

This Day in History

(May 28)

Today is Thursday; 7th of the Iranian month of Khordad 1394 solar hijri; corresponding to 9th of the Islamic month of Sha’ban 1436 lunar hijri; and May 28, 2015, of the Christian Gregorian Calendar.

2600 solar years ago, on this day in 585 BC, as per the prediction of Greek philosopher Thales of Miletus four days earlier, a solar eclipse occurred in the midst of a battle outside Sardis in what is now western Turkey, between the Medes of Iran and the Lydians. The battle ended in a draw. Alyattes of Lydia, agreed to enter into a truce with the Median Emperor, Cyaxares, thus ending the Battle of Halys. It is one of the cardinal dates from which other dates are calculated.

1078 lunar years ago, on this day in 358 AH, Muttaqi-Billah, the 21st self-styled caliph of the usurper Abbasid regime died, shortly after being deposed and blinded by the Turkic general, Tuzun, following a 4-year reign. The caliphate or political rule of the Islamic state that was snatched from its rightful inheritor, Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (AS), at the scandalous gathering of Saqifa Bani Sa’da, by a group of Sahaba – recent converts from years of idolatry – no sooner did Prophet Mohammad (SAWA) leave the mortal world, had become so insignificant after the tyrannically Godless rule of the Omayyads and the early Abbasids, that it now depended on the whims of the neo-Muslim Turkic slave guards who played havoc in Baghdad. Iran and the east had long become independent of the Abbasid caliphs; Egypt and Africa had been lost to the Fatemids, Arabia and Yemen were held by the Carmathians and local chieftains, Syria and Palestine were no longer under the caliphate, and even in Iraq there were revolts in Basra and Waset, while Mosul had become independent. In northern Syria and Anatolia, the Byzantine attempt to advance was being thwarted because of the bravery of the Hamdanid Shi’ite Muslim dynasty whose protection Muttaqi-Billah had sought on becoming caliph. Naser od-Dowla saw this as an opportunity to add all of Iraq to his realm and marched along with the caliph, but because of the well-organized opposition of the Turkic forces he found it difficult to control Baghdad. The caliph, after wondering from city to city, threw himself at the mercy of Tuzun, who broke his promise and deposed, blinded and replaced him with another puppet, al-Mustakfi.

955 lunar years ago, on this day in 481 AH, the renowned Egyptian Imami theologian, Abu’l-Qassim Abdul-Aziz Ibn Barraj Tarabulusi, passed away. He was born in Fatimid Ismaili Shi’ite Egypt and grew up there. He came to Iraq for higher religious studies and in Baghdad studied under such great scholars as Seyyed Murtaza and after him Abu Ja’far Shaikh at-Tayefa Tusi. He settled in Tripoli (Tarabulus) in what is now Lebanon and served there as the chief judge for almost thirty years in addition to being the representative of Shaikh Tusi. His views are valued by prominent theologians. He trained many prominent scholars and penned numerous books on theology and Islamic philosophy. His well-known book is *“al-Jawame’ al-Faqih”*, which is in the form of questions and answers and is considered highly significant till this day. His other works include *“al-Kamel”* and *“al-Mo’jiz”*.

845 lunar years ago, on this day in 591 AH, the al-Muwahhedeen ruler, Yaqoub Ibn Tashfeen al-Mansour crossed from Morocco into Spain to defeat King Alfonso VIII of Castile in the Battle of Alarcos following raids by Christians on the territories of Spanish Muslims. Some two decades later, when Ibn Tashfeen was no more, the Pope in Rome called for a crusade against Muslims in Spain, and Alfonso VIII heading an alliance of Christian rulers defeated the al-Muwahhedeen ruler to occupy large parts of Andalusia.

397 lunar years ago, on this day in 1039 AH, a devastating flood hit the holy city of Mecca due to torrential rains that drowned over 4000 people and engulfed the holy Ka’ba for several days. Following the gradual receding of waters, the walls of the holy Ka’ba including the place of the Hajar al-Aswad (the sacred Black Stone) were reinforced by the custodian of the Grand Sacred Mosque, Iran’s Seyyed Aqa Zain al-Abedin Kashi, who has recorded it in his book *“Mafraha al-Anaam fi Tasis Bayt-Allah Haraam.”* Kashi who was a student of Mullah Mohammad Amin Astarabadi, was martyred in Mecca by enemies of Prophet Mohammad’s (SAWA) Ahl al-Bayt.

491 solar years ago, on this day in 1524 AD, Selim II, the Drunkard, the 3rd self-styled Turkish caliph and the 11th Ottoman Sultan, was born in Istanbul. Son of Sultan Suleiman and the Rutherian (Ukrainian-Polish) concubine, Khurram Sultan (original name: Alexandra Lisowska), he succeeded to the throne at the age of 42 through intrigue and fraternal dispute. Despite claiming to be caliph and having a powerful fleet that controlled the Mediterranean Sea, he refused the pleas for help by the Spanish Muslims during the 3-year Morisco Revolt (1568-71) in Granada, southern Spain. As a result the uprising was ruthlessly crushed by a joint Christian armies of Spain, Austria, and Italy, in the aftermath of which hundreds of thousands of Spanish Muslims were forcibly Christianized and all books and documents in Arabic burned. Selim II died at the age of 50 after an incompetent reign of 8 years, as a result of drunkenly slipping on the wet floor of a bath-house, and fatally injuring his head.

277 solar years ago, on this day in 1738 AD, French physician Joseph Ignace Guillotin, who promoted a law requiring the use of a “machine that beheads painlessly” as a humane mode for all executions for commoners or nobles alike, was born. Without any further specifications from Guillotin, others actually designed and built the machine, and yet it still became known by his name—the guillotine. After experiments on cadavers taken from a public hospital, the first such machine was erected in the Place de Greve in Paris (4th April 1792), and first used to execute a highwayman (25th April 1792). It was widely used during the French Revolution. Known first as the “machine”, after the beheading of King Louis XVI it became known as “la louisette” or “le lousion,” but the name “la guillotine” prevailed. It was also used in other countries.

172 solar years ago, on this day in 1843 AD, Noah Webster, US lexicographer, textbook pioneer, English spelling reformer, political writer, editor, and prolific author, died. He has been called “Father of American Scholarship and Education.” His blue-backed speller books taught five generations of American children how to spell and read. His name became synonymous with “dictionary,” especially the modern Merriam-Webster dictionary that was first published in 1828 as An American Dictionary of the English Language. In 1806, Webster published his first dictionary, titled *“A Compendious Dictionary of the English Language”*. In 1807 he began compiling an expanded and fully comprehensive dictionary, titled *“An American Dictionary of the English Language”*; it took eighteen years to complete. To evaluate the etymology of words, Webster learned twenty-six languages, including Old English (Anglo-Saxon), German, Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, French, Hebrew, Arabic, and Sanskrit. He hoped to standardize American speech, since Americans in different parts of the country used different languages. They also spelled, pronounced, and used English words differently. His book contained seventy thousand words, of which twelve thousand had never appeared in a published dictionary before.

110 solar years ago, on this day in 1905 AD, the 2-day Battle of Tsushima ended with destruction of almost the entire Russian Fleet by Admiral Togo Heihachiro of the Imperial Japanese Navy. Fought in the Tsushima Strait between Korea and Japan, it was the first naval battle in which wireless telegraphy played an important role, and the first time in modern history, following the Industrial Revolution in the West that a European power was defeated by an Asian country. The Russians lost 4,380 killed and 5,917 captured, including two admirals, with another 1,862 interned. The Japanese lost three torpedo boats, with 117 men killed and 500 wounded.

75 solar years ago, on this day in 1940 AD, during World War II, Belgium, was occupied by German Nazi forces. On the other hand, on this day the Allied Forces, in the wake of a deadly confrontation with German troops, started to retreat from the Port of Dunkirk in eastern France. During these operations, 1774 warships of the Allied Forces took part to rescue 350,000 British, French, and Belgian soldiers. But, due to the air strikes against this French port and its siege by German Nazi forces, nearly 50,000 Allied Forces were killed and 400 of their warships were destroyed. France was subsequently completely occupied by German troops.

51 solar years ago, on this day in 1964 AD, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was formed by several combatant groups with the purpose of creating the independent State of Palestine. It is recognized as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people” by over 100 world countries and has enjoyed observer status at the United Nations since 1974.

39 solar years ago, on this day in 1976 AD, the famous Bengali painter, Zain ul-Abedin, passed away at the age of 62. He shot into prominence in 1938 winning the gold medal while studying art in Calcutta, and got the breakthrough in 1944 with his Famine Series paintings of 1943 on the great famine that afflicted Bengal. On partition of the subcontinent, his hometown Kishoreganj now became part of East Pakistan, which in 1971 became Bangladesh. An artist of exceptional talent and international repate, he is rightly considered the Father of Bangladeshi Art.

35 solar years ago, on this day in 1980 AD, Iran’s post-revolution Majlis (parliament) started its first 4-year term – a landmark event for the Islamic Republic of Iran. There are 290 MPs in the Majlis, elected by the people’s direct vote. Religious minorities, such as Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians, have their own elected representatives. The Majlis, as the Legislative Branch, coordinates with the other two branches of government – the Executive and the Judiciary.

17 solar years ago, on this day in 1998 AD, Pakistan responded to a series of nuclear tests by India 17 days earlier with five of its own, codenamed Chagai-I. Pakistan celebrates this event every year as *“Youm-e Takbir”* or Day of God’s Majesty. By conducting simultaneous atomic testing of the five nuclear devices, Pakistan became the seventh nuclear-armed power. Both India and Pakistan have refused to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

6 solar years ago, on this day in 2008 AD, Nepal’s Constituent Assembly formally declared the country a republic, ending the 240-year rule of the Hindu Shah dynasty. Islam, which accounts for 10 percent of the 27-million-population, is the third but fastest growing religion in Nepal.

6 solar years ago, on this day in 2009 AD, in Iran’s southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan, a terrorist bombing in a mosque at Zahedan left 25 people martyred. Investigations pointed to the hands of the US and the Zionist entity, who are trying to stoke sectarian tensions as part of the plot to divide the Muslims.

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

No Afghan Kid Deprived of Schooling in Iran

KABUL (Tasnim) - Afghanistan’s minister of refugees and repatriation lauded Iran for providing all Afghan children with the opportunity to receive education on Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei’s orders.

Speaking at a press conference in Kabul, Seyed Hussain Alemi Balkhi referred to a meeting he had with Ayatollah Khamenei during his recent visit to Iran, and applauded the Supreme Leader’s order that “not a single Afghan child, either with or without the residence documents, should be deprived of education during the new academic year” in Iran.

Ayatollah Khamenei has issued an order stressing that all Afghan children, even children of the undocumented migrants living in the country illegally, have the right to register and study in Iran’s schools.

Back in May 2014, UN resident coordinator in Iran Garry Lewis appreciated the measures adopted by the

Islamic Republic in hosting foreign nationals, saying Iran is the world’s second biggest country accepting foreign refugees.

“Iran has very well hosted the refugees over the past three decades,” he

said, adding that preceded by Pakistan, Iran is the second country in the world that accepts the highest number of refugees.

Out of the total 880,000 registered refugees in Iran, Lewis explained,



Seyed Hussain Alemi Balkhi

Sweden to Stage 2 Iranian Plays

STOCKHOLM (MNA) – Iranian plays ‘Count to one’ and ‘Earth and Wheel’ will go on stage at the Swedish Theatre Biennale 2015.

Zahra Sabri from the Iranian theater group told MNA correspondent the play Count to One was inspired by acclaimed Persian poet Khayyam and Earth and Wheel inspired by Rumi’s poetry.

Each edition of the Festival takes place in a different city in Sweden, with Malmö hosting this edition.

The Iranian theater group left for Sweden on Tuesday to participate with their two plays in the Swedish Biennial for Performing Arts.

The Swedish Biennial for Performing Arts brings together more than a thousand participants from all parts of the world of theatre in Sweden.

The whole of the Swedish performing arts world has a part to play in the Biennial, in performances, seminars, exhibitions, lectures, master-classes, meetings and arrangements of various kinds. The performances are chosen by a jury.

The festival was launched on May 16 and will run through May 31, 2015 in the Swedish city of Malmö.

Lack of Mosques in Italy

ROME (IQNA) - Italian Muslims are praying in warehouses, parking lots and garages due to the lack of official mosques in the country – and they are not happy about it.

There are some 1.5 million Muslims in Italy but only two official, purpose-built mosques – in Rome and Milan – plus a handful, around five, that resemble mosques but are in fact cultural associations, according to Nicoló Degiorgis, an Italian photographer who has spent years observing Muslims praying in the north-east of the country as part of an award-winning photobook, Hidden Islam.

This is in stark contrast to other European countries: Germany has 140 mosques with domes and minarets; the UK has around 200 purpose-built mosques. And while Catholicism, Buddhism, Judaism and Mormonism are formally recognized religions in Italy, Islam, the country’s second largest religion, is not. This explains, in part, the furor over an art installation at Venice’s Biennale which sees a disused Catholic church transformed into a mosque.

Venice’s Santa Maria della Misericordia church, in the Cannaregio district, was turned into a mosque in April. It is the work of Christoph Büchel, an artist of joint Swiss and Icelandic nationality, who wanted the controversial installation to show that Venice’s 20,000 Muslims –

who mostly live on the outskirts of the city – do not have a mosque of their own.

The installation has caused friction, and the Venetian authorities have threatened

to close it. A Right-wing party, Fratelli d’Italia, has also protested outside the church-turned-mosque.

During the course of his research, Degiorgis discovered Muslims praying in parking lots in the rain, in supermarkets, garages, etc. “I didn’t realize Muslims were using all these different kinds of spaces, it was surprising,” he says, adding, “It causes Muslims great sad-

ness and frustration”.

Imam Yahya Pallavicini, vice-president of the Islamic Religious Community in Italy, says: “We have just a few official mosques in the country and hundreds of Islamic centers, but many of these centers do not have the dignity or quality of an official place of worship. This is the reality.”

Pallavicini has mixed feelings about the art installation in Venice. He agrees with its sentiment but not its execution, saying it serves to give the impression that Muslims are not respectful of Italian culture.

“We need to find a solution which does not amplify people’s fears

Mazandaran, Kyrgyz University Ink Cooperation MoU

SARI (IRNA) – Iran’s Mazandaran Universities and Kyrgyz Slavic University signed a memorandum of understanding on scientific and educational cooperation.

Chancellor of Mazandaran University Fakhreddin Asghari said at the signing ceremony held in Babolsar that the university has scientific cooperation with certain Caspian Sea littoral states.

Exchanging students will take place between Mazandaran and Astrakhan universities as of September, he said, calling for studying capabilities of the two higher

educational centers for broadening scientific and educational collaboration.

President of Slavic University Vladimir Nifadiev, for his part, referred to capabilities of the university, saying that among four credible universities operating under the same name in Russia, Ukraine, Tajikistan and Armenia, it holds an acceptable level in global ranking.

Slavic University is directly administered by Russian Federation’s Science Ministry and its certificates are issued by the same authority, he said.

Picture of the Day



Shormast Lake – Mazandaran Province- Iran

Courtesy: IRNA