

This Day in History

This Day in History (February 18)

Today is Sunday; 29th of the Iranian month of Bahman 1396 solar hijri; corresponding to 1st of the Islamic month of Jamadi as-Sani 1439 lunar hijri; and February 18, 2018, of the Christian Gregorian Calendar.

1117 solar years ago, on this day in 901 AD, Sabian scholar and mathematician, Thabet Ibn Qurra al-Harrani, died. He greatly contributed to such important mathematical discoveries as the extension of the concept of number to positive real numbers, integral calculus, theorems in spherical trigonometry, analytic geometry, and non-Euclidean geometry. In astronomy he was one of the first reformers of the Ptolemaic system, writing the book *"Concerning the Motion of the Eighth Sphere"*. Including observations of the Sun, eight complete treatises by Thabet on astronomy have survived. In mechanics he was a founder of statics. He was from Harran, presently under the control of Turkey although historically and culturally part of Mesopotamia. He belonged to the Sabian creed of star-worshippers, while some say he followed the Mandeian creed that considers Prophet Yahya (John the Baptist) to be the principal figure and last messenger of God. Thabet was invited to Baghdad by the Iranian scientists, the Banu Musa brothers, and translated scientific texts from Greek and Syriac into Arabic. It is not known whether or not he became a Muslim, but his sons accepted Islam.

1060 lunar years ago, on this day in 379 AH, noted linguist of Islamic Spain, Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Hassan az-Zubaidi, passed away. He authored the books *"Lahn al-Aamma"* (Errors of Language of Common People), and *"Tabqaat an-Nahwiyeen wa'l-Lughawiyeen"* (Who is Who of Arabic Grammar and Linguistics). In the latter work, compiled in Spain, he has hailed the sermons of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (AS), as unrivaled masterpieces of eloquence, decades before the compilation of *"Nahj al-Balagha"*.

817 solar years ago, on this day in 1201 AD, famous Iranian Islamic theologian and scientist, Mohammad Ibn Hassan, popular as Khwaja Naseer od-Din Tusi was born in Tous in Khorasan. He was an outstanding philosopher, scientist, mathematician and astronomer who made valuable contributions to the development of science and civilization. Even the Mongol invaders acknowledged his genius and Hulagu Khan, appointed him as his scientific advisor. Naseer od-Din Tusi built the famous observatory at Maragah in 1262. It had various instruments such as a 4-meter wall quadrant made from copper and an azimuth quadrant which was his unique invention. Using accurately plotted planetary movements, he modified Ptolemy's model of the planetary system based on mechanical principles. The observatory and its library became a centre for a wide range of work in science, mathematics and philosophy. About the real essence of the Milky Way, Tusi in his book on astronomy *"at-Tadhkirah fi Ilm al-Hayyah"*, wrote three centuries before Galileo: *"The Milky Way, i.e. the galaxy, is made up of a very large number of small, tightly-clustered stars, which, on account of their concentration and smallness, seem to be cloudy patches. Because of this, it was likened to milk in colour."*

He wrote some 80 books in both Arabic and Persian on various subjects including *"Tajrid al-E'teqad"* on theology, *"Akhlag-e Naseri"* on ethics, *"Sharh al-Isharaat Ibn Sina"* on philosophy, and *"Kitab ash-Shakl al-Qatta"* on mathematics, etc. It is to be noted that a 60-km diameter lunar crater located on the southern hemisphere of the moon is named after him as *"Naseeruddin"*. A minor planet discovered by Soviet astronomer Nikolai Stepanovich Chernykh in 1979 is named after him *"10269 Tusi"*.

780 lunar years ago, on this day in 659 AH, biographer and poet, Mohammad bin Abi Bakr al-Ishbili al-Andalusi, popular as Ibn Saiyyid an-Naas, was born in Cairo. A member of a scholarly Spanish Muslim family of Seville, he studied in Cairo and Damascus under prominent ulema such as the historian-theologian, Ibn Asaker (author of the voluminous History of Damascus). He then taught hadith at the Zaheriyya School of the Egyptian capital. He composed Qasidas (panegyrics) in praise of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA). He also wrote a biography of the Prophet entitled *"Lyouan al-Asar fi Fonoun al-Maghazi, ash-Shama'el wa's-Siyar"*.

724 solar years ago, on this day in 1294 AD, Kublai Khan, the fifth Great Khan of the Mongol Empire from 1260 to 1294 and the founder of the Yuan Dynasty in China died. As the son of Tolui and a grandson of Chengiz Khan, he styled himself Khaqaanm, though his actual power was limited to China and Mongolia. He was the first non-Chinese Emperor to conquer all China.

686 solar years ago, on this day in 1332 AD, Amda Seyon I, Emperor of Ethiopia began his brutal campaign in the Muslim areas of the Horn of Africa, destroying towns and cities, desecrating mosques, massacring thousands of people, stealing their livestock, and plundering their gold, silver and properties. A bigoted Christian with blind hatred of Islam, he acted as an agent of the Byzantine or Eastern Roman Empire and subjected Muslims to persecution and genocide. As a result the independent Muslim areas of the Horn of Africa were absorbed in Christian-ruled Ethiopia, where Muslims still make up over 40 percent of the population today.

646 solar years ago, on this day in 1372 AD, Shafe'i hadith scholar, poet, and historian, Shahab od-Din Ahmad ibn Ali ibn Mohammad Ibn Hajar Asqalani, was born in Cairo. A prolific writer, he compiled some 150 books and treatises on various topics including the God-given merits of the Ahl al-Bayt of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA). He died the age of 78.

613 solar years ago, on this day in 1405 AD, the Turco-Mongol conqueror, Amir Timur, died, while on expedition against China after conquering all the lands from the Mediterranean coast of Syria to River Ganges in India, and from the Persian Gulf in the south to Moscow in the north. He was of ferocious nature and sometimes destroyed entire cities and massacred whole populations. He seized the Chaghatai Khanate of Central Asia-Khorasan, destroyed the Golden Horde of Eurasia, defeated the Mamluk Empire of Egypt-Syria, conquered the Sultanate of Delhi and shattered the emerging Ottoman Empire, whose sultan, Bayazid I, he brought as prisoner to his capital Samarqand. At the same time he patronized art, architecture and literature, especially the Persian language. He was buried in his capital Samarqand in what is now the Republic of Uzbekistan in the mausoleum known as Gur-e Amir.

472 solar years ago, on this day in 1546 AD, German theologian and iconic figure of the Protestant Reformation in Christianity, Martin Luther, died. He strongly disputed the claim of the Catholic Church that freedom from God's punishment for sin could be purchased with money. He wrote his famous "Ninety-Five Theses" in 1517. His refusal to retract all his writings at the demand of Pope Leo X in 1520 and the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V resulted in his excommunication. His translation of the Bible from Latin into the spoken language made it more accessible and led to the development of a standard version of the German language. Luther wrote that since the Israelites betrayed Prophet Jesus and continue to slander the Virgin Mary, all Jewish homes should be destroyed, their synagogues burned, and their wealth confiscated.

454 solar years ago, on this day in 1564 AD, Italian painter, sculptor, architect, and poet, Michelangelo, died at the age of 89. He created several works of art. The huge statues which he named Moses and David (not to be confused with the Prophets as he wrongly claimed), and the painting of the so-called Last Judgment are considered as his most important works.

273 solar years ago, on this day in 1745 AD, Italian physicist, Alessandro Giuseppe Antonio Anastasio Volta, who invented the electric battery in 1800, was born. Volta also invented the electrophorus, the condenser and the electroscope. His study of gases included the discovery of methane. The "volt", a unit of electrical measurement, is named after him.

233 solar years ago, on this day in 1785 AD, Ja'far Khan Zand, who a week earlier on February 11 had defeated and killed Ali Murad Khan Zand to avenge his father, the 5th Zand ruler Sadeq Khan's murder, crowned himself in Shiraz as the 7th king of the Zand Dynasty of Iran. Ja'far was an able military commander and he defeated the Qajar aspirant to the throne of Iran, Agha Mohammad Khan, in several battles. His rule ended four years later with his murder by Sayed Murad Khan Zand, who in turn was defeated and killed after only 4-months in power by his victim's son, Loff Ali Khan Zand. The fratricide amongst the Zands brought about the collapse of the founded by Karim Khan (reigned for 29 years by placing Ismail III Safavi as figurehead), and led to establishment of the Qajar dynasty under Agha Mohammad Khan in 1794.

184 solar years ago, on this day in 1834 AD, French colonial forces, which had occupied Algeria in 1830, following the weakening of the hold of the Ottoman Empire on North Africa, were crushed by the forces of Amir Seyyed Abdul-Qader al-Jazaeri al-Hassani, who traced his descent to Imam Hasan al-Mujtaba (AS), the elder grandson and 2nd Infallible Heir of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA). A third of the French troopers were killed, and half of the remaining troops were taken captive. In the next two years he liberated nearly all of Algeria. He was later defeated through ruse and taken to France as a captive. Years later he was forced to renounce opposition to French rule in Algeria, and was allowed to settle in Syria where he died.

105 solar years ago, on this day in 1913 AD, Pedro Lascurain became President of Mexico for 45 minutes – the shortest term of any person as president of any country.

40 solar years ago, on this day in 1978 AD, the people of Tabriz rose against the Pahlavi regime on the 40th day of the martyrs of the Qom uprising. This historical movement triggered a series of uprisings all over Iran, which resulted in the victory of the Islamic Revolution.

39 solar years ago, on this day in 1979 AD, snow fell in the Sahara Desert in southern Algeria for the only time in recorded history.

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

WHO Appoints Iran Health Min. As Commissioner on NCDs



Iranian Minister of Health and Medical Education Dr. Seyed Hassan Ghazizadeh Hashemi was appointed as commissioner to control and prevent non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

TEHRAN (MNA) – At the official announcement of World Health Organization (WHO), Iranian Minister of Health and Medical Education Dr. Seyed Hassan Ghazizadeh Hashemi was appointed as commissioner to control and prevent non-communicable diseases (NCDs)

Deputy Ministry of Health and Medical Education in International Affairs Mohsen Asadi Lari made the above remark and added, "non-communicable diseases are the leading cause of 75% death of people in the country, so that WHO has emphasized on controlling these diseases in the world strictly."

In this line, High Commissioner to Control Non-Communicable Diseases, headed by four presidents and ministers, was set up to guide joint programs across the world, he said, adding, "as a leading country, Iran approved document to control and prevent non-communicable diseases."

He reiterated, "World Health Organization has praised Iran's role as one of the successful countries in controlling and preventing non-communicable diseases."

To conclude his remarks, the deputy minister said, "it was stipulated that Iran's progresses and achievements would be submitted in UN General Assembly in 2018."

Golestan University Hosts 1st Conference on New Trends in English Teaching

By Behnaz H. Gholipour

TEHRAN – The First International Conference on New Trends in English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics was held at Golestan University, northeastern Iran, on February 15.

A total of 400 people took part in the conference.

Two workshops ran by Dr. Kamran Ahmad Goli and Professor Alireza Jalilifar were held on the sidelines of the meeting, dealing with literature, arts and text analysis.

The conference focused on curriculum development in language teaching and discourse, language assessment and testing, acquisition of second language, and many more pertinent subjects.

The secretary of the seminar and vice-chancellor of University of Golestan for research affairs and secretary of the conference Dr. Mahnaz Aghdasi, in an address to the audience,



called for "better teaching" of the English language. Aghdasi noted that Iran is in dire need of international-style teaching of English, which is the most widely spoken language in the business world and international community.

Another speaker at the event was scientific secretary of the conference Dr. Ali Derakhshan who thanked the audience for their participation and hoped for a wider audience and larger scale participation in

the next meeting.

The other speakers, who took the floor in the conference, were Professor Mohammad Alavi from Tehran University, Professor Reza Pishghadam from Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, and Dr. Farzad Sharifian from Australia's Monash University.

Renowned and distinguished professors and instructors from Tehran's Allameh Tabataba'i University, University of Tehran, Kharazmi University, Shahid Beheshti University, Ahvaz University as well as universities of Isfahan, Shiraz, Hamedan, Tabriz, Mazandaran, and Islamic Azad University also attended the meeting.

Out of 448 scientific articles sent to the secretariat of the meeting, 237 were selected for aural and 37 for poster presentation.

The 2nd International conference in English language teaching will be held at Golestan University in the next two years.

Alzheimer's Disease Reversed in Mouse Model

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Researchers have found that gradually depleting an enzyme called BACE1 completely reverses the formation of amyloid plaques in the brains of mice with Alzheimer's disease, thereby improving the animals' cognitive function.

The study carried out by a team of researchers from the Cleveland Clinic Lerner Research Institute, raises hopes that drugs targeting the said enzyme will be able to successfully treat Alzheimer's disease in humans.

One of the earliest events in Alzheimer's disease is an abnormal build-up of beta-amyloid peptide, which can form large, amyloid plaques in the brain and disrupt the function of neuronal synapses. Also known as beta-secretase, BACE1 helps produce beta-amyloid peptide by cleaving amyloid precursor protein (APP). Drugs that inhibit BACE1 are therefore being developed as potential Alzheimer's disease treatments but, because BACE1 controls many important processes by cleaving proteins other than APP, these drugs could have serious side effects.

Mice completely lacking BACE1 suffer severe neurodevelopmental defects. To investigate whether inhibiting BACE1 in adults might be less harmful, Riqiang Yan and colleagues generated mice that gradually lose this enzyme as they grow older. These mice developed normally and appeared to remain perfectly healthy over time.

The researchers then bred these rodents with mice that start to develop amyloid plaques and Alzheimer's disease when they are 75 days old. The resulting offspring also formed plaques at this age, even though their BACE1 levels were approximately 50% lower than normal. Remarkably, however, the plaques began to dis-

appear as the mice continued to age and lose BACE1 activity, until, at 10 months old, the mice had no plaques in their brains at all.

Loss of BACE1 also improved the learning and memory of mice with Alzheimer's disease. However, when the researchers made electrophysiological recordings of neurons from these animals, they found that depletion of BACE1 only partially restored synaptic function, suggesting that BACE1 may be required for optimal synaptic activity and cognition.



Picture of the Day



Alexander's prison is a 15th century domed school, located next to the tourist office in the old town of Yazd. Alexander's prison is advertised as being built as a mosque and Ziaeeh religious school and to have no connection to Alexander.

Courtesy: Tasnim News Agency