

This Day in History

(March 18)

Today is Saturday; 28th of the Iranian month of Esfand 1395 solar hijri; corresponding to 19th of the Islamic month of Jamadi as-Sani 1438 lunar hijri; and March 18, 2017, of the Christian Gregorian Calendar.

942 solar years ago, on this day in 1075 AD, the Iranian Sunni Muslim exegete of the holy Qur’an, narrator of hadith, and linguist, Abu’l-Qasim Mohammad Ibn Omar Zamakhshari, was born in the village of Zamakhshar in the ancient Iranian land of Khwarezm in Central Asia. He studied in Samarqand and Bukhara. He later lived in Baghdad for some years. He followed the rationalistic Mu’tazali doctrine and was known as **“Jarallah”** (Neighbour of God), since he stayed for several years in the city of Mecca, spending his time at the holy Ka’ba, the symbolic House of God Almighty. He wrote both in Persian and Arabic, and is best known for **“al-Kashshaaf”**, a commentary on the holy Qur’an, which is famous for its deep linguistic analysis of the ayahs. Another of his famous books is **“Rabi al-Abraar”**, a voluminous reference work in which he has exposed the dubious parentage of Mu’awiya ibn Abu Sufyan. He has recorded many of the God-given merits of the Ahl al-Bayt of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA) and their superiority over all Muslims. Zamakhshari died at the age of 72 in the city of Gurganj in the ancient Iranian land of Khwarezm, which today is divided between the Central Asian republics of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

949 solar years ago, on this day in 1068 AD, a devastating earthquake struck the Levant and parts of Arabia, leaving up to 20,000 dead, and many more injured.

900 solar years ago, on this day in 538 AH, the famous Egyptian reciter of the Holy Qur’an, Qasem Ibn Fira ash-Shatebi, known as “Imam al-Qurra” was born. Although he was blind, he had a sharp memory and authored a book on the seven different ways of recitation of the holy book. He passed away in Cairo in 590 AH.

850 solar years ago, on this day in 1167, the Battle of al-Babein took place during the double invasion of Fatemid Egypt by Crusaders and the Turkic rulers of Syria, ending in a tactical draw between the two. King Amalric I of the usurper Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem was met by an army sent by Noor od-Din Zengi under command of his Kurdish general, Shirkuh, whose nephew, Salah od-Din Ayyoubi (Saladin), served as his uncle’s highest-ranking officer in the battle. The two opposing armies were in Egypt because of conspiracy by Vizier Shawar, who solicited the support of Noor od-Din’s generals to gain control of the state. Shawar turned to Shirkuh for assistance. After Shawar found out Shirkuh’s price for fighting for him was higher than he was willing to pay, Shawar turned to Amalric. Shirkuh was almost ready to establish territory of his own in Egypt when Amalric I invaded. After several months of campaigning, Shrikuh was forced to withdraw. The fate of Fatemid Egypt was, however, sealed. In the next couple of years, Salah od-Din Ayyubi, who schemed to become the vizier of the Fatemid caliph, backstabbed his master to seize power, overthrow the Fatemid Dynasty, burn the libraries and persecute Shi’ite Muslims.

776 solar years ago, on this day in 1241 AD, Mongols overwhelmed Polish armies in Krakow in the Battle of Chmielnik and sacked the city. The Mongols, led by Baidar, the son of Chaghtai and grandson of the fearsome Chengiz Khan, had invaded Poland in early 1240 as well and defeated the Poles in the Battle of Tursko. With the defeat of the Polish army, panic spread throughout Europe, but the Mongols did not advance.

507 solar years ago, on this day in 1510 AD, the region called Columbia in South America was seized by the Spanish invaders, who till the 18th century plundered this land and enslaved its people. In the early 19th century with the weakening of Spain as a result of Napoleonic wars, the Columbian people led by the famous South American freedom fighter, Simon Bolivar, ended Spanish colonial rule and established an independent republic.

373 solar years ago, on this day in 1644 AD, the third and last Anglo-Powhatan War began in Virginia in what is now the US as part of British encroachment on the territories of the Amerindians. The 2-year war ended with the capture and treacherous killing of Opechancanough by the white men. The first war had lasted from 1610 to 1614, while the second war lasted from 1622 to 1626.

202 solar years ago, on this day in 1815 AD, with the merger of Geneva canton, Switzerland took its current shape and form. Switzerland consists of 25 cantons administered in the form of a confederation. The Paris Conference, set up in France after the defeat of Napoleon, ruled that Switzerland should be neutral and not join any alliance, a status maintained till this day. Located in Central Europe it covers an area of 41,000 sq km.

159 solar years ago, on this day in 1858 AD, the German inventor, Rudolf Diesel, was born. He conducted extensive research on the driving force of engines and in 1893 managed to invent a device without electricity that uses the heat of compression to initiate ignition to burn the fuel, which is then injected into the combustion chamber. This is in contrast to spark-ignition engines such as a petrol engine, which uses a spark plug to ignite an air-fuel mixture. The diesel engine has the highest thermal efficiency of any regular internal or external combustion engine due to its very high compression ratio.

95 solar years ago, on this day in 1922 AD, the leader of India’s independence movement, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, was arrested and sentenced to 6-year imprisonment by the British. He was, however, released after two years. By launching the non-violent movement, which he said, he learned after studying the exemplary life of the Martyr of Karbala, Imam Husain (AS), the grandson of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA), he succeeded in gaining independence for India.

77 solar years ago, on this day in 1940 AD, during the initial years of World War 2, Germany’s Adolf Hitler and Italy’s Benito Mussolini met at the Brenner Pass in the Alps and agreed to form an alliance of Axis powers against France and Britain.

55 solar years ago, on this day in 1962 AD, the struggles of the Algerian Muslim people for independence from France bore fruit after eight years of intense fighting that saw one million people killed by the French occupiers. Based on an agreement reached at the Evian-les-Bains Conference, France recognized Algeria’s independence and withdrew its forces. Nonetheless, the terrorist operations of French secret army continued in Algeria for a while.

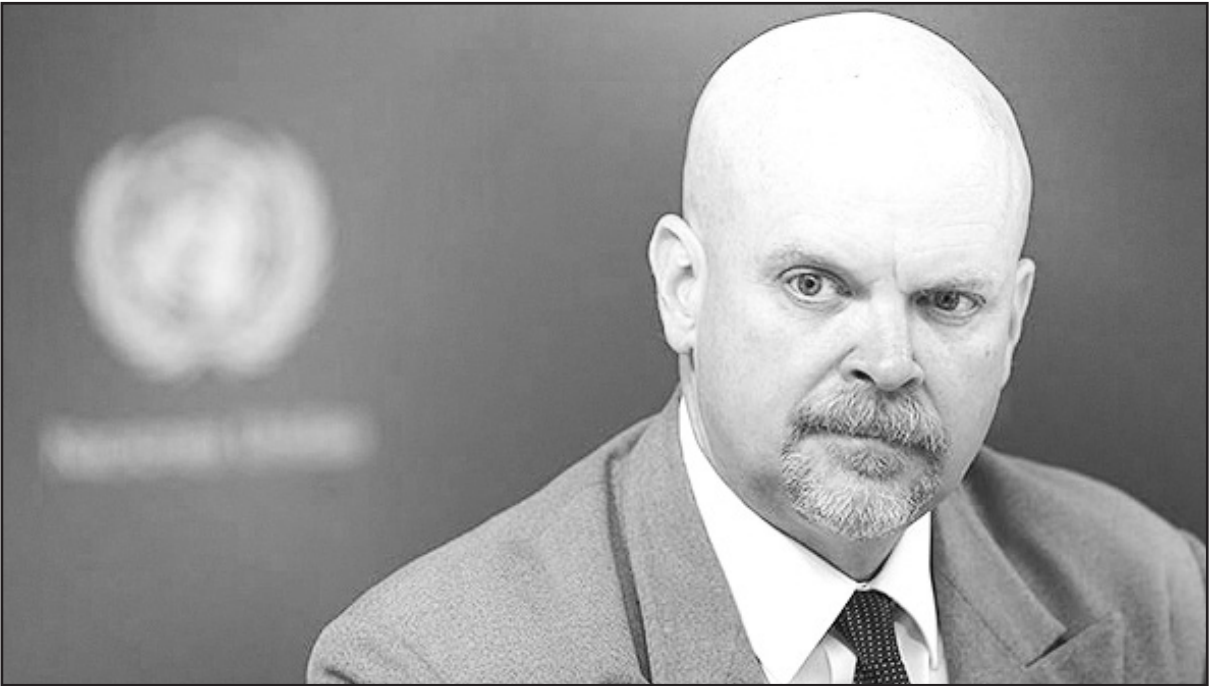
52 solar years ago, on this day in 1965 AD, the first spacewalk was achieved when Soviet Cosmonaut Aleksey Leonov performed an Extra Vehicular Activity, when he exited the Voskhod 2 spacecraft in orbit. The ability to work outside a space capsule was an important goal for future missions. The walk was not without problems. After ten minutes Leonov’s space suit became over-pressured and basically became a non-functioning balloon. He had to greatly reduce pressure in the suit before he could re-enter the capsule.

52 solar years ago, on this day in 1965 AD, Farouq, the last king of the Khedive Dynasty of Egypt, died in exile in Rome, Italy, at the age of 45 years, 13 years after his overthrow in the military coup carried out by General Mohammad Najib and Colonel Jamal Abdun-Nasser. Crowned king of Egypt and Sudan in 1936 on the death of his father, King Fouad I, the 16-year old, who on his coronation made a public radio address to the nation – the first time a sovereign of Egypt had ever spoken directly to his people – gave himself up to a life of pleasure and luxury. Despite owning thousands of acres of land, dozens of palaces and hundreds of cars, he often travelled to Europe for grand shopping sprees, earning the ire of his subjects. A glutton to the very core, he used to eat 600 oysters a week, and he died in the “Ile de France Restaurant in Rome”, collapsing at his dinner table following a characteristically heavy meal, although some claim he was poisoned by Egyptian Intelligence. Farouq was widely condemned for his corrupt and ineffectual governance, the continued British occupation of Egypt, and the Egyptian army’s failure in the 1948 war on the illegitimate birth of the Zionist entity, Israel. On 23 July 1952, the Free Officers staged a military coup and forced him to abdicate. His baby son, Ahmad Fouad, was proclaimed king, but the power was in the hands of Najib and Nasser, who within a year on 18 June 1953, formally abolished the monarchy, ending 150 years of the dynasty founded by the Ottoman Empire’s Albanian governor Mohammad Ali Pasha. One of Farouq’s sisters, Princess Fawzia was the first wife and queen-consort of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the British-installed king of Iran, who after nine years of marriage divorced her in 1948.

5 solar years ago, on this day in 2012 AD, Pakistani academic, social worker and religious vocalist, Seyyed Sibte-e Ja’far Zaidi, was martyred at the age of 55 by sectarian terrorists in Karachi. Gifted with a commanding voice, he was a master reciter of elegies for the martyrs of Karbala and has trained a large number of students in the art of Sooz-Khani.

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

UNDP Hails Iran’s Efforts to Revive World’s Largest Lake



UNDP Resident Representative, Gary Lewis.

TEHRAN (FNA) - **United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative Gary Lewis hailed efforts made by Tehran to revive the world’s largest lake in Northwestern Iran.**

“Life has returned to the dying Salt Lake in North-West Iran. The effort to restore what

had been broken is succeeding,” Lewis said in a statement about the Lake Orumiyeh (Urmia) after he has recently visited it after four years.

“I was able to see water. Not nearly enough, but much more than last time. The lake is reviving. And this revival is the result

of an immensely successful collaborative effort involving many players – some Iranian, some foreign,” he added.

Lake Orumiyeh was once Iran’s largest lake. In its prime, it was the second largest saltwater lake in the world. But years of man-made disruption – from the fren-

zy of 60 years of dam-building to the massive over-use of feeder rivers – had diverted the natural flow of sweet water from the surrounding basin into the salty lake. As a result, it simply dried out. It died at the hands of humans.

In late June 2014, President Hassan Rouhani warned of the dire consequences that the drying of the 3rd largest saltwater lake on Earth would have for the Iranian and regional people, and ordered the start of executive operations to rehabilitate Lake Orumiyeh.

“Lake Orumiyeh is in special conditions and the continued trend of its drying can have harmful impacts on the regional and Iranian people,” Rouhani said, addressing a workgroup set up to save the Orumiyeh lake in Tehran on Sunday.

He said that the lake shouldn’t be left in such a situation, and stressed the government’s readiness to provide for all the costs and expenses which might be needed for the rehabilitation of the lake.

Iran Joins World Hepatitis Association

TEHRAN (IRNA) – **Head of Iran Hepatitis Network, Seyyed Moayed Alavian, says Iran has joined the World Hepatitis Association (WHA).**

Alavian said on Thursday that the WHA had admitted Iran Hepatitis Network as Iran’s official representative to the As-

sociation on March 15, 2017.

He said Iran will have a vote in the WHA decision makings in the future and will take part in its sessions.

He added that Iran has over recent years launched extensive medication, education and research activities in hepatitis.

Climate Affects Nose Shapes

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - **According to an international team of researchers, humans inherit their nose shape from their parents, but ultimately, the shape of someone’s nose and that of their parents was formed by a long process of adaptation to our local climate.**

“We are interested in recent human evolution and what explains the evident variation in things like skin color, hair color and the face itself,” said Mark D. Shriver, professor of anthropology, Penn State. “We focused on nose traits that differ across populations and looked at geographical variation with respect to temperature and humidity.” The researchers noted today (Mar. 17) in PLOS Genetics that “An important function of the nose and nasal cavity is to condition inspired air before it reaches the lower respiratory tract.”

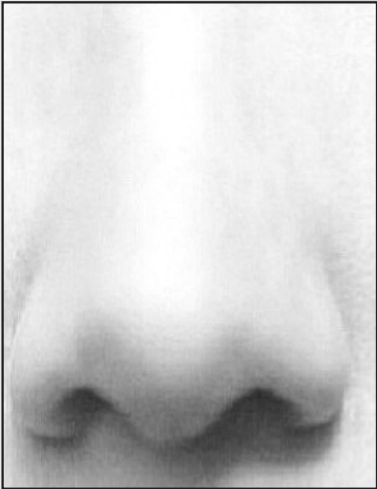
They considered a variety of nose measurements, looking at the width of the nostrils, the distance between nostrils, the height of the nose, nose ridge length, nose protrusion, external area of the nose and the area of the nostrils. The measurements were made using 3D facial imaging.

Differences in the human nose may have accumulated among populations through time as a result of a random process called genetic drift. However, divergent selection -- variation in natural selection across populations --

may also be the reason that different populations have differing noses. Teasing the two apart is difficult, especially in humans.

The researchers found that the width of the nostrils and the base of the nose measurements differed across populations more than could be accounted for by genetic drift, indicating a role for natural selection in the evolution of nose shape in humans. To show that the local climate contributed to this difference,

the researchers looked at the spatial distribution of these traits and correlated them with local temperatures and humidity. They showed that the width of the nostrils is strongly correlated with temperature and absolute humidity. The researchers noted that “the positive direction of the effects indicate that wider noses are more common in warm-humid climates, while narrower noses are more common in cold-dry climates.”



Picture of the Day



While Iranian Muslims go to the graveyards on the last Thursday of the year to remember the departed loved ones, families of the martyrs also pay tribute to the national heroes a few days before the start of the new Iranian year. Credit: Tasnim News Agency