

## This Day in History

(February 26)

Today is Sunday; 8th of the Iranian month of Esfand 1395 solar hijri; corresponding to 28th of the Islamic month of Jamadi al-Awwal 1438 lunar hijri; and February 26, 2017, of the Christian Gregorian Calendar.

**2764 solar years ago**, on this day at noon in 747 BC, the "Anno Nobonassari" began in the reign of King Nabu-Nasir of Babylon, which the ancient Greco-Egyptian astronomer, Claudius Ptolemy, calls in his work "Almagest", as beginning of the world's first recorded calendar based on astronomical calculations. The Babylonian Chronicle covering the years 747 to 668 BC, the best preserved exemplar of this genre, was possibly collated from Babylonian astronomical diaries. The lists of celestial phenomena started with the lunar eclipse of 747-746 BC, a spectacular conjunction of the moon and the planets that may have inspired the commencement of recording of accurate astronomical observations. Although it is claimed that it was from the reign of Nabu-Nasir onward that the movements and duration of the stars were recorded, according to Islamic texts, it was Prophet Idris (Enoch), who centuries before the Great Deluge of the days of Prophet Noah, taught astronomy and devised the calendar. This is more or less confirmed by the 3rd century BC Hellenized Babylonian priest, Berossus, who in his work Babyloniaca, writes: "Nabu-Nasir gathered the records of his predecessors and destroyed them, thus ensuring that the history of the Chaldean kings began with him."

**1155 lunar years ago**, on this day in 283 AH, the acclaimed Arabic poet, Ali ibn Abbas ibn Jurayj, known popularly as Ibn ar-Roumi, passed away at the age of 62. Born in Baghdad, he was the son of an Iranian mother and a half-Roman Muslim father, which explains his surname Ibn Roumi. By the age of twenty he earned a living through his poetry which would culminate in his masterpiece Diwan. His political patrons included the Taherid ruler of Khorasan, Obaydallah ibn Abdullah, the Abbasid Caliph's Persian minister, Ismail ibn Bulbul, and the politically influential Nestorian family of Banu Wahd. He was a Shi'ite Muslim. He died of illness, although some have suggested that poison may have been the cause.

**863 solar years ago**, on this day in 1154 AD, King Roger II of Sicily died at the age of 59 in his capital Palermo. Sicily, which for over three centuries was a Muslim island and part of the empire of the Fatimid Shi'ite Muslim Dynasty, was seized by his father, Roger I - a Norman adventurer from Normandy in northern France. Influenced by the rich culture and civilization of Islam, Roger II drew around him distinguished Muslim scientists, architects, statesmen, and even soldiers. The famous Islamic geographer Seyyed Mohammad al-Hassani al-Idrisi and the Spanish Muslim polymath Abu Salt al-Andalusi - who had formerly served the Fatemids in Egypt - were among the dignitaries at the Norman court in Palermo. Idrisi - a descendant of Imam Hasan (AS), the elder grandson and 2nd Infallible Heir of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA) - wrote for Roger the book "Nuzhat al-Mushtaq fi-Ikhteraaq al-Afaaq". Known in Latin as "Tabula Rogeriana", it is a description of the world and the first world map ever drawn in Europe that later enabled navigators like Christopher Columbus, Amerigo Vespucci, Ferdinand Magellan and others to rediscover the Americas. It took Idrisi fifteen years to write this monumental work which contains commentaries and illustrations as well as the first perfect map of the Eurasian continent including its link to North Africa. Roger II also hired many Muslims who were trained in long-established traditions of centralized government. These included Abdur-Rahman an-Nasrani, a Greek convert whose name was Latinized as Christodulus and who served as the Emir of Palermo with the title "ammiratus-ammiratorum" (a corruption of "Amir al-Omara"), and later "Amir al-Bahr" (navy commander), which gave rise to the English word Admiral.

**215 solar years ago**, on this day in 1802 AD, the acclaimed French poet and author, Victor Hugo, was born.

**212 lunar years ago**, on this day in 1226 AH, the prominent Iranian Islamic scholar, Mullah Ali Mirza Khalili, was born. He honed his skills in theology, jurisprudence, and mathematics, and spent his life on research, study, and writing of books. His works include "Khaza'in al-Ahkam". He passed away in 1297 at the age of 71.

**202 solar years ago**, on this day in 1815 AD, Napoleon Bonaparte, along with 1,200 of his men, escaped from his 10-month confinement on the island of Elba in the Mediterranean Sea, to start the 100-day re-conquest of France, before his final defeat in the Battle of Waterloo on June 15 and the exile to St. Helena Island in the southern Atlantic Ocean, where he died in May 1821 - presumably by poison administered by the British.

**157 solar years ago**, on this day in 1860 AD, white-skinned European encroachers massacred a band of Wiyot Amerindians at the village of Tuluwat on Indian Island near Eureka, California. At least 60 women, children and elders were killed in cold blood. The US has a bleak and bloody record of genocide and ethnic cleansing of the native people.

**119 lunar years ago**, on this day in 1319 AH, the great Islamic scholar, Allamah Mirza Mohammad Hassan Ashtiani Tehrani, passed away. He authored a number of books on various Islamic sciences, and published the lectures and thoughts of the celebrated scholar, Grand Ayatollah Sheikh Morteza Ansari Dezfuli. He, along with other combatant and courageous ulema, opposed monopolization of tobacco trade, which was granted to a British company by the Qajarid King, Nasser od-Din Shah.

**114 solar years ago**, on this day in 1903 AD, Richard Jordan Gatling, US inventor of the "Gatling Gun", the forerunner of the machine gun, died at age of 84. In 1861 he invented his gun, a crank-operated, rapid-fire multi-barrel design combining reliability, high firing rate and ease of loading into a single device. The outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861 spurred him to design firearms.

**96 solar years ago**, on this day in 1921 AD, the Soviet Union entered into an agreement with Iran four years after triumph of the Bolshevik Revolution by declaring all treaties imposed on Iran by Czarist Russia as null and void. The Soviet Union was under threats from all directions and the main purpose of the treaty was to ensure prevention of any anti-communist activities from Iranian soil. However, despite canceling all Czarist imposed treaties, the Soviet Union did not return to Iran the lands which the Czars had seized in the Caucasus, including what is known today as the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Autonomous Republic of Nakhichevan, Daghestan, and parts of Central Asia such as the region of Marv in what is now the Republic of Turkmenistan.

**82 solar years ago**, on this day in 1935 AD, the feasibility of 'RADAR', which is the abbreviation of "Radio Detection And Ranging" was demonstrated for the first time at Daventry, England, by Scottish physicist Robert Watson-Watt. While working on methods of using radio-wave detection to locate thunderstorms in order to provide warnings to airmen, he realized that it could be used to track enemy aircraft for air defence. The test showed that a British bomber flying in the main beam of a BBC short-wave radio transmitter gave back reflected signals to the ground on three occasions that the aircraft passed overhead. By 1939, the outbreak of WW II, the military installed a chain of radar stations along the east and south coasts of England to prevent a German invasion.

**31 solar years ago**, on this day in 1986 AD, Iranian singer, Gholam-Hussein Banaan, passed away after a long illness at the age of 75. He started his singing career on Iran Radio in 1942, and two years later after foundation of the National Music Society, he started grooming students. He was not only a master of traditional and classical Iranian music but was also a maestro of Iran's modern music. His cooperation with Iran Radio led to creation of 450 songs, which have remained to this day as highly valuable works on Iran's musical scene.

**30 solar years ago**, on this day in 1987 AD, Hussain Kharrazi, one of the brilliant young commanders of the Islamic Revolution, achieved martyrdom in the "Karbala 5" Operations against the invading Ba'thist forces in the southwestern theatre of the war imposed on Iran by the US through Saddam. He was commander of the Imam Husain (AS) 14 Battalion.

**25 solar years ago**, on this day in 1992 AD, Armenian militiamen and the 366th rifle regiment of the Russian army massacred in cold blood at least 613 Muslim men, women, and children in the town of Khojaly in the Qarabagh autonomous region of the Republic of Azerbaijan on its seizure by Armenia. As confirmed by Human Rights Watch and other international observers, the "Khojaly Genocide" and its aftermath shocked the civilized world, and later many dead bodies of Azeris trying to flee the massacre were found in the surrounding mountains and forests as a result of freezing temperatures.

**24 solar years ago**, on this day in 1415 AH, the prominent scholar, Seyyed Reza Sadr, passed away at the age of 75 in the holy city of Qom and was laid to rest in the holy shrine of Hazrat Ma'souma (SA).

**3 solar years ago**, on this day in 2014 AD, 23-year Ja'far Mohammad Ja'far of Bahrain attained martyrdom in a hospital a week after he was admitted there following torture at the hands of agents of the repressive Aal-e Khalifa minority regime, who had kidnapped him on trumped up charges, including smuggling of weapons, when the fact of the matter is that the mass popular uprising of the people of Bahrain for restoration of their birthrights, has been peaceful and unarmed from its very outset in early 2011 despite the brutalities of the US-Israeli backed regime.

One solar year ago, on this day in 2016 AD, prominent Iranian Film director, Farajollah Salahshour, passed away at the age of 63. Born in Qazvin, he directed several widely popular historical, and religious films such as "Prophet Job (AS)", "Prophet Joseph (AS)", and "Men of Angelos" - the last named a serial on the Qur'anic account of the Seven Sleepers of the Cave, who because of their firm faith in monotheism had fled to the mountains to escape persecution from the pagan Romans.

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

# Moondance Offers Free Entry Fees for 7 Banned Countries by U.S.



TEHRAN (MNA) - The Moondance International Film Festival offers free entry fees for filmmakers, writers and composers in the 7 countries including Iran

now banned from the US following Donald Trump's executive order.

According to the festival's founder Elizabeth English, the 2017 Moondance International

Film Festival is now offering free competition submissions for filmmakers, writers and music composers from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen, the seven countries whose immigrant and refugee artists and others have been banned from entering the United States following Donald Trump's executive order back in January.

Artists and filmmakers from these seven countries wishing to submit their work at this year's edition of the event can contact the festival at [moondancefestival@gmail.com](mailto:moondancefestival@gmail.com) for more information.

The Moondance International Film Festival is an independent annual film festival and awards

competition in the U.S., founded by Elizabeth English in 1999 as a complimentary contrast to the Sundance Film Festival, where in 22 years no women filmmakers had won.

Last year, three Iranian films including 'The Sea and the Flying Fish', directed by Mehrdad Ghafarzadeh, and 'Atlan', directed by Moein Karimoddini, won top prizes at Moondance film festival.

The 18th edition of the American festival will accept submissions through June 30, 2017 in various genres including narrative feature, short, documentary, drone & animation films, feature & short screenplays, film scores, etc.

## 2nd AASM 2017 Starts in Isfahan

ISFAHAN (IRNA) - The second Asian African Congress of Mycobacteriology (AASM 2017) started work with the attendance of AASM President Ali Akbar Velayati on Saturday in the city of Isfahan.

The congress will be underway for four days and in the presence of about 120 international scientific figures from 42 Asian, European

and African countries and also some 130 domestic guests.

"About 200 scientific articles have been introduced to the congress half of which will be presented through lectures and the second half through posters," AASM Secretary Parisa Farnia said.

Farnia pointed to the fact that the congress is held every two years,

saying that mycobacteriology is a group of bacteria which causes Tuberculosis (TB), pulmonary disease (COPD) and leprosy.

The event aims at reviewing and understanding diagnostic and treatment ways to control Tuberculosis and train experts to uproot the illness.

Velayati also addressed the congress saying that during the

1st edition of the event which was held in 2015 in Iran, useful topics were presented in the presence of world top experts and scientists.

AASM is a non-governmental organization consisting of top researchers of Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

The 2nd Asian African Congress of Mycobacteriology is underway from Feb 25 to 28 in Isfahan.

## Exercise Improves Brain Function After Stroke

WASHINGTON (Dispatches)- Structured physical activity training after a stroke effectively improves brain function, according to research presented at the American Stroke Association's International Stroke Conference 2017.

In a meta-analysis of 13 intervention trials that included 735 participants, researchers analyzed the effects of various types of physical activity on cognitive function among stroke survivors. They found that structured physical activity training significantly improved cognitive deficits regardless of the length of the rehabilitation program (i.e., training longer than 3 months as well as from 1 to 3 months led to improvements in cognitive performance).

The researchers also found that cognitive abilities can be enhanced even when physical activity is introduced in the chronic stroke phase (beyond 3 months after a stroke).

"Physical activity is extremely helpful for stroke survivors for a number of reasons, and our findings suggest that this may also be a good strategy to promote cognitive recovery after stroke" said lead author Lauren E. Oberlin, a graduate student at the University of Pittsburgh. "We found that a program as short as twelve weeks is effective at improving cognition and even patients with chronic stroke can experience improvement in their cognition with an exercise intervention."

Stroke is the fifth leading cause of death in the United States, and the leading cause of long-term disability. Studies estimate that up to 85 percent of people who suffer a stroke will have cognitive impairments, including deficits in executive function, attention and working memory. Because there are no drugs to improve cognitive function, physical activity -- such as physical therapy, aerobic and strength training -- has become a low-cost intervention to treat cognitive deficits in stroke survivors.

## Foreign Language Film Oscar Nominees Denounce 'Climate of Fanaticism'

TEHRAN (ISNA) - The five directors nominated for the best foreign-language film Oscar this year released a group statement Friday denouncing "the climate of fanaticism and nationalism we see today in the U.S. and some other countries."

Though they did not mention any leaders by name, the directors expressed their "unanimous and emphatic disapproval" of "leading politicians" that they believe influence those attitudes.

The filmmakers, who hail from Denmark, Sweden, Iran, Australia, and Germany, stated that they "refuse to think in terms of borders" and as a result, dedicated the award, regardless of who wins it, to "all the people, artists, journalists and

activists who are working to foster unity and understanding, and who uphold freedom of expression and human dignity."

The Oscar will be presented at the Academy Awards on Sunday night.

"The fear generated by dividing us into genders, colors, religions and sexualities as a means to justify violence destroys the things that we depend on - not only as artists but as humans: the diversity of cultures, the chance to be enriched by something seemingly 'foreign' and the belief that human encounters can change us for the better," they stated. "These divisive walls prevent people from experiencing something simple but fundamental: from discovering that we are all not so different."

Last month, in the wake of President Donald Trump's executive order that banned most travelers from seven predominantly Muslim countries, including Iran, Iranian director Asghar Farhadi, who was nominated in the category for his film "The Salesman," told the New York Times that he would not be attending the awards show.

"We would like to express our unanimous and emphatic disapproval of the climate of fanaticism and nationalism we see today in the U.S. and in so many other countries, in parts of the population and, most unfortunately of all, among leading politicians," said the statement, issued to trade publications Variety and the Hollywood Reporter.

## Picture of the Day



The United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF) called Friday the international community to play a decisive role in eradicating the soldier-children phenomenon.

Courtesy of Mehr News Agency