

## This Day in History

(December 20)

Today is Saturday; 29<sup>th</sup> of the Iranian month of Azar 1393 solar hijri; corresponding to 27<sup>th</sup> of the Islamic month of Safar 1436 lunar hijri; and December 20, 2014, of the Christian Gregorian Calendar.

**1372 solar years ago**, on this day in 642 AD, Muslims decisively defeated the forces of the 29<sup>th</sup> and last Sassanid monarch of the Persian Empire, Yazdgerd III, near the western Iranian city of Nahavand, in the crucial battle called "**Fath al-Fotouh**" (Victory of Victories), since it ended the 416-year Sassanid rule over what is now Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, the Caucasus (Georgia, Armenia, Chechen and Dagestan), and parts of Central Asia and modern Turkey. According to the early Iranian Muslim historian, Abu Ja'far at-Tabari, Firouzan, a Persian army of 50,000 demoralized soldiers led by Firouzan, was outmaneuvered by a force of 30,000 Arab Muslims. Yazdgerd fled to Khorasan where the people did not welcome him and after his failure to raise an army, he was murdered in 651 by a miller in Marv (presently in Turkmenistan). In addition to the firm faith of Muslims, what led to the defeat of Yazdgerd was the fact that the Iranians, who were fed up with the tyranny and corruption of Sassanid kings and the irrationality of Zoroastrian tenets, enthusiastically accepted the truth of Islam, given its egalitarian values of monotheism, justice, fraternity, and equality. Soon Iranian Muslims turned into flag-bearers for promotion and spread of the divine religion of Islam, its ethereal teachings, and its scientific and cultural endeavours.

**1227 lunar years ago**, on this day in 209 AH, the Iranian Sunni Muslim compiler of Hadith, Mohammad Ibn Majah al-Qazvini, was born in Qazvin (west of Tehran). He travelled widely through Iran, Iraq, Syria, Hejaz, and Egypt, to gather hadith and compile his book "**Sunan**", which contains 4000 hadith. Although later this compilation was included in the "**Sihah as-Sitta**" (Six Primary Books of Hadith of Sunni Muslims), it is still regarded as the weakest one. Perhaps for fear of the Abbasid regime, Ibn Majah failed to collect genuine information about the Sunnah and Seerah of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA) from the main sources of his time, that is, Imam Ali al-Hadi (AS) and Imam Hasan al-Askari – the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Infallible Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt. Like his Iranian compatriots before him, such as Bukhari, Muslim Naishapuri, Tirmizi, and Abu Dawoud Sijistani, he failed to seek the company of the disciples and companions of the Infallible Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt in order to ascertain whether the hadith he had gathered were really genuine. Ibn Majah died in 273 AH in his hometown Qazvin at the age of 64.

**492 solar years ago**, on this day in 1522 AD, the island of Rhodes in the Aegean Sea surrendered to the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman after a siege of several months, and the surviving Knights Hospitalers were allowed to leave for Malta. The Turks found and released thousands of Muslim prisoners on Rhodes who were enslaved and forced to work for the Christians.

**79 solar years ago**, on this day in 1935 AD, the Muslim revolutionary, Sheikh Mohammad Izz od-Din al-Qassaam, attained martyrdom near Haifa in Palestine at the age of 53. Born in Jableh in the Latakia Governorate of the Ottoman Province of Syria, he was a follower of the Qaderi Sufi order. After studying at Egypt's al-Azhar Academy, he returned home to become prayer leader and teacher at a local mosque. After Italy's 1911 seizure of Libya for the Turks, he recruited dozens of volunteers, but Ottoman officials prevented him from going to Libya. He joined the Ottoman army when World War I broke out, and served as a chaplain at a base. After the war, he organized a local defense force to fight the French occupation of Syria, but internecine fighting forced him to take refuge in the mountains to plan guerrilla warfare. He was a key figure in the 1921 Syrian uprising against the French when Faisal, a son of the British agent, Sharif Hussain, was brought from Hejaz and declared king of Syria in Damascus. Al-Qassaam was sentenced to death after the failure of the revolt. When the French occupiers besieged the city, he fled via Beirut to Haifa in British-occupied Palestine, where he concentrated his activities on mobilizing Islamic resistance against the colonialists. His followers were mainly landless farmers drifting into Haifa from Upper Galilee, where land purchases by the illegal Zionist migrants from Europe was creating a crisis. He joined the Istiqlal (Independence) Party and in 1929 was appointed the marriage registrar in Mufti Amin al-Hussaini's Supreme Muslim Council's Sharia Court in Haifa, a role that allowed him to tour the northern villages, whose inhabitants he encouraged to set up agricultural cooperatives. In 1930 he established 'Black Hand', a combatant organization for fighting the British occupiers as well as the illegal Zionist migrants. He arranged military training for peasants and by 1935 had enlisted nearly 800 men. In November 1935, fearing arrest after a British constable was killed in a skirmish with some of his followers he fled with his men to the hills between Jenin and Nablus. The British cornered him in a cave near Ya'bad, and in the ensuing battle he was martyred. The manner of his last stand assumed legendary proportions in Palestinian and other Arab circles as the symbol of resistance. The al-Qassaam Brigades of the Palestinian Islamic Resistance (Hamas) is named after him for the struggle to liberate their homeland from the Zionist usurpers.

**64 solar years ago**, on this day in 1950 AD, the prominent Iranian expert of the art of Marquetry, Mohammad Hussein Sane'i Khatam, passed away at the age of 67. Born in the southern city of Shiraz, he was also a calligrapher well familiar with Arabic, Persian and English. He has left behind valuable artistic works that adorn museums in Iran and abroad.

**63 solar years ago**, on this day in 1951 AD, Oman gained independence from British colonial rule. Oman used to be a part of various Persian Empires, both before and after the advent of Islam. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century it was occupied by the Portuguese, who were driven out in 1622 by a joint Iranian-British force. Iran also ruled Oman from 1737 to 1749 during Nader Shah's reign, after which power was seized by the Aal-e Sa'eed Tribe of the Abadhi sect of the Khawarej. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Oman became a British colony. Oman, with its capital of Muscat, covers an area of over 212000 sq km. It lies on the southern coast of the Arabian Peninsula, sharing borders with Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and the UAE. It is separated from Iran by the narrow Hormuz Strait.

**57 solar years ago**, on this day in 1957 AD, the acclaimed Iranian musician, Abu'l-Hassan Saba, passed away. He was also highly interested in painting, literature, and flowers, in addition to being an expert on traditional Iranian music. He wrote books on Iranian musical instruments and their history.

**46 solar years ago**, on this day in 1968 AD, US novelist, John Steinbeck, died at the age of 66. The bitter incidents in his life set the stage for his novels, which depicted the hardships of the underprivileged strata of the American society. One of his famous novels is the "**Grapes of Wrath**".

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

# Iran, IFRC Ink MoU to Enhance Environmental Protection



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TEHRAN (MNA) – Iranian Department of Environment and World Federation of Environment signed a Memorandum of Understanding to enhance cooperation on environmental protection.

Thursday morning, Secretary General of International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Elhadj As Sy, Iran's head of Department of Environmental Protection Masoumeh Ebtekar, and Iran's Red Crescent President Dr. Mohammad Farhadi signed a trilateral Memorandum of Understanding to protect the environment.

During the meeting for signing the MoU, Dr. Farhadi declared the most important protection as the environment of the 21st century. "Iran's Red Crescent, with the benefit of youth and volunteers, has presented its cooperation offer in the preservation of the environment to the Department of Environment and the

World Federation of Environment."

Following this meeting, Secretary General of IFRC expressed satisfaction over his presence among the Iranian volunteers and said Red Crescent volunteers are actively present in the community and among people in times of crisis and disaster, adding that two million Iranian volunteers from 17 million volunteers worldwide represents the dynamics of the Iranian Red Crescent.

Masoumeh Ebtekar, for her part, said that in a world of violence and terror, a common human voice can still be heard for peace, emphasizing the role of unity between Department of Environment and Red Crescent in preventing the earth from further damage.

## Up to 6,000 Working on Expansion of Grand Mosque in Mecca

MECCA (ABNA) – As many as 6,000 engineers and construction workers are on site at the Grand Mosque Expansion Project in Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

The huge team is currently preparing the infrastructure on the eastern and western sides of the mosque, having already removed more than 100

properties in the central area. These have included the Ansar market, Awqaf building and the old children's hospital, while work is underway to remove the King Abdulaziz Library and a number of major hotels.

Around 125,000 square meters of property space has been expropriated,

with compensations reaching a total value of \$6.66 billion (SAR25 billion).

Saudi Binladin Group, which is implementing the project, is preparing the eastern side of the mosque which, when complete, should be able to host more than 1.8 million worshippers.

The renovations at the site include the ad-

dition of a new building to the mosque that surrounds it and connects with it from the north, east and west. Other expansion plans include the establishment of a lower floor to house air conditioning and other equipment.

The project is now in its fourth phase, after the supervising committee finalized assigning properties for the expansion.

## More Chinese Teenagers to Study in U.S

BEIJING (Xinhua) -- Chinese teenagers studying in the United States has increased more than 60 times during the past decade, with experts believing the boom will continue into the future, a new study showed on Thursday.

Nearly 27,000 Chinese students were studying at U.S. senior schools, public or private, during the school year 2012-2013, compared with 433 in the year of 2003-2004, according to a blue book published by the Social Sciences Academic Press on Thursday.

The book was compiled by the Center for China and Globalization.

China overcame South Korea in 2011 to become the largest source of overseas high school students in the United States, maintaining its position since.

The parents, holding high aca-

demic degrees, position or income, hope their children enjoy the style of education in the U.S. and better their ability in foreign languages and independent life, according to the book.

The sharp increase of students receiving education in the U.S. is expected to continue as more Chinese families gain wealth, according to the book.

Prolonged student visas and easier overseas applications are also helping more Chinese study abroad.

But experts warn that Chinese parents should not "blindly" send children overseas because teenagers may not be mature enough to live independently.

Some find it hard to finish school work or integrate into local communities, according to the book.

## World Assembly of Muslim Youth Distributes Food Aid in Djibouti



The World Assembly of Muslim Youth Office (WAMY) in Djibouti has distributed 250 food baskets to families affected by drought in the village of Ibeito in the country's southern province.

DJIBOUTI CITY (ABNA) – The World Assembly of Muslim Youth Office (WAMY) in Djibouti has distributed 250 food baskets to families affected by drought in the village of Ibeito in the country's southern province.

Mohammed bin Saif, director of Djibouti branch office, said in a statement to the media that this food aid is part of WAMY's charity projects, which aimed at alleviating the suffering of poor families in rural areas.

He noted that the distribution of this food items, consisting of rice, sugar, flour, cooking oil and tomato, came

only a few days after the inauguration of development projects in the same village by the organization, which include an elementary school, a clinic and health housing units, at an estimated cost of more than \$ 350,000.

It is to be noted that the World Assembly of Muslim Youth is the world's largest Muslim youth organization, which is affiliated with some 500 other Muslim youth groups in five continents. It also has a relief agency that serves children in orphanages, as well as people who are affected by natural disasters and wars.

## Ireland to Launch 70 School Building Projects in 2015

DUBLIN (Xinhua) -- Ireland announced on Thursday it will launch 70 school building projects in 2015 to meet the country's demographic challenge.

The projects will include the replacement of educational infrastructure and building new sites for schools.

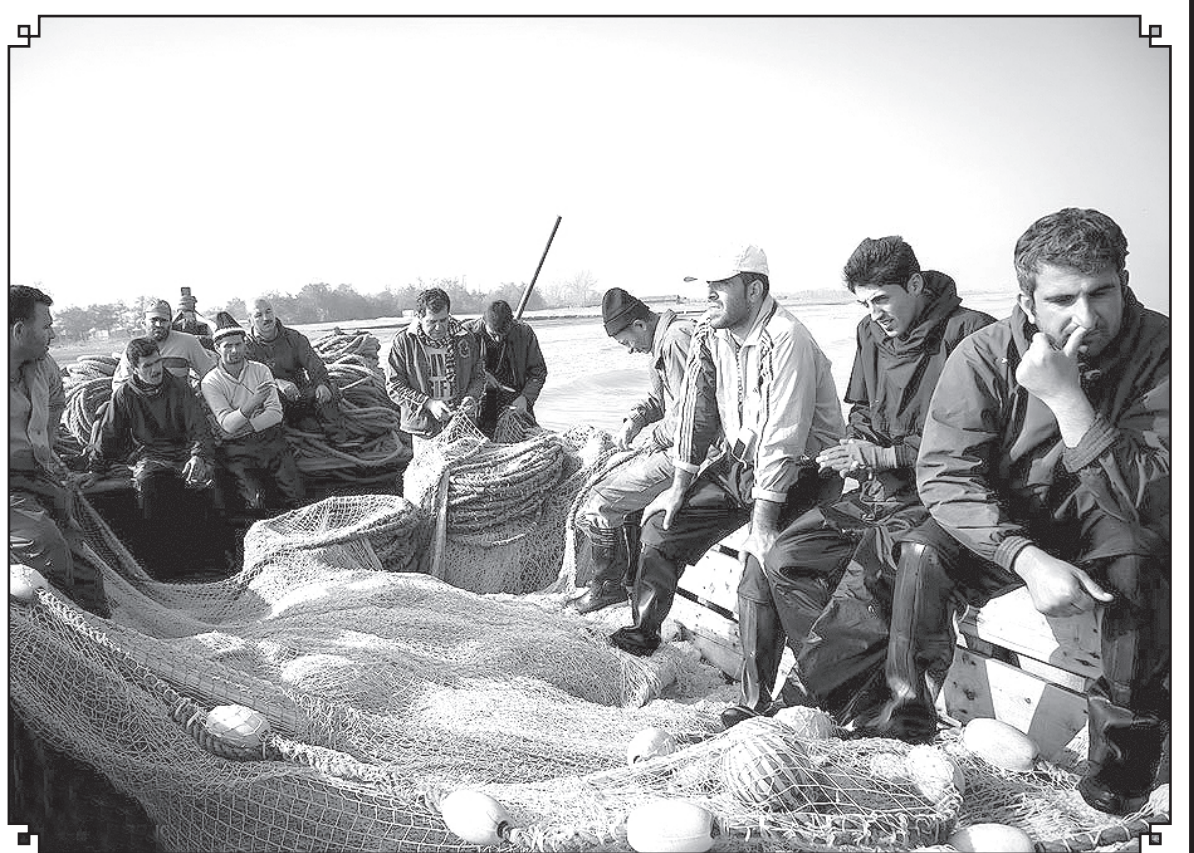
"We are facing significant increases in the number of school-going children in the coming years," said Education Minister Jan O'Sullivan.

According to the minister, the total pupil enrolment in both primary and post-primary schools is expected to grow by almost 70,000 pupils between now and 2017, over 44,000 at primary level and 25,000 at post primary.

Some 450 million euros (552 million U.S. dollars) will be spent on primary and post-primary infrastructure next year, with a projected expenditure on large scale projects of more than 280 million euros.

These school projects will include the building of more than 27,800 permanent schools, of which more than 23,700 are new ones. The remainder will be the replacement of temporary or unsatisfactory accommodation.

## Picture of the Day



Fishing season begins in Caspian Sea – Iran

Courtesy: MNA