

This Day in History

(January 12)

Today is Thursday; 23rd of the Iranian month of Dey 1395 solar hijri; corresponding to 13th of the Islamic month of Rabi as-Sani 1438 lunar hijri; and January 12, 2017, of the Christian Gregorian Calendar.

1220 lunar years ago, on this day in 218 AH, the biographer, Abu Muhammad Abdul-Malik Ibn Hisham, passed away. His fame rests on his editing of the supposed biography of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA) compiled earlier by Ibn Ishaq, who had collected the oral traditions in book form on the orders of the crafty Abbasid caliph, Mansur Dawaniqi, the murderer of the Prophet's 6th Infallible Successor, Imam Ja'far Sadeq (AS). Ibn Ishaq's work is lost and is now only known in the Seerah or Biography of Ibn Hisham and the history of Tabari. Ibn Hisham grew up in Basra, Iraq, but moved afterwards to Egypt, where he gained a name as a grammarian and student of language and history. Critics note that since the bulk of the so-called biography of the Prophet was not taken from the authoritative sources of the Ahl al-Bayt, and compiled on the orders of caliphs, who were open enemies of the Prophet's Household, so many accounts in such works are open to doubt.

968 solar years ago, on this day in 1049 AD, the Iranian mystic and poet, Abu-Sa'eed Abi'l-Khair, passed away at the age of 81 in Naishapur, in Khorasan. Born in Mihne, near Torbat-e Haidarieh, he was an expert on the exegesis of the Holy Qur'an, hadith, and jurisprudence, and was devoted to the Prophet's Ahl al-Bayt. The details of his thoughts and life are known from the book *"Asrar at-Tawhid"* (Mysteries of Monotheism) written by his grandson, Mohammad Ibn Munawwar. Abu Sa'eed was also an accomplished poet, and mostly composed quatrains in Persian. During his life his fame spread throughout the Islamic world, even to Spain. He was the first Sufi writer to widely use ordinary love poems as way to express and illuminate mysticism, and as such he played a major role in foundation of Persian Sufi poetry. Abu Sa'eed records several meetings with the famous multisided Iranian-Islamic genius Abu Ali ibn Sina (Avicenna to medieval Europe).

702 lunar years ago, on this day in 736 AH, the last Ilkhanid king of Iran, Iraq, Iraq and parts of Central Asia, Abu Sa'eed Bahador Khan, son of Oljeitu, died without an heir, and with him the dynasty founded by Hulagu Khan disintegrated. Although he patronized poets and religious scholars, he was a weak administrator, who during his 19-year rule committed many excesses, even executing able ministers, such as Rashid od-Din Fazlollah, the author of the famous history, *"Jame' at-Tawarikh"*.

463 solar years ago, on this day in 1554 AD, Bayinnaung Kyawhtin Nawrahta, who would go on to build the largest empire in Southeast Asia, was crowned King of Burma (Myanmar). During his 31-year reign, he expanded his empire – often by recruiting Muslim soldiers equipped with firearms. His empire included much of modern-day Burma, Thailand, the Chinese Shan states, and what is now Manipur in northeast India. Although he is best remembered for his empire building, Bayinnaung's greatest legacy was his integration of the Shan states into the Irrawaddy-valley-based kingdoms that eliminated the threat of Shan raids into Upper Burma, an overhanging concern since the late 13th century. His Shan policy was followed by Burmese kings right up to the final fall of the kingdom to the British in 1885.

352 solar years ago, on this day in 1665 AD, French mathematician and presenter of the theory of numbers and possibilities, Pierre de Fermat, who wrote the book *"About Maximums and Minimums,"* died at the age of 64. The West claims him to be the founder of differential calculus and analysis – despite the fact that he greatly benefited from the works of Islamic scientists. Although the concept of a derivative in the sense of a tangent line is a very old one, familiar to Greek geometers such as Euclid and Archimedes, this science developed independently in ancient India as well, where, around 500 AD, the astronomer-mathematician Aryabhata used infinitesimals to study the motion of the moon. In the heyday of Islamic culture and civilization, Ibn al-Haytham of Basra significantly developed this science, which in the 12th century was borrowed and improved upon by India's Bhaskara, in whose works differential calculus can be found. It was left to the Iranian Islamic mathematician Sharaf od-Din Tusi, who was the first to discover the derivative of cubic polynomials and his *"Treatise on Equations"* developed concepts related to differential calculus, such as the derivative function and the maxima and minima of curves.

141 solar years ago, on this day in 1876 AD, American author, journalist, and social activist, Jack London, was born in San Francisco. A pioneer in the then-burgeoning world of commercial magazine fiction, he was one of the first fiction writers to obtain worldwide celebrity and a large fortune from his fiction alone. He wrote 50 books, produced 200 short stories, 400 nonfiction articles and 20 novels. Some of his famous works include *"The Call of the Wild"* and *"White Fang"*, both set in the Klondike Gold Rush, and the wolves in the area. His short stories include *"To Build a Fire"*, and *"An Odyssey of the North"*. He also wrote of the South Pacific in such stories as *"The Pearls of Parlay"* and *"The Heathen"*, and of the San Francisco Bay area in *"The Sea Wolf"*. A passionate advocate of unionization, socialism, and the rights of workers, he wrote several powerful works dealing with these topics, such as his dystopian novel *"The Iron Heel"*, his non-fiction exposé *"The People of the Abyss"*, and *"The War of the Classes"*. As a war correspondent, London was sent to Korea to cover the Russo-Japanese War of 1904 for the daily San Francisco Examiner. He died in Glen Ellen, California, at the age of 40, of a kidney disease, gastrointestinal uremic poisoning.

120 solar years ago, on this day in 1897 AD, Isaac Pitman, the inventor of the Phonetic Shorthand System, died at the age of 84. His shorthand has been adapted for such diverse languages as Arabic, Hebrew, Hindi, Japanese, Latin, Persian, Welsh, and Tamil. In 1837, he set forth a shorthand system based on phonetic rather than orthographic principles.

53 solar years ago, on this day in 1964 AD, a revolution overthrew the Sultan of Zanzibar and his mainly Arab-Omani government. An ethnically diverse Muslim state consisting of several islands off the east coast of Africa, Zanzibar was granted independence by Britain in 1963. Thereafter a series of parliamentary elections resulted in the Arab-Omani minority retaining the hold on power it had inherited from Zanzibar's former existence as an overseas territory of the Sultanate of Oman. Frustrated by under-representation in parliament despite winning 54% of the vote in the July 1963 election, the Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP) allied itself with the left-wing Umma Party, and mobilised around 600-to-800 revolutionaries. Having overrun the police force and appropriated their weaponry, the insurgents proceeded to Zanzibar Town where they overthrew the Sultan. Reprisals against Arab and South Asian civilians on the island followed; the resulting death toll is disputed, with estimates ranging from several hundred to 20,000. ASP leader Obeid Karume became the new president, and positions of power were granted to Umma party members. In April the same year, the ASP joined Zanzibar with Tanganyika to form the Republic of Tanzania. Islam had been brought over a thousand years ago to East Africa by Iranians from Shiraz, whose descendants are still found in Zanzibar, Tanzania, and Kenya.

47 solar years ago, on this day in 1970 AD, the 30-month civil war ended in Nigeria, as the forces of the secessionist state Biafra, surrendered after nearly a million ethnic Igbo died mostly of hunger and disease. Emeka Ojukwu had led some 40 million Igbo in secession.

42 solar years ago, on this day in 1975 AD, the famous jurist, Ayatollah Seyyed Abu'l-Hassan Rafi'i Qazvini, passed away at the age of 83. Born in Qazvin, he studied in Tehran and then in holy Qom under the famous scholar, Ayatollah Abdul-Karim Ha'eri Yazdi, mastering various branches of Islamic sciences. He authored several books.

38 solar years ago, on this day in 1979 AD, during demonstrations in several Iranian cities in the crucial days of the Islamic Revolution, intense clashes erupted between Shah's forces and the people, leading to martyrdom and injury of a number of courageous Iranians.

38 solar years ago, on this day in 1979 AD, students and people of the Iranian capital staged a large gathering at Tehran University, announcing their opposition to the Shah's despotic regime and calling for return home from exile of the Father of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeini (RA). This happened while the university campus was surrounded by soldiers. Following this gathering, Imam Khomeini, in his message from his place of brief exile near Paris in France, taking note of the rumours being spread by the Shah's regime and plots being hatched against the Islamic Revolution, called on the Iranian people to be alert and vigilant in order to foil all such plots.

36 solar years ago, on this day in 1981 AD, Saddam of Iraq's repressive Ba'ath minority regime ordered the first chemical bombardment of Iran, 50 km west of the city of Elam, resulting in the martyrdom of several soldiers. During the 8-year war imposed on the Islamic Republic of Iran on US orders, Saddam frequently used internationally banned chemical weapons supplied by the West, especially Germany, resulting in the martyrdom of at least 10,000 Iranian people and injury to over 130,000 others, as the UN turned a blind eye to his crimes.

17 solar years ago, on this day in 2000 AD, scientists claimed that temperatures of the Earth's surface have risen 0.7-to-1.4 degrees Fahrenheit over the past century and that the Planet Earth has been warming for the past 300 years.

7 solar years ago, on this day in 2010, a 7-degree earthquake jolted Haiti in the Caribbean Sea, killing over 300,000 people, destroying most of the infrastructure and installations, and making hundreds of thousands of people homeless.

(Courtesy: IRIB English Radio – <http://parstoday.com/en>)

Japan Envoy Signs Rafsanjani's Memorial Book in Persian



KABUL (IRNA) – The Japanese ambassador to the Afghan capital has used the Persian lan-

guage to sign the memorial book opened in Iran's embassy as a tribute to the late Ayatollah Akbar

Hashemi Rafsanjani.

Mitsuji Suzuka, before leaving his note in the memorial book,

speaking to Iran's Ambassador to Afghanistan recalled his past mission to Tehran and his acquaintance with the late chairman of the Expediency Council.

'I express my condolences on the demise of Mr. Hashemi Rafsanjani honorable Head of the Islamic Republic's Expediency Council,' Suzuka wrote in Persian.

'In sweet memory of him,' he concluded.

Following the opening of the memorial book for the late Ayatollah Rafsanjani, many Afghan high-ranking officials as well as other countries' ambassadors to Kabul attended the Iranian embassy to sign it.

Ayatollah Rafsanjani died of a sudden heart attack at a Tehran hospital on Sunday.

The veteran Iranian politician and senior cleric was 82 years old.

No Link Between Weather and Pains



CANBERRA (Dispatches) - The weather plays no part in the symptoms associated with either back pain or osteoarthritis, new research says.

Professor Chris Maher, of The George Institute for Global Health, said: "The belief that pain and inclement weather are linked dates back to Roman times. But our research suggests this belief may be based on the fact that people recall events that confirm their pre-existing views.

Almost 1000 people with lower back pain and around 350 with knee osteoarthritis were recruited for the Australian-based studies. Weather data from the Australian Bureau of Meteorology were sourced for the duration of the study period. Researchers compared the weather at the time patients first noticed pain with weather conditions one week and one month before the onset of pain as a control measure.

Results showed no association between back pain and temperature, humidity, air pressure, wind direction or precipitation. However, higher temperatures did slightly increase the chances of lower back pain, but the amount of the increase was not clinically important.

It's long been thought episodes of both back pain and arthritis can be triggered by changes in the weather, including temperature, humidity, air pressure, wind direction and precipitation.

Researchers Build Kit for Honey Adulteration Detection

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iranian researchers managed to build a honey adulteration detection kit to enable consumers to recognize the fake honey from the pure one with the lowest cost.

Adulteration usually refers to mixing other matter (substance) of an inferior and sometimes harmful quality with food or drink intended to be sold.

Abbas Ebrahimi, project manager of "chemical kit for honey adulteration detection" said that the most important concern for honey consumers today is to ensure the quality of this food. "Given that honey contains various combinations, we need laboratory tests to determine its quality which is associated with high costs," Ebrahimi noted, adding the designed kit easily detects purity of honey, in the shortest time possible.

The Kit is designed to evaluate



the existence and amount of two predominant enzymes of glucose oxidase and diastase (amylase) as well as Hydroxymethylfurfural (HMF) in honey.

HMF is an organic compound produced by acid-catalyzed dehydration of sugars, primarily fructose and it is crucial to evaluate the conformity of honey for daily use

according to the government legislation.

Fake honey is produced by hydrolysis of sugar materials containing large amounts of this combination.

The project conducted by Seyed Hossein Safavi and Abbas Ebrahimi, won the second prize in chemistry at the 18th Khwarizmi Youth Festival.

Picture of the Day



A photo taken with a slow shutter speed shows ice floe drifting on the River Danube below Szabadsag (Freedom) Bridge in Budapest, Hungary. A cold wave across Hungary has caused many lakes to freeze.

Credit: EPA