

# This Day in History

(July 28)

Today is Thursday; 7<sup>th</sup> of the Iranian month of Mordad 1395 solar hijri; corresponding to 23<sup>rd</sup> of the Islamic month of Shawwal 1437 lunar hijri; and July 28, 2016, of the Christian Gregorian Calendar.

**1566 solar years ago**, on this day in 450 AD, Eastern Roman Emperor, Theodosius II, died at the age of 49 in a riding accident, after a 42-year reign – having succeeded his father as a 7-year-old. He presided over the outbreak of two christological controversies, Nestorianism and Eutychianism, and fought an almost two-year inconclusive war with the Sassanid Empire of Iran. In 421, Bahram V succeeded his father Yazdegerd I, who shortly before being killed, had started the persecution of Christians as reprisal for attacks against Zoroastrian temples in the Roman Empire. Bahram continued this persecution, and among those killed was his father's Christian counselor, James Interciscus, who was cut to pieces in Jundishapur. This incident, along with friction in trade ties and border issues, made Theodosius declare war on Persia in 421 AD. The conflict raged across the borders of the two empires, mostly in southeastern Turkey, northern Syria and to some extent in Armenia. In 422, the two sides signed the peace treaty that returned everything to the pre-war situation. Both sides agreed to reject Arab defectors of the other part, as well as to guarantee liberty of religion in their territories.

**804 lunar years ago**, on this day in 633 AH, Cordoba (Qurtuba in Arabic), the former capital of the Omayyad state of Andalusia or Islamic Spain, fell to King Ferdinand III of Castile after a 7-month siege, thus ending 520 glorious years of Muslim rule, which saw the city win worldwide acclaim as a centre of science and civilization at a time Christian Europe was immersed in darkness. Although Cordoba's political and administrative decline had begun half-a-century earlier when the al-Muwahhadin Dynasty shifted the capital to Seville after defeating the al-Murabetun Dynasty, it was still the cultural centre of Andalusia, with libraries and schools that over the centuries produced outstanding scholars in various fields such as Ibn Hazm the poet and grammarian, Ibn Saffar the mathematician, al-Bakri the historian and geographer, al-Ghafiqi the botanist, az-Zahravi the physician, al-Qurtubi the exegete of the holy Qur'an, and Abbas ibn Firmas, the polymath who experimented with a flying machine some thousand years before the airplane was invented. The decline of Muslims in Spain was the result of fratricide and treachery. The death of Yusuf II in 621 led to a crisis of succession, providing the Christian rulers an opportunity for intervention, especially when the claimant, Abdullah al-Adel, began to ship the bulk of his forces across the straits to Morocco to contest the succession with his rival there, leaving Andalusia undefended. At this, al-Adel's cousin, Abdullah al-Bayyasi appealed to Ferdinand III for military aid and with the help of the Christian army was installed as Amir in Cordoba, in return for surrendering strategic frontier strongholds. Soon, when al-Bayyasi was killed by a popular uprising the people of Cordoba, Ferdinand occupied more Muslim territory. In 625 AH when the Almohad ruler in Seville, Abdul-Ala Idris I, made the fatal mistake of abandoning Spain, and left with the remnant of the Almohad forces for Morocco, Andalusia was left fragmented in the hands of local strongmen, led loosely by Mohammed ibn Yusuf ibn Houd al-Judhami. At this, the Christian kings - Ferdinand III of Castile, Alfonso IX of Leon, James I of Aragon and Sancho II of Portugal - immediately launched a series of raids. Houd's army was destroyed and the Christian armies romped through the south virtually unopposed, as Muslim cities fell one by one, with little or no prospect of rescue from North Africa. Ferdinand seized Badajoz and Mérida, followed by Cazorla, Ubeda and Cordoba, from where he continued his march over the next 12 years to occupy Murcia, Cartagena and finally Seville, the Almohad capital, leaving only a rump Andalusian state, the Emirate of Granada, unconquered.

**266 solar years ago**, on this day in 1750 AD, the German musician and composer, Johann Sebastian Bach, died at the age of 65. Many of his songs are religious, and he also played a pivotal role in the progress and perfection of German music. Later in life he went blind. He composed numerous works, including a number of carols.

**222 solar years ago**, on this day in 1794 AD, with the execution of Maximilien Robespierre and a group of his supporters, the one-year long Reign of Terror in France ended. It had started when on the order of parliament, which administered the affairs of France following the victory of the French Revolution, a court was formed to counter the anti-revolutionaries. Robespierre, who was one of the main leaders of the revolution, intended to gain absolute authority in France, and executed many of his opponents, to this end. During the Reign of Terror, more than 120,000 summary executions took place, and many prominent persons were killed such as the chemist, Antoine-Laurent Lavoisier, and poet, Andre Marie Chenier.

**195 solar years ago**, on this day in 1821 AD, Peru gained independence from Spanish colonial rule. Home to the Inca Empire and Civilization that dominated northwest South America from the 12th to the 16th centuries, Peru and its rich culture were destroyed by the Spanish invaders, who ruthlessly massacred the indigenous people. Finally, thanks to the struggles of South American revolutionaries, such as Jose de San Martin and Simon Bolivar, Peru was liberated. The country covers an area of 1285216 sq km, with a long coastline on the Pacific Ocean, and shares borders with Ecuador, Colombia, Chile, Brazil, and Bolivia.

**158 solar years ago**, on this day in 1858, fingerprints were used as a means of identification for the first time.

**153 solar years ago**, on this day in 1863 AD, Tsarist Russia's senior-most Muslim general, Husain Khan Nakhchivanski, was born in Nakhchivan City to Major-General Kalb-e Ali Khan – son of Ehsan Khan Kangarlu, the last ruler of the Nakhchivan Khanate, which the Russians seized from Qajarid Iran through the Khan's treachery during the 1828 war. His mother was Khurshid Qajar-Iravan, member of the ruling family of the Erivan Khanate – also abolished by Russia in 1828 on its seizure from Iran. He was the only Muslim to serve as General-Adjutant of the Tsar's retinue. He distinguished himself in the Russo-Japanese War and received 7 medals for his bravery. Tsar Nicholas II personally decorated him and made him Deputy Commander of the Caucasus Army during World War I, before promoting him as General of the Cavalry. After the end of World War I, Hussain Khan Nakhchivanski remained in the capital Petrograd (St. Petersburg) and refused to side with the revolutionaries. He sent to the Tsar a telegram (later found undelivered) to use his forces to crush them. In October 1917, when the Bolsheviks under Lenin hijacked the revolution and seized powers, Hussain Khan Nakhchivanski along with other prominent citizens was taken hostage, and executed in 1919 at the age of 55. His nephews, Jamshid Khan and Kalb-e Ali Khan (sons of Ja'far Khan Nakhchivanski), who served under him, played the Azerbaijan Democratic Army, inflicted defeats on the Soviet Red Army, and joined prominent roles in the short-lived Azerbaijan Republic, before the communists took over. Kalb-e Ali fled to Iran where he joined the Iranian Army and was secretly murdered by Reza Khan Pahlavi in 1934, while Jamshid after brief imprisonment, reluctantly switched sides to the Soviet Union, but during the 1937-1938 repressions he was arrested, charged with anti-communist activities and killed by a firing squad.

**138 solar years ago**, on this day in 1878 AD, the Treaty of Berlin was signed by representatives of Russia, France, Britain, and Austria as well as other German speaking states, at the end of the Berlin Congress called by German chancellor, Otto von Bismarck, to determine the national identity of Germany.

**102 solar years ago**, on this day in 1914 AD, the Austria-Hungary Empire declared war on Serbia on rejection of conditions of an ultimatum of July 23 following assassination of crown prince, Archduke Francis Ferdinand. World War I thus began with the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires on one side, and the Russian and British Empires on the other side in alliance with Serbia and France.

**73 solar years ago**, on this day in 1943 AD during World War II, the savage Operation Gomorrah launched by the British air force on Hamburg caused a firestorm that killed 42,000 German civilians.

**40 solar years ago**, on this day in 1976 AD, a major earthquake shook the East Chinese city of Tangshan, killing 242,769 people and injuring 164,851 others. Over a million people were made homeless. This 7.8 degree trembler was the second major earthquake that jolted China in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

**36 solar years ago**, on this day in 1980 AD, Iran adopted a new flag, as a reflection of the changes brought about by the victory of the Islamic Revolution over a year earlier. Its field is a tricolour comprising equal horizontal bands of green, white, and red. Green symbolizes growth, happiness, unity, and vitality. White stands for peace. Red stands for martyrdom, since this colour symbolizes bravery, fire, life, love, warmth, and sophistication in Iranian culture. The Iranian parliament, as per the 1980 constitution, changed the flag and seal of state, replacing the Lion and Sun emblem in the centre with the Word "Allah" (the Almighty Creator). Designed by Hamid Nadimi, and officially approved by the Father of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeini (RA), this Emblem is a highly stylized composite of various Islamic elements: a geometrically symmetric form of the Word Allah and overlapping parts of the phrase "la ilaha il-Allah" (there is no deity but God), forming a monogram in the form of a tulip it consists of four crescents and a line. The four crescents read from right to left – as per the Perso-Arabic alphabet. The first crescent is the letter "Alif" (A), the second crescent is the first "Laam" (L); the vertical line is another "Laam", and the third and fourth crescents together form the "heh" (H). Above the central stroke is a "tashdid" (a diacritical mark indicating gemination) that resembles "w". The tulip shape of the emblem as a whole memorializes those who have given their life for Iran and symbolizes the values of patriotism and self-sacrifice, building on a legend that red tulips grow from the shed blood of martyrs.

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

# 'Son of Desert' to Explore Iranian Central Desert

TEHRAN (MNA) – Italian famous desert-trotter has decided to come to Iran and explore the road not taken by any human being in the history of the desert: to cover on foot the central desert of Iran which stretches 400km north-south.

'When someone says it's impossible I already feel that I can do,' this is audacious sentence written in Max Calderan's official website. His stamina belies the conventional wisdom and medical practice. He is beyond the understanding traditional people make of what the strenuous task is and what the sport proper is. Calderan's achievements go beyond the most strenuous of the Olympics. His distances covered in the desert simply dwarf that of the Olympic Marathon. He is a master of desert and single-handedly crossed the passages no human being dared to ever.

Crossing 250km of Sinai Desert under torrid conditions of 50 degrees Celsius and by fasting in day of holy month of Ramadan is a demanding task not even imagined. Max converted to Islam 12 years ago just ahead of its epic journey in the Sinai Desert. "I want to achieve what has not been achieved by anyone; I want to tread places not trodden by anyone before; I want to face challenges no one welcomed," says Calderan, who is in Iran this time to record another Guinness record among his repertoire of the mind-blowing superlatives.

His new plan is to cover 400km of Iranian central desert north-south to protect Asiatic Cheetah. The route he will take is not an easy route and no one so far has gotten the gauntlet the inhospitable environs of the Iranian desert usually had thrown. The sun warms this desert more than any other



spot on the planet. The desert is northernmost part of the desert band which rounds the earth. NASA has recorded a hottest temperature of 71 degrees Celsius (159 degrees Fahrenheit) in

the region, which gives the desert the epithet 'hottest place on earth.'

Max has been invited to Iran officially. He is not a stranger to the Middle Eastern deserts. In 2014, Alja-

zeera recorded a documentary featuring Max Calderan, aptly entitled 'The Son of the Desert,' aired worldwide to publicize this newly-convert Muslim of Christian stock.

## Int'l Cardiovascular Congress Opens in Mashhad

MASHHAD (IRNA) – The 8th Razavi International Cardiovascular Congress started work Wednesday in this northeastern Iranian province. Over 400 domestic and foreign surgeons, cardiologists and doctors attended the congress being held at the Razavi Hospital for three days.

The Mashhad congress is aimed at presenting

the latest research and scientific achievements in treatment of cardiovascular diseases and exchanging experiences between foreign and domestic experts in that area.

Also, some foreign guests from Germany, Britain, US, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Turkey, India, Egypt, South Korea, Vietnam and Ireland have participated in the congress.

## Hosseinyeh Ershad Holds Exhibition on Imam Sadiq (AS) Martyrdom



TEHRAN (IBNA) - Hosseinyeh Ershad Public Library in Tehran will hold an exhibition on the subject of the martyrdom of the sixth Shi'ite

Imam, Sadiq (AS) on July 27 and 28. According to IBNA correspondent quoting the historical sources, Imam Sadiq was a key figure in the

formation and promotion of Shi'ite ideas and Shi'ite Fiqh (jurisprudence). The hadiths received from this Imam are said to be more numerous than all others ascribed to the other Shi'ite imams as a whole. He lived at a special time where the Islamic world was the scene of confrontation among different religious ideas and sects.

The sixth Shi'ite Imam was arrested several times by Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs Hisham, Saffah, and Mansur. Based on some sources, he was poisoned through at the behest of Mansur in 148/765 at the age of 64 or 65 and was laid to rest in the city of Medina, in the famous ancient Jannatul Baqee cemetery.

## Experiences of Racism Most Harmful to Mental Health

LONDON (Dispatches) - For the first time, it has been revealed how harmful repeated racial discrimination can be on mental and physical health, new research says.

The study observed how experiences of repeated racial attacks over time including being shouted at, being physically attacked, avoiding a place, or feeling unsafe because of one's ethnicity affected a person's mental health.

"Studies that assess the association between racial discrimination and health, or examine exposure at a certain point in time, underestimate the harm of racial discrimination on the mental health of ethnic minority people and its contribution to ethnic inequalities in health," said Dr Becares, research fellow in the Manchester University's School of Social Sciences and in the Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity.

According to the research, increased mental health problems were shown to be significantly higher among racial minorities who'd experienced repeated incidents of racial discrimination, when compared to ethnic minorities who did not report any experience of racism.

It was also discovered that it was the fear of avoiding spaces and feeling unsafe due to racial discrimination that had the biggest cumulative effect on the mental health of ethnic minorities.

## Picture of the Day



Painters work on a mural created by Brazilian artist Eduardo Kobra that when finished will cover nearly 3,000 square meters of wall space and depict indigenous faces from five continents, to welcome visitors to the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, in Rio de Janeiro. Courtesy: Reuters