

This Day in History

(February 5)

Today is Monday; 16th of the Iranian month of Bahman 1396 solar hijri; corresponding to 18th of the Islamic month of Jamadi al-Awwal 1439 lunar hijri; and February 5, 2018, of the Christian Gregorian Calendar.

1956 solar years ago, on this day in 62 AD, a major earthquake devastated most of the Italian city of Pompeii, the vice-centre of the Roman Empire. Preceded over the past decades with small-scale tremblers, this severe earthquake was clearly a divine warning to the people to leave their sinful and erotic ways or else face the wrath of the All-Merciful God that finally descended on Pompeii 17 years later in 79 AD, as a result of the massive volcanic eruption of Mount Vesuvius that buried the city under tons of molten lava. Chaos followed the earthquake. Fires, caused by oil lamps that had fallen, added to the panic. Temples, houses, bridges, and roads were destroyed. After the quake, anarchy ruled the city, with theft and starvation plaguing survivors. Between 62 and the eruption that destroyed it in 79, rebuilding was done, but many inhabitants moved to other cities, fearing divine punishment, while other moved in for pursuit of carnal pleasures, when Vesuvius gave to the 20,000 population the taste of the eternal inferno in life.

1262 solar years ago, on this day in 756 AD, An Lushan, the Leader of the revolt against the Tang Dynasty, declared himself emperor and established the short-lived state of Yan. A general of Sogdian-Turkic ethnicity at the Tang court, he launched his revolt which spanned the reigns of three Tang emperors and involved a wide range of regional powers, including Arab and Persian Muslims, Iranian Sogdian forces, and the pagan Gogturks. The resulting disorder led to a huge loss of life and large-scale destruction. It significantly weakened the Tang dynasty, which four years earlier had suffered a disastrous defeat at the Battle of Talas in Ferghana Valley. In 756, over 22,000 Arab-Iranian Muslims were sent by the Abbasid caliph to the aid of the Tang. They stayed in China after the war and intermarried with the Hui Chinese – who are predominantly Muslim till this day. During the rebellion the port of Canton (Guangzhou, near the mouth of the South China Sea) was pillaged in 758 by a sea-borne Arab-Persian force.

1111 lunar years ago, on this day in 328 AH, Spanish Muslim theologian and poet, Ahmad ibn Muhammad Ibn Abd Rabbihi, passed away. His anthology *“al-Iqd al-Fareed”* (The Unique Necklace), is a voluminous work, considered a masterpiece of Arabic literature. Although he was descended from Spanish Christian converts to Islam, spent all his life in Spain and did not travel to the Islamic East, he was well aware of affairs of the Islamic world extending into Khorasan, Central Asia and present day Pakistan. He has also chronicled the merits of the Ahl al-Bayt or Infallible Household of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA) and detailed the seditious events in the early days of Islam when the caliphate was hijacked from the Prophet’s family.

590 solar years ago, on this day in 1428 AD, King Alfonso V of Aragon, who had taken control of Sicily, ordered Sicilian Jews to convert to Catholicism. With the end of Muslim rule in Spain and the islands off the coast of Spain and Italy, the Jews who had enjoyed all basic rights under Islamic rule and rose to prominent positions, were severely persecuted by Christians. There were periodic massacres and forced conversion. After fall of the Muslim kingdom of Granada, when the Inquisition reached Sicily, 100,000 Sicilian Jews were ordered expelled, and the island was cleared of all Jews – the remaining forcibly converted. Throughout history the Christians have intensely hated Jews, for the alleged crucifixion of Prophet Jesus, as well as for their continued slandering of the Virgin Mary.

278 solar years ago, on this day in 1840 AD, Christian priest, Father Thomas de Camangiano of Sardinia, disappeared in Syria with his servant on the eve of Passover in the Jewish quarter of Jobar. Syrian Christians charged 13 prominent Jews of Damascus with the ritual murder of the two, and subsequently imprisoned and tortured them. Four Jews died under torture, and the remaining 9 were released several months later when a group of influential European Jews led by Britain’s Jewish banker, Moses Haim Montefiore, visited Cairo and pleaded their case with Mohammad Ali Pasha the ruler of Egypt-Syria. The *“Damascus Affair”*, as it became known, made international news, as Christians called for blood libel against Jews. To prevent Christian-Jew feuds in the Ottoman Empire, a *“farman”* was issued from Istanbul by Sultan Abdul-Majid I that shows the rights enjoyed by the minorities in Muslim societies: *“For the love we bear to our subjects, we cannot permit the Jewish people, whose innocence for the crime alleged against them (by the Christians) is evident, to be worried and tormented as a consequence of accusations which have not the least foundation in truth.”*

Later investigation confirmed the French Christian priest was ritually slaughtered by Jews.

235 solar years ago, on this day in 1783 AD, a series of earthquakes ravaged Calabria in Italy. Over 30,000 people died and hundreds of thousands became homeless.

149 solar years ago, on this day in 1869 AD, the largest-ever gold nugget, called the *“Welcome Stranger”*, was found in Australia by John Deason and Richard Oates. It weighed 71.018 kg and measured 61 by 31 centimeters. It was melted and sent as gold ingots to the Bank of England in London. If intact, its present value would have been more than four million US dollars.

137 solar years ago, on this day in 1881 AD, Scottish essayist, historian and orientalist, Thomas Carlyle, died at the age of 86. He mastered German and Arabic languages, and taught Arabic at Cambridge University. During trips to Muslim lands, he became familiar with Islamic culture and civilization, and was highly influenced by Islam. On the Holy Qur’an, he calls it a direct voice from the heart of the universe for mankind. He has hailed Prophet Mohammad (SAWA) as a person of deep and a great spirit, far from worldly ambitions, saying: *“It is a great shame for anyone to listen to the accusation that Islam is a lie and that Mohammad was a fabricator and a deceiver. We saw that he remained steadfast upon his principles, with firm determination; kind and generous, compassionate, pious, virtuous, with real manhood, hardworking and sincere. Besides all these qualities, he was lenient with others, tolerant, kind, cheerful and praiseworthy and perhaps he would joke and tease his companions. He was just, truthful, smart, pure, magnanimous and present-minded; his face was radiant as if he had lights within him to illuminate the darkest of nights; he was a great man by nature who was not educated in a school nor nurtured by a teacher as he was not in need of any of this.”*

On the Prophet’s Vicegerent Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (AS), Carlyle wrote: *“As for this young Ali, one cannot but like him. A noble minded creature, as he shows himself, now and always afterwards, full of affection, of fiery daring something chivalrous in him, brave as a lion, yet with a grace, truth and affection... He died by assassination in the mosque at Kufa, death occasioned by his own generous fairness, confidence in the fairness of others. He said: if the wound proved not unto death, they must pardon the assassin, but if it did, they must slay him straightaway, so that the two of them in the same our might appear before God, and see which side of that quarrel was the just one.”*

On the martyrdom of Imam Husain (AS), Carlyle has written: *“The best lesson which we get from the tragedy of Karbala is that Husain and his companions were the steadfast believers of God. They illustrated that numerical superiority does not count when it comes to truth and falsehood. The victory of Husain despite his minority marvels me!”* Carlyle authored several books, including *“The French Revolution”*, *“Past and Present”*, and *“On Heroes and Hero Worship and the Heroic in History.”*

60 solar years ago, on this day in 1958 AD, a 3,400 kg hydrogen bomb, was lost by the US Air Force off the coast of Georgia, near Tybee Island when a B-47 bomber jettisoned it on midair collision with a fighter plane. It was never found. If detonated, it would mean mass destruction.

39 solar years ago, on this day in 1979 AD, air force officers came to the Father of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeini (RA) to swear allegiance. The Imam welcomed them and issued orders for forming of a provisional government, defining its duties and instructing that a nationwide referendum be held to determine the form of the post-revolutionary system. The remnants of the fugitive Shah’s army tried to create chaos over the next days but were overcome by the people’s power and finally on February 11 the Islamic Revolution triumphed.

24 solar years ago, on this day in 1994 AD, Iranian journalist Ali Akbar Kasmai, passed away. After graduation in Tehran, he left for Egypt to pursue journalism, and his acquaintance with famous journalists like Taha Hussain, Abbas Aqqad and Towfiq al-Hakim, greatly benefitted his natural flair for writing. He mastered Arabic and French languages, and on return to Iran, involved himself in the media, serving for fifty years as Editor of the newspaper *“Entela’at”*.

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

Tehran to Host 2nd Congress on Successful Iranian Women



TEHRAN (MNA) – Concurrent with International Women’s Day on March 8, Tehran will host the second National Congress on Successful Iranian Women.

The congress aims to highlight the crucial role of women in achieving sustainable development and to celebrate the successes of Iranian women.

The topics to be discussed at the congress include challenges facing the participation of Iranian women in various social, cultural, political and economic fields.

The congress will gather together many successful women in national and international fields and female managers who are active in executive organizations.

Specialized workshops and meetings will also be held on the sidelines of the event and participants will be granted certificates.

On 6 March 2017, Shahid Beheshti University hosted the first “National Congress on Successful Iranian Women” in Tehran, also attended by UNESCO representatives.

Polar Bears Face Food Shortage Crisis

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - New research published in the journal *Science* has found that polar bears have metabolic rates 60 percent higher than scientists previously thought, meaning the animals require more food to survive their harsh Arctic environment than was previously known.

Polar bears already face challenges due to the effects of climate change on natural habitats, and the new information means their ability to adapt to receding sea ice will become even more difficult.

The polar bear’s diet is high in



fat, supplied largely by hunting seals, but with less Arctic ice,

scientists worry that the bears will have to walk or swim great-

er and greater distances for food with each passing year.

The researchers used radio collars to track nine female polar bears near the Beaufort Sea. Using collected blood samples, scientists found that five of the bears lost body mass due to malnutrition. Four of the bears lost 10 percent body weight in just a 10-day period.

In 2017, the world’s oceans reached their hottest temperatures on record. And since 2010, the Earth has experienced the five warmest years ever recorded.

Standing Up Could Help You Lose Weight

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - A new study found that standing instead of sitting for six hours a day could prevent weight gain and help people to actually lose weight.

A new study published in the European Journal of Preventive Cardiology found that prolonged sitting has been linked to the obesity epidemic, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes. Europeans sit for up to seven hours a day, and even physically active people may spend most of the day in a chair.

This paper examined whether standing burns more calories than sitting. The researchers analyzed results from a total of 46 studies with 1,184 participants in all. Participants, on average, were 33 years old, 60% were men, and the average body mass index and weight were 24 kg/m² and 65 kg, respectively.

The researchers found that standing burned 0.15 kcal per minute more than sitting. By substituting standing for sitting for six hours a day, a 65 kg person would expend an extra 54 kcal a day. Assuming no increase in food intake, that would equate to 2.5 kg in one year and 10 kg in four years.

Senior author Professor Francisco Lopez-Jimenez, Chief of Preventive Cardiology at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, U.S., said: “Standing not only burns more calories, the additional muscle activity is linked to lower rates of heart attacks, strokes, and diabetes, so the benefits of standing could go beyond weight control.”

The gap in energy expenditure

between standing and sitting could be even greater than the study found. Participants were standing still, while in reality people make small movements while standing. “Our results might be an underestimate because when people stand they tend to make spontaneous movements like shifting weight or swaying from one foot to another, taking small steps forward and back. People may even be more likely to walk to the filing cabinet or trash bin,” said Professor Lopez-Jimenez.



Picture of the Day



Ghadamgah is a town in the “Khorasan Razavi” Province in the east of Neyshabour city. This religious and holy place includes a mosque and the graves of some great renowned characters in history. The reason why it is called “Ghadamgah” (the place of feet) is due to the presence of a dark black stone that illustrates the feet step print on and it is believed that these are the step place of Imam Reza, the eighth Shiite Imam.

Courtesy: Tasnim News Agency