massey University senior lecturer in Chinese Dr Rosemary Haddon told Xinhua that funding for Chinese language programs at universities had been cut "to the bone," resulting in a lack of qualified teachers.

## Young Men Rent Flats to Smoke Shisha in Saudis

RIYADH (Arab News) - The shisha ban in Jeddah cafes has contributed to the rise in prices of small flats which are now in demand by Saudis to smoke shisha.

Shishas have been banned on health grounds, alongside other forms of smoking, with the Health Ministry campaigning for tougher measures against the habit for years.

Several Saudis have since found alternative locations such as small flats to smoke shisha, far from the prying eyes of the inspectors.

"There is a high turnout of Saudi youth willing to rent small flats. This has contributed to a rise in rents by up to 30 percent," Abdullah Al-Gharbawi, a former member in the Real-Estate Committee of Jeddah Chamber for Commerce and Industry, told Arab News.

"I rented a small flat to smoke shisha and watch football with my friend," Fahad Al-Murshedi, a young Saudi man told Arab News.

"There is no place in Jeddah for Saudi youth to meet with their friends. Most of the Jeddah cafes have been closed by municipal authorities. Therefore, I have rented a small flat with my friend to smoke shisha and have tea to spend our leisure time," said Abdul Aziz Mubark.

## Picture of the Day



Dome and Finial manufacture - Mazandaran Province- Iran

Courtesy: ISNA