

This Day in History

(February 20)

Today is Monday; 2nd of the Iranian month of Esfand 1395 solar hijri; corresponding to 22nd of the Islamic month of Jamadi al-Awwal 1438 lunar hijri; and February 20, 2017, of the Christian Gregorian Calendar.

757 solar years ago, on this day in 1258 AD, Musta'sim-Billah, the 37th and last self-styled caliph of the usurper Abbasid regime, was wrapped in a carpet and trampled to death under the feet of horses on the orders of the Mongol conqueror Hulagu Khan, ten days after the sack of Baghdad. The incompetent Musta'sim, whose 16-year rule was confined to Iraq and some eastern parts of Syria, had neither raised an army to defend Baghdad nor did he attempt to negotiate with Hulagu, to whom two years earlier he had supplied troops to conquer the Ismaili Nizari stronghold of Alamout (150 km west of modern Tehran). The contemporary Italian traveler, Marco Polo, reports in his "Travels" that upon finding the caliph's great stores of treasure which could have been spent for the defence of the realm, Hulagu locked him in his treasure room without food or water for a while, telling him: "Eat of your treasure as much as you want, since you are so fond of it." The curtain thus came down on 508 solar years of the Abbasid caliphate founded by Abu'l-Abbas as-Saffah on defeating the Omayyads in 750 AD by hijacking the sentiments of the Arab and Iranian masses for the Ahl al-Bayt, thereby depriving once again the progeny of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA) of their political right to rule the Islamic realm.

340 solar years ago, on this day in 1677 AD, France defeated the Spanish in the Caribbean Sea and took control of Haiti, which it ruled for 130 years. In 1804, a major uprising of the black people enslaved in the Americas by the Europeans, took place in Haiti, which emerged as the first independent country in Latin America.

227 lunar years ago, on this day in 1211 AH, the Iranian astronomer and mathematician, Mirza Hussein Doost Mohammad Isfahani, was born. He passed away at the age of 81 years and was laid to rest in the holy city of Najaf in Iraq.

151 solar years ago, on this day in 1866 AD, France defeated Mexican freedom fighters and crowned its Austrian client, Prince Maximilian, as king of Mexico. Five years later, the Mexicans rallied under former President, Benito Juarez, to reinstate him on ousting Maximilian.

89 solar years ago, on this day in 1928 AD, the British granted the status of 'protectorate' to Jordan - a state they had created in 1920 by the river of the same name, by dividing the historical land of "Shaan" (Greater Syria) in collaboration with the French, after defeating the Ottoman Empire in World War I. The British installed as king, Abdullah, the son of their agent, Sharif Hussain, the ruler of Hejaz, for his services to Britain during World War I against the Ottoman Turks. Faisal, another son of Sharif Hussain, was placed as king in Damascus from where he was driven out by the French four months later and then installed in Baghdad as king in 1921 against the wishes of the Iraqi people after the British crushed the popular uprising led by Ayatollah Mirza Taqi Shirazi and Ayatollah Kashef al-Gheta. In the late 1920s when Sharif Hussain lost Hejaz, including the religious cities of Mecca and Medina, and the commercial centres of Jeddah and Ta'ef, to another British agent, Abdul-Aziz ibn Saud and his Wahhabi brigands from Najd, Britain bestowed upon the new strongman in 1932 another artificial country called Saudi Arabia. As for Jordan, in 1946, a year after World War 2, the British granted it independence but continued to dictate orders before handing it over to the US which today exercises hegemony over this land. Jordan, like several other Arab states of West Asia, has no historical roots and almost 80 percent of its population is made up of Palestinians. It is part of the historical land of "Shaan" which was carved up by the British and the French into Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine - where later in 1948 the British planted Israel after illegally settling on this Muslim land, hundreds of thousands of European Jews. Currently, mass demonstrations are rocking the Jordanian capital, Amman, and other cities, calling for reforms and scrapping of the monarchy because of its subservience to the US and its treasonous ties with the illegal Zionist entity, Israel.

70 solar years ago, on this day in 1947 AD, the British finally agreed to grant independence to the Subcontinent later in the year in August, but after partitioning it into India, West Pakistan, and East Pakistan (which in 1971 became Bangladesh), while deliberately leaving Muslim-majority Kashmir as a bone of contention. The fate of Haiderabad-Deccan which was a Muslim kingdom and the largest of the subcontinent's semi-independent states (nearly the size of France) was left by the British in limbo despite the fact that its ruler, Nizam ul-Mulk Asef Jah VII, had generously helped Britain in both the World Wars with tens of millions of pounds-sterling in addition to troops. Landlocked Haiderabad-Deccan, which for a year functioned as an independent sovereign state with membership in the UN, was forced to surrender to India in September 1948 following a week-long war. It is worth noting that the British had entered Muslim-ruled India as traders in the 17th century, but with the weakening of the Mughal Empire, they treacherously seized in mid-18th century the large province of Bengal (today's Bangladesh and the Indian state of Bengal) from its Muslim rulers of Iranian origin - Siraj ud-Dowla, Mir Ja'far, Mir Qassem - and thereupon gradually expanded their influence by taking control of all the Subcontinent through wars and imposed treaties. In 1856 they annexed the Shi'ite Muslim kingdom of Awadh and deposed Wajed Ali Shah to end the 134-year rule of the Naishapuri Dynasty of Iranian origin. In 1857, when both the Muslims and Hindus rose against British rule in northern India, they were crushed, Delhi was stormed, and the nominal Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar, was imprisoned and exiled to Burma. India was subsequently declared a part of the British Empire with Queen Victoria as Empress of India. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, because of the struggles of the Indian people against colonialism under the leadership of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the Ali Brothers, Jawaharlal Nehru, etc, the British were forced to agree to independence. India despite being a non-Muslim country has the world's largest population of Muslims of around 250 million.

57 solar years ago, on this day in 1960 AD, Charles Leonard Woolley, the British archaeologist whose excavation of the ancient Sumerian city of Ur (in modern Iraq) greatly advanced knowledge of Mesopotamian civilization, died. His discovery enabled scholars to trace the history of the city from its final days during the 4th century BC back to its prehistoric beginnings (c. 4000 BC). His finds revealed much about everyday life, art, architecture, literature, religion, and administration in this "cradle of civilization."

26 solar years ago, on this day in 1991 AD, Abdur-Rahman Sharaftkandi, the Iranian Sunni Muslim Kurdish writer, poet, and Islamic scholar, passed away at the age of 69. Born near Mahabad in western Iran in a religious family, he was active against the despotic regime of the Shah and was jailed. Upon release from prison he left Iran and lived in Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon. He returned to Iran before the triumph of the Islamic Revolution. Among his works are the Kurdish translation of the holy Qur'an, the translation from Arabic into Kurdish of the famous Iranian Islamic genius Abu Ali Sina's medical manual, "al-Qanoun fi't-Tibb" (Cannons of Medicine), in seven volumes, a book on Iran-Egypt cultural ties, and a divan of his Kurdish poetry titled: "Barg-e Sabz" (Green Leaf).

20 solar years ago, on this day in 1997 AD, a terrorist attack on Iran's Cultural Centre in Multan, Pakistan, by Saudi-funded Takfiri terrorists of the Lashkar-e Jhangvi outfit, resulted in the martyrdom of 8 persons, including its director, Seyyed Mohammad Ali Rahimi, career diplomat who had served with distinction earlier in India, Afghanistan, and Nigeria. Pakistan said the terrorists overpowered the guards at the gate, burst into the building and after spraying the staff with machinegun fire fled the scene. Iran strongly denounced it as another case of negligence by the Pakistani security department, which seven years earlier, had failed to arrest, prosecute and punish the murderers of the Iranian consul-general in Lahore, Sadeq Ganji.

8 lunar years ago, on this day in 1430 AH, the great Gnostic Grand Ayatollah Shaikh Mohammad Taqi Bahjat passed away in holy Qom at the age of 96 and was laid to rest in the mausoleum of Hazrat Fatema Ma'souma (peace upon her). Born in Foumen in Gilan Province, after preliminary studies in his hometown he left for the holy city of Karbala in Iraq at the age of 14 for higher studies. Four years later he moved to holy Najaf, where he attended the classes of a number of prominent ulema, including Ayatollah Murtaza Taleqani, Seyyed Abu'l-Hassan Isfahani, Mirza Mohammad Hussain Naeeni, and Seyyed Ali Qadhi Tabatabaei. Ayatollah Bahjat paid special attention to piety, self-cultivation and moral perfection. After 15 years of study in Iraq during which he mastered several branches of Islamic sciences including the philosophy of Abu Ali Ibn Sina, he returned to Iran and decided to stay in the holy city of Qom, where he reached the level of Ijtihad by attending the classes of Grand Ayatollah Hujjat Kuhkamrei and Grand Ayatollah Seyyed Hussain Boroujerdi. Thereafter, he started teaching theology and jurisprudence for almost 50 years at his house. He composed poems of praise and eulogy of the Infallible Ahl al-Bayt of Prophet Mohamad (SAWA), especially the Martyr of Karbala, Imam Husain (AS). He has left behind a large number of compilations, including: "Jama' al-Masa'el", and "Zakhirat-al-Ebaad".

4 solar years ago, on this day in 2013 AD, the great teacher of ethics, Ayatollah Sheikh Azizollah Khoshwaqt, passed away in the holy city of Mecca after performing the Umrah pilgrimage, and his body was flown back to Tehran and laid to rest in the holy mausoleum of Shah Abdul-Aziz al-Hassani (AS) in Ray.

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

Iran, Germany to Expand Scientific Cooperation



TEHRAN (ISNA) - Iran held the first joint meeting with the representative of German RWTH Aachen University in research and science fields. Iranian Research Organization for Science and Technology (IROST) held the first joint meeting with the representative

of German RWTH Aachen University in research and science fields in order to consolidate international cooperation between Iran and the other countries.

Determination the subjects of bilateral cooperation in developing advanced technologies for the production of dialysis machines and related equipment, exchange information and cooperation in production Heart Stent, management of water sources, preventing water disputes and developing related technologies were among the most results of the meeting.

The formation of various workgroups was also proposed during this meeting.

The meeting has been held with the head of IROST in attendance.

Russia, Iran to Broaden Scientific, Technological Cooperation

MOSCOW (IRNA) - Russian Presidential Chief Andrei Fursenko announced that Moscow and Tehran are resolved to broaden their mutual cooperation, especially in the scientific and technological fields.

"There is currently no obstacle or problem hindering the development

of Russia-Iran relations, particularly in advanced scientific and technological fields," Fursenko told IRNA.

The Russian presidential advisor reiterated that Russia-Iran relations in science and technology fields have taken an upward trend since

more than one year ago.

"Regular meeting between Iran and Russian officials at different levels is continuing; the two countries' universities and scientific circles are also cooperating with each other," Fursenko said.

He pointed to the trend of

implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and Iran's advances in different areas, and said, "We should make use of all existing potentials for the expansion of the existing capacities for broadening of Tehran-Moscow relations."

Reasons for Our Left or Right-Handedness



BERLIN (Dispatches)-It is not the brain that determines if people are right or left-handed, but the spinal cord, new research indicates.

According to a study by the biopsychologists team in Ruhr-University Bochum, gene activity in the spinal cord is asymmetrical already in the womb.

Up to now, it had been assumed that differences in gene activity of the right and left hemisphere might be responsible for a person's handedness. A preference for moving the left or right hand develops in the womb from the eighth week of pregnancy, according to ultrasound scans carried out in the 1980s. From the 13th week of pregnancy, unborn children prefer to suck either their right or their left thumb.

Arm and hand movements are initiated via the motor cortex in the brain. It sends a corresponding signal to the spinal cord, which in turn translates the command into a motion. The motor cortex, however, is not connected to the spinal cord from the beginning. Even before the connection forms, precursors of handedness become apparent. This is why the researchers have assumed that the cause of right respective left preference must be rooted in the spinal cord rather than in the brain.

Films on Art Festival to Host Iran's 'Golchehreh'



TEHRAN (MNA) - Iranian drama film 'Golchehreh' directed by Vahid Mousaian will go on screen at Films On Art Festival in Portugal.

Golchehreh is based on a

true story about the Taliban in Afghanistan and how they tried to destroy their National Film Archive and closing the cinemas.

The movie has been showcased previously in international film

festivals, including Zanzibar International Film Festival, Jaipur International Film Festival, and Middle Eastern Film & Arts Festival in Finland.

The film has been honored at several festivals and has won the Grand Prix award of the 2011 Batumi International Art-House Film Festival (BIAFF) in Georgia, the Red Rose Award of the 4th Jaipur International Film Festival (JIFF) in India and the Golden Dhow Award at the 16th Zanzibar International Film Festival in Tanzania.

Films On Art Festival (Festival Filmes Sobre Arte in Portuguese) is an international film competition in Lisbon of Portugal which promotes films which deal with art, artistic creation and art works. The event was held on February 16 and will wrap up on February 19.

Picture of the Day



The closing ceremony of the 9th Fajr International Festival of Visual Arts was attended by Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Reza Salehi Amiri.

Credit: Mehr News Agency