

This Day in History

June 30

Today is Thursday; 10th of the Iranian month of Tir 1395 solar hijri; corresponding to 24th of the Islamic month of Ramadhan 1437 lunar hijri; and June 30, 2016, of the Christian Gregorian Calendar.

1435 lunar years ago, on this day in 2 AH, the avowed enemy of Islam, Abu Lahab, died after suffering a blow to his head as a result of rage and anger on learning of the victory of Muslims over the pagan Arabs of Mecca at Badr – the first-ever armed encounter the polytheists imposed on Prophet Mohammad (blessings of God upon him and his progeny). Notorious for his rough manners, he was a step uncle of the Prophet and was married to the equally treacherous Arwa Omm Jameel, the sister of Abu Sufyan, the other archenemy of Islam. On the Prophet's public proclamation of the message of Islam, he became a sworn enemy of his nephew, and along with his wife, left no stone unturned to harm him. He joined the other infidel Arabs in imposing the 3-year social-economic boycott of the neo Muslim community, and was part of the conspirators, who plotted to murder the Prophet on the Night of Hijrah (migration). Abu Lahab used to raise his hands to curse the Prophet while his wife who took great pride in wearing an ostentatious necklace, would at night strew thorns and prickly plants in the Prophet's path to injure his feet. God Almighty revealed Surah al-Masad meaning Palm Fibre in condemnation of the wicked husband-and-wife pair. It reads: "Perish the hands of Abu Lahab, and perish he! Neither his wealth availed him, nor what he had earned. Soon he will enter the blazing fire; And his wife [too], the firewood carrier, Or 'the informer,' with a rope of palm fibre around her neck."

1083 lunar years ago, on this day in 354 AH, the famous Arabic poet, Ahmad bin Hassan Kufi, known by his penname "Mutanabbi", was killed near Baghdad during an encounter with highway brigands at the age of 51. Gifted with sharp intelligence and wit, he started writing poetry as a nine-year old. Among the topics he versified were courage, the philosophy of life, and the description of battles. Many of his poems were and still are widely read by Arabic speakers. His great talent earned him respect from many political leaders of his time, and he praised kings and emirs in return for money and gifts. He joined the court of Sayf od-Dowla in Aleppo and during his 9-year stay in Syria versified his most famous poems. There was great rivalry between him and many of the scholars and poets at Sayf od-Dowla's court, including the latter's cousin and brother-in-law, Abu Firas al-Hamdani. Mutanabbi lost Sayf od-Dowla's favour because of his political ambition to be a governor. He had no other choice but to leave Aleppo for Egypt to join the court of Abu'l-Misk Kafur. Here also he failed in his political ambitions and after his ridiculing of Kafur in satirical odes, he left for Iraq, where he was killed.

727 lunar years ago, on this day in 710 AH, the prominent Iranian physician, mathematician, physicist, astronomer, poet and philosopher, Qotb od-Din Mahmoud Ibn Zia od-Din Masoud Kazerouni, known as Mullah Qotb Shirazi, was born in the southern Iranian city of Kazeroun. He studied medicine under his father, who practiced and taught medicine at the Mozaffari hospital in Shiraz. He also studied the "al-Qanoun fi't-Tibb" (The Canon of Medicine) of the Iranian-Islamic genius, Abu Ali ibn Sina, along with its commentaries. In particular he read the commentary of Fakhr od-Din Razi on this book and raised questions of his own, resulting in the writing of his own commentary, where he resolved many of the issues of this book, especially in the company of the famous genius of his age, Khwaja Naseer od-Din Tusi, who established the observatory at Maragha in northwestern Iran. In Maragha, he learned other branches of science under the guidance of Naseer od-Din Tusi, who taught him astronomy as well as Ibn Sina's masterpiece on remarks and admonitions titled "al-Isharaat wa'l-Tanbihat". One of the important scientific projects was completion of the new astronomical table or Zij. Qotb od-Din Shirazi subsequently traveled to Khorasan, where he stayed to study under Najm od-Din Katebi Qazvini in the town of Jovayn. Later he journeyed to Qazvin, Isfahan, Baghdad, and Qonya in Anatolia or modern day Turkey, where he studied the "Jam' e al-Osoul" of Ibn Atheer with Sadr od-Din Qonawi. The governor of Qonya made him judge of the cities of Sivas and Malatya, where he compiled "Miftah al-Meftah" on Arabic grammar and rhetoric, and "Ikhtiyaraat al-Mozaffariya" on astronomy. He was sent as envoy by the Ilkhanid ruler of Iran-Iraq, Ahmad Tekudar, to Sayf od-Din Qalawun, the Mamluk ruler of Egypt, where he collected various critiques and commentaries on Ibn Sina's Qanoun and used them in his commentary on the "Kulliyat". The last part of Qotb ad-Din Shirazi's active career was teaching in Syria the "Qanoun" and the "Kitab ash-Shefa" – the philosophical magnum opus of Ibn Sina. He died while on a visit to Tabriz. He wrote in both Arabic and Persian on a wide variety of topics including medicine, astronomy, geography, mathematics, philosophy and religion. Among his works is "Nihayat al-Itraak fi Dirayaat al-Aflak" on the movement of planets, and he identified observations by Ibn Sina on the transits of Venus and Mercury, centuries before European scientists.

722 solar years ago, on this day in 1294 AD, following the murder of a Christian boy in Bern, several Jews were executed and the survivors expelled from Switzerland. In the 1620s Jews were banished from Swiss towns, and from 1776, they were allowed to reside only in the two villages of Lengnau and Oberendingen, in what is now the canton of Aargau.

674 solar years ago, on this date in 1342 AD, Zafar Khan, the founder of the Muzaffarid Dynasty of Gujarat, was born in Delhi to Wajih ul-Mulk, who before embracing Islam was a Rajput of the Tanka clan by the name of Sadharan. Wajih ul-Mulk's sister was married to Sultan Feroze Shah Tughlaq, who in 1391 appointed his wife's nephew Zafar Khan as governor of the western province of Gujarat. When after the death of Feroze Shah, the subcontinent was invaded by the fearsome Turkic conqueror, Amir Timur in 1398, and the Tughlaq Sultanate collapsed, Zafar Khan declared himself sultan of Gujarat with the title Muzaffar Shah I. He died in 1411 after a 20-year reign. His son, Ahmad Shah I built the city of Ahmadabad as the new capital. The dynasty ruled for almost 200 years, until the conquest of Gujarat by the Mughal Empire. The sultanate reached its peak of expansion under Mahmud Shah I Begara, reaching east into Malwa and west to the Gulf of Kutch. During the Muzaffarid rule, Ahmadabad grew to become one of the largest and wealthiest cities in the world, and the sultans were patrons of a distinctive architecture that blended Islamic elements with Gujarat's indigenous Hindu and Jain architectural traditions. The court language was Persian and the Sultans of Gujarat maintained infrequent ambassadorial relations with Iran.

437 solar years ago, on this day 1579 AD, the prominent Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire, Mohammad Pasha Sokolovich, was assassinated at the age of 73. A Serb by birth who converted to Islam at an early age he was raised among the special Jan-Nisari Corps. His rapid rise through the ranks of the Ottoman imperial system, eventually brought him positions as Head of the Imperial Guard, High Admiral of the Navy, Governor-General of Rumelia, Third Vizier, Second Vizier, and as Grand Vizier – a position he held for over 14 years under three Sultans: Suleiman, Selim II, and Murad III. In addition to his native Serbo-Croat, he was fluent in Turkish, Persian, Arabic, and Venetian-Italian. He had taken part in wars against Safavid Iran as head of a force of Serbs and Greeks, but later, due to Shah Tahmasp's diplomacy and proposal of a lasting peace accord, he advised the Ottoman Sultan to accept it. He was a great builder and constructed many mosques, schools, musafir-khanas (inns) and bridges in Istanbul, Belgrade, Sarajevo, and Mecca.

108 solar years ago, on this day in 1908 AD, a massive explosion occurred near the Podkamennaya Tunguska River in Central Siberia in what is now Krasnoyarsk Krai, Russia. The explosion (epicentre 60.886°N, 101.894°E), is believed to have been caused by the air burst of a large meteoroid or comet fragment at an altitude of 5-to-10 km above the Earth's surface. It is the largest impact event on or near Earth in recorded history. In 2013, a team of researchers led by Victor Kvasnytsya of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine published analysis results of micro-samples from a peat bog near the blast epicentre showing fragments possibly of meteoric origin. Estimates of the energy of the blast range from 3 to as high as 30 megatons of TNT – roughly equal to the United States' Castle Bravo thermonuclear bomb tested on March 1, 1954; about 1,000 times more powerful than the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, Japan; and about two-fifths the power of the Soviet Union's Tsar Bomba (the largest nuclear weapon ever detonated). The Tunguska explosion knocked down an estimated 80 million trees over an area covering 2,150 square km. It is estimated that the shock wave from the blast would have measured 5.0 on the Richter scale. An explosion of this magnitude is capable of destroying a large metropolitan area.

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

Iranian Researchers Find More Effective Treatment for Stomach Ulcers



TEHRAN (MNA) – Iranian researchers at Islamic Azad University in Tehran have synthesized a nanocarrier that proves to be more effective in treating peptic ulcer disease.

Homayoun Ahmadpanahi, the project manager, said the aim of the research was to synthesize and

introduce a new nanocarrier for a more effective and targeted drug delivery for treating stomach ulcers.

"Treatment costs reduction, a boost in the effectiveness of the drug and a decrease in drug consumption side effects are the benefits of using this nanocarrier as the drug delivery system," he said.

He further added that the synthesized nanocarrier in this project is comprised of a polymer component and an oxide component, adding "the magnetic nanoparticles of iron have been modified by smart polymers; this allows the drug delivery to be done locally and under controlled conditions, and at the same time, using the temperature-sensitive sorbents minimizes the drug's side effects."

According to him, the magnetic iron oxide nanoparticles have been synthesized through co-precipitation method and by using iron complexes, and their surfaces have been modified by organic compounds and smart polymers. The nanocarriers were then used as targeted drug delivery for Famotidine, commonly used in the treatment of peptic ulcer disease.

The results of the research indicate that almost 73 per cent of the drug loaded into the nanocarrier has been released in the simulated gastric fluid environment within one hour.

The results of the research have been published in International Journal of Pharmaceutics, vol. 476, 2014, pp. 70-76.

"Combined Therapy" Promising Approach to Treating Brain Cancer

LONDON (Dispatches) - Scientists say that there is now a two-in-one approach which may help keep brain cancer in check.

Glioblastoma is the most common form of brain cancer and also the most deadly that affects people from around 40 years of age, and most people live for less than 2 years after aggressive therapy. "This is a devastating disease," says Simona Parrinello of the MRC's Clinical Sciences Centre, who led the research.

The team demonstrates that targeting just one protein has two effects; it both halts the division of the cancer cells, and stops these cells from spreading through normal tissue, a two-in-one approach.

"Current treatments often fail because the tumors spread throughout the brain, and so can't be fully removed by surgery. If we can target this spread, it may be possible to make therapies more effective. When we target this one protein we block two key features of the tumor: its ability to divide and its ability to invade. It could be a combined therapy in one," says Parrinello.

Scientists are not clear exactly how the cancer cells invade the brain in patients with this condition, though they know that one key route is through the space that surrounds blood vessels. It is also known that it's a critical subset of cancer cells that appears to favor this route. These are called "glioblastoma stem-like cells," or GSCs, because they behave in a similar way to stem cells in the developing and adult brain.

GSCs are particularly resistant to chemotherapy and radiotherapy. Scientists believe that this, and their ability to invade, could mean it's these cells that are responsible for the regular recurrence of glioblastoma after initial treatment.

Using a cutting-edge technique called intravital imaging, the team discovered that when healthy cells first develop non-cancerous mutations, blood vessels within the brain keep them in a compartment so that they cannot spread and cause damage. They found that the vessels do this by producing a protein, called ephrin-B2, which appears to immobilize the cells and hold them in place. However, when cells become cancerous GSCs, they are able to override this anti-invasion signal, and escape the compartment. Crucially, Parrinello showed that the GSCs do this by producing their own ephrin-B2, which makes them insensitive to the ephrin-B2 already on the blood vessels.

Pakistan Calls for Expansion of Media Cooperation with Iran

TEHRAN (FNA) - Pakistani Information and Broadcasting Minister Pervaiz Rashid called for broadening of mutual cooperation with Iran, especially in media fields.

"There is a need for exchange of media delegations, so that both countries could learn from each other experiences," Rashid said.

He reiterated that Pakistan believes that enhanced media connections between Iran and Pakistan would further reinforce and consolidate the already strong bonds between the two friendly coun-

tries. "Media can be an effective tool in progress of people and also remove misconceptions between the two countries to build better understanding on matters of that could benefit both countries," Rashid added.

Iranian and Pakistani officials in a meeting in Islamabad underlined the need for the further expansion of mutual cooperation.

During the meeting in the Pakistani capital, Iranian Ambassador to Islamabad Mehdi Honardoust

and Pakistani Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan explored avenues for bolstering and reinvigorating bilateral ties.

The Pakistani interior minister underlined the need for joint efforts against the elements trying to disrupt peace and create instability in the region.

The two sides also discussed resumption of banking cooperation between the two countries to pave the way for the expansion of trade and economic cooperation between the two neighbors.

Call for Iran's 24th Annual World Book Award issued

TEHRAN (IBNA) - According to IBNA correspondent, the secretariat of the Award Committee which aims to realize and introduce books on the two abovementioned fields, stated that the books to be considered can be in any language and the awards will be granted for writing, translation and editing. They must also have been published (in their first edition) outside of Iran in 2015.

Each of the two main topics – Islamic Studies and Iranian Studies- includes numerous parts and subdivisions, some of which are as follows:

A) Islamic Studies: History of Islam, Islamic Civilization, Quranic and

Hadith Studies, Islamic Theology & Philosophy, Islamic Mysticism, Islamic Law and Jurisprudence, Translation of Classic Islamic Texts, Islamic Economics, Contemporary Islamic Studies, Islamic Arts & Architecture, History of Science, etc.

B) Iranian Studies: History of Iran, Iranian Languages and linguistics, Iranian Geography, Ancient Iranian Religions; Civilization & History, Persian Literature, Iranian Arts & Architecture, History of Science in Iran, Iranian Anthropology, Translation of the Great Iranian works, etc.

Accordingly, the Secretariat of the

Award Committee invites all scholars, writers, translators, and publishers to nominate book(s) for consideration, not later than October 31, 2016.

Submission: To nominate your title(s), please first e-mail a nomination letter to the Book Award Secretariat at bookaward@ketab.ir, and then send a copy of submitted book(s) to the following address:

The Book Award Secretariat, PO Box 14155-1437, Tehran, IRAN. (Tel: +98 21 88861320)

For further information please contact: bookaward@ketab.ir

Picture of the Day



Thai illegal hunters sell different snake species to restaurant owners to make meatballs out of them.

Courtesy: Fars News Agency