

This Day in History

(May 20)

Today is Saturday; 30th of the Iranian month of Ordibehesht 1396 solar hijri; corresponding to 23rd of the Islamic month of Sha'ban 1438 lunar hijri; and May 20, 2017, of the Christian Gregorian Calendar.

1491 solar years ago, on this day in 526 AD, some 300,000 people were killed when a devastating earthquake hit the sin-infested Byzantine city of Antioch in Syria (Antakya, presently in Turkey).

1425 lunar years ago, on this day in 13 AH, in *Harb al-Jisr* or the Battle of the Bridge in Iraq, the Sasanian forces led by Bahman Jaduyeh defeated the Arabs under the command of Abu Ubayd in the only major Persian victory over Muslims.

1134 lunar years ago, on this day in 304 AH, Seyyed Hassan al-Utrush, known as "*Nasser li'l-Haq*" (Defender of Faith) passed away at the age of 75, after an eventful life and a 3-year reign as reviver of the Alawid state of Tabaristan in what is now the Caspian Sea Provinces of Gilan, Mazandaran and Golestan in northern Iran.

946 lunar years ago, on this day in 492 AH, the Islamic city of Bayt al-Moqaddas was captured by European Crusaders from the Fatimid Ismaili Dynasty of Egypt-Syria-Hijaz-North Africa, after a siege of over 40 days. The invaders savagely massacred men, women and children, numbering more than 70,000 people, including Iranian Muslims settled there.

705 lunar years ago, on this day in 733 AH, the hadith scholar and literary figure Sharaf od-Din Hussain ibn Abdullah Tayyebi, passed away. He wrote an Exegesis of the Holy Qur'an.

639 solar years ago, on this day in 1378 AD, Dawoud Shah, who over a month earlier had usurped the throne of the Bahmani Dynasty of Iranian origin of the Deccan (Southern India) by treacherously assassinating his nephew Mujahid Shah, was killed on the orders of his niece Rooh-Parwar Agha (sister of the deceased Mujahid Shah) and replaced by her younger brother, Mohammad Shah II. The court language of the Bahmanis, who traced their origin to the pre-Islamic Iranian hero Bahman, was Persian, and they promoted Iranian culture, art and architecture.

621 lunar years ago, on this day in 817 AH, the prominent Persian poet and literary figure, Noor od-Din Abdur-Rahman Jami was born in the city of Jam, in Khorasan, northeastern Iran.

596 solar years ago, on this day in 1421 AD, Khizr Khan, who governed Delhi, Punjab and parts of northern India, as viceroy of the Turkic conqueror, Amir Timur, and after him of his son and successor, Shahrukh, died in Delhi. Two days later he was succeeded by his son, Mubarak Shah, in whose reign the famous Persian history "*Tarikh-e Mubarak Shahi*" was written in India.

511 solar years ago, on this day in 1506 AD, Italian navigator, Christopher Columbus, died in Valladolid in Spain at the age of 55 in the state of poverty, still believing he had discovered the coast of Asia.

510 lunar years ago, on this day in 928 AD, Shah Beg Arghun, who established his rule over Sindh by defeating Jam Firuz of the Samma dynasty, died after invading Gujarat. He was succeeded by his eldest son, Shah Hussain. A Persianized Mongol, Shah Beg initially ruled Qandahar as a vassal of the Timurid rulers of Herat, but with the rise of another Timurid prince, Zaheer od-Din Babar in Kabul, he realized the futility of ruling Qandahar and decided to carve out a separate state by seizing Sindh.

497 solar years ago, on this day in 1520 AD, the Spanish conquerors of Mexico brutally massacred the Aztec people while celebrations were taking place at the Festival of Tocatl in the city of Tenochtitlan. The Europeans are notorious for their genocide of the native populations of the Americas and plundering of their resources.

395 solar years ago, on this day in 1622 AD, Osman II, the 16th Ottoman Sultan and the 8th self-styled Turkish caliph, was strangled to death by his vizier, Qara Davoud Pasha, at the age of 18, after a 4-year reign.

386 solar years ago, on this day in 1631 AD, the city of Magdeburg in Germany was seized by forces of the Holy Roman Empire and most of its inhabitants massacred, in one of the bloodiest incidents of the Thirty-Year-War.

371 solar years ago, on this day in 1645 AD, in China the Manchurian Qing forces, led by Prince Dodo occupied the city of Yangzhou and for 10 days massacred almost the entire 800,000 population for supporting the Ming loyalist government.

215 solar years ago, on this day in 1802 AD, Napoleon Bonaparte reinstated slavery in the French colonies, revoking its abolition by the French Revolution, thus depriving a sizeable number of fellow humans of their rights of liberty and freedom.

211 solar years ago, on this day in 1806 AD, the English philosopher and economist, John Stuart Mill, was born.

107 solar years ago, on this day in 1910 AD, Japan, which had occupied the Korean Peninsula three years earlier by defeating both Russia and China, formally announced annexation of this land and renamed it Joseon.

104 lunar years ago, on this day in 1334 AH, the jurist and pious scholar, Shaikh Baqer ibn Mullah Mohammad Qomi, passed away. He was in Samarra for a long time and then returned to holy Najaf where he used to lead the congregational prayers.

90 solar years ago, on this day in 1927 AD, the British, as per the Treaty of Jeddah, handed over to the desert brigand Abdul-Aziz ibn Saud, the historical land of Hijaz and its religious and commercial centres, such as the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, the seaport of Jeddah and the agriculture-rich resort of Ta'ef. A couple of years earlier, the Wahhabi heretics had occupied Hijaz by driving out the other British agent, Sharif Hussain, and slaughtering over a hundred thousand Muslims, in addition to desecrating the holy shrines of the sacred cemeteries of Jannat al-Baqie in Medina and Jannat al-Mu'alla in Mecca. Five years later in 1932, Hijaz was formally joined with Najd to create the spurious entity called Saudi Arabia, which annexed the oil-rich eastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula on the Persian Gulf against the wishes of the local people, and then seized from Yemen the provinces of Najran, Jizan, and Asir.

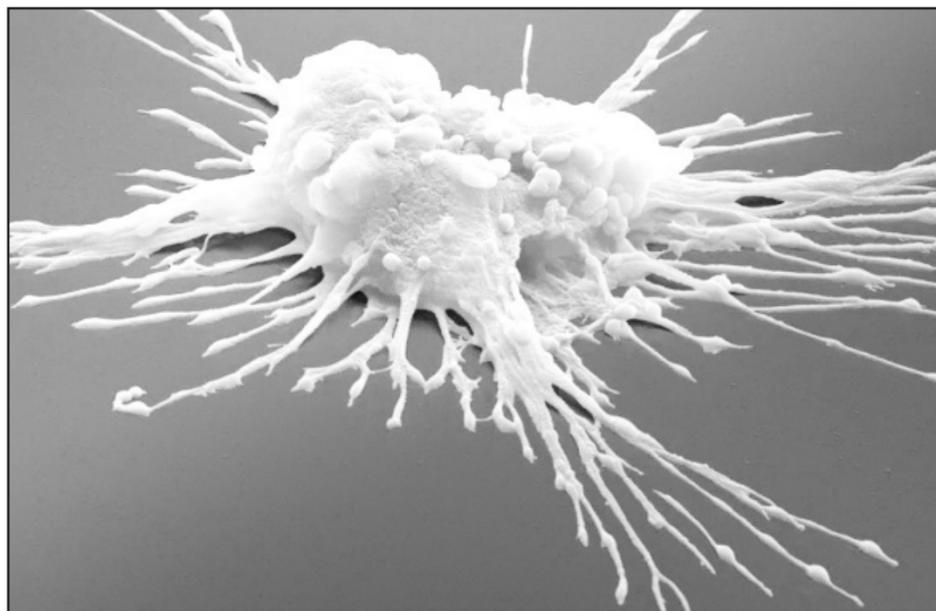
83 solar years ago, on this day in 1934 AD, the one-sided Treaty of Ta'ef was imposed on Imam Yahya of Yemen by Abdul-Aziz ibn Saud, ruler of the British created state called Saudi Arabia, according to which the regions of Najran, Jeezan, and Asir were occupied for a period of 40 years.

35 solar years ago, on this day in 1982 AD, as per the suggestion of the then Chief of the Iranian Legislature (Majlis), Ayatollah Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, the Daneshgah-e Azad-e Islami or Islamic Azad University (IAU), was established in Tehran. With branches throughout Iran and also in some countries abroad, it is one of the largest comprehensive systems of universities, colleges, and community colleges in the world. Over the years, IAU has promoted "higher education for all" as its key objective. Currently it has an enrollment of 1.7 million students. It has university branches in UAE, Britain, Lebanon and Afghanistan.

10 solar years ago, on this day in 2007 AD, Nigeria's largest state, Niger, sued US drug firm Pfizer for using 200 children as "guinea pigs" for a drug test in 1996 that led to deaths and deformities.

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

Scientists Produce Lab-Grown Blood Stem Cells



Researchers have made blood stem cells and progenitor cells from pluripotent stem cells (pictured above). Credit: Getty Images

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - **Scientists have transformed mature cells into primordial blood cells that regenerate themselves and the components of blood.**

The work offers hope to people with leu-

kaemia and other blood disorders who need bone-marrow transplants but can't find a compatible donor. If the findings translate into the clinic, these patients could receive lab-grown versions of their own healthy cells.

One team, led by stem-cell biologist George Daley of Boston Children's Hospital in Massachusetts, created human cells that act like blood stem cells, although they are not identical to those found in nature. A second team, led by stem-cell biologist Shahin Rafii of Weill Cornell Medical College in New York City, turned mature cells from mice into fully fledged blood stem cells.

Daley's team chose skin cells and other cells taken from adults as their starting material. Using a standard method, they reprogrammed the cells into induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cells, which are capable of producing many other cell types. Until now, however, iPS cells have not been morphed into cells that create blood.

Then Daley and his colleagues inserted seven transcription factors—genes that control other genes—into the genomes of the iPS cells. Then they injected these modified human cells into mice to develop. Twelve weeks later, the iPS cells had transformed into progenitor cells capable of making the range of cells found in human blood, including immune cells. The progenitor cells are "tantalizingly close" to naturally occurring 'haemopoetic' blood stem cells, says Daley.

Cardiovascular Disease Causes One-Third of Deaths Worldwide

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - **Cardiovascular diseases (CVD), including heart diseases and stroke, account for one-third of deaths throughout the world, according to a new scientific study that examined every country over the past 25 years.**

Countries with the greatest number of cardiovascular deaths, after accounting for population size, are found throughout Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East, South America, sub-Saharan Africa, and Oceania. Additionally, the steep declines experienced by the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, and countries in Western Europe

over the past two decades have begun to taper off and plateau.

"It is an alarming threat to global health," said Dr. Gregory Roth, Assistant Professor at the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) at the University of Washington and in the Division of Cardiology at the University of Washington School of Medicine. "Trends in CVD mortality are no longer declining for high-income regions and low- and middle-income countries are also seeing more CVD-related deaths."

Prevalence rates of CVD, including coronary artery disease, atrial fibrillation, heart failure, stroke, and peripheral arterial disease, were highest across sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern and Central Europe, and Central Asia. Some of the lowest rates occurred in high-income Asian countries such as Singapore, Japan, and South Korea, and southern South Amer-



ican countries, including Chile and Argentina.

The highest CVD death rates occurred throughout Central Asia and Eastern Europe, but also in countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan, and many South Pacific island nations. The lowest rates were in Japan, Andorra, Peru, France, and Spain. "High levels of cardiovascular

disease are seen throughout the world, both in high-income countries and those with more limited access to effective and inexpensive treatments," Dr. Roth said. "Risk factors for CVD, like high blood pressure, poor diet, high cholesterol, tobacco smoking, excessive alcohol use, and obesity, are common throughout most of the world."

Childhood Blindness Gene Identified

LONDON (Dispatches) - **A genetic mutation that contributes to sight loss in children has been identified by scientists.**

The mutation was identified in patients with a disease known as ocular coloboma, which causes part of the eye to be missing at birth.

The findings shed light on its causes and help to explain how genes contribute to development of the eye, researchers say.

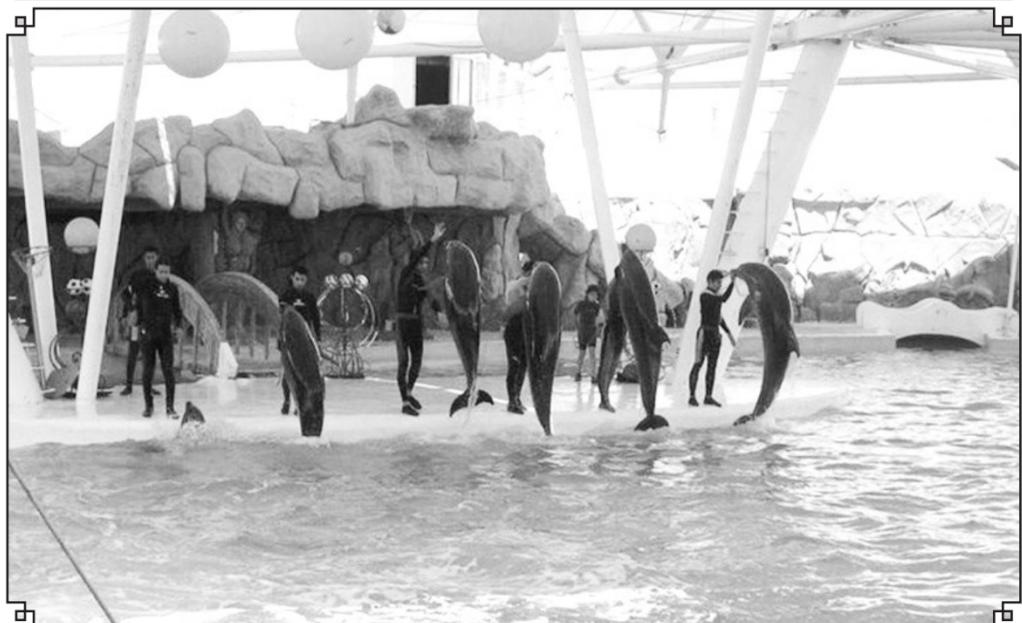
Ocular coloboma accounts for up to 10 per cent of all childhood blindness. It can cause a distinctive keyhole-shaped pupil as it commonly results in a missing segment in the iris, the coloured part of the eye.

Few genetic causes have so far been found to explain the cause of coloboma.

The research team -- lead by the University of Edinburgh -- worked with 12 families, studying the DNA of children with coloboma and their unaffected parents.

Using state-of-the-art genetic screening -- known as whole exome sequencing -- the scientists revealed mutations in 10 genes, three of which were linked to activity of one molecule.

Picture of the Day



Dolphin Park or Dolphinarium located on Kish Island, south of Iran, is the first dolphin park in Iran. The huge recreational and tourist complex with 100 hectares area is located in the southeast of the island.

Courtesy: Tasnim News Agency