

This Day in History

(December 14)

Today is Thursday, 23rd of the Iranian month of Azar 1396 solar hijri; corresponding to 25th of the Islamic month of Rabi al-Awwal 1439 lunar hijri; and December 14, 2017, of the Christian Gregorian Calendar.

1003 lunar years ago, on this day in 436 AH, the great scholar and jurist, Seyyed Ali Ibn Hussain, popularly known as Sharif Murtaza, passed away at the age of 81 in his hometown Baghdad. He was born in a family descended on both sides from Prophet Mohammad (blessings of God upon him and his progeny). His father Hussain was 5th in line of descent from Imam Musa al-Kazem (AS), while his mother, Fatema – a scion of the family that had carved out an independent state in Tabaristan on the Caspian Sea coast of Iran – was a descendant of Imam Zain al-Abidin (AS). It was she who entrusted her two sons, as students, to the great scholar, Sheikh Mufid, who on her insistence had written one of his famous books “*Ahkam al-Nisa*” or jurisprudential rules for women. Sharif Murtaza’s vast knowledge earned him the title of ‘*Alam al-Huda*’ (Banner of Guidance). He wrote some 66 books and treatises on a variety of topics such as theology, jurisprudence, Qur’anic sciences, grammar, literature, and poetry. This leading Mujtahed served for 30 years as the Chief Judge of Baghdad, and was highly respected by all, including Sunni Muslims. Acknowledged as the greatest scholar of his era, during the rule of the Iranian Buwayhid Dynasty over Iraq-Iran-Oman, he groomed many outstanding ulema, including the famous Iranian scholar Shaikh at-Ta’afa Tusi – the founder of the celebrated Islamic Seminary of Najaf. Sharif Murtaza was the elder brother of the equally prominent, Sharif Radhi, the compiler of the famous book “*Nahj al-Balagha*” – the collection of the sermons, letters and maxims of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (AS). His books include “*al-Intisar*”, “*ash-Shafi*”, “*at-Tanzih al-Anbiyya*”, “*al-Ghurar wa’l-Durar*” and “*Zakhrat al-Usul al-Fiqh*”, as well as a Diwan containing over 20,000 of his Arabic verses.

730 solar years ago, on this day in 1287 AD, as a result of a storm, the Zuiderzee sea wall in the Netherlands collapsed, killing an estimated 80,000 people in the sixth largest flood in recorded history. Much of the land was permanently flooded in what are now the Waddenzee and Jsselmeer.

541 solar years ago, on this day in 1476 AD, the murderous Vlad III, known as the “Impaler” for his inhuman killing of Muslims and Christians as well, died at the age of 45. He was the local ruler of Wallachia (Vallahaiya) in Romania, and had once attempted to assassinate the Ottoman Sultan Mohammad II, the Conqueror of Constantinople. Also known as “Dracula” or Son of Dragon, his sadistic cruelties inspired stories of the bloodsucking Vampire. He is said to have impaled nearly 100,000 Turkish Muslims, although despite claiming to be a defender of Christianity, he impaled and burned tens of thousands of Christians as well, during his 19-year reign of terror that ended with his defeat by his consanguineous brother, Radu, who had embraced Islam and was appointed Pasha of Wallachia by the Ottomans. Vlad, who along with Radu had been sent to the Ottoman court while an adolescent, to learn martial arts, the holy Qur’an as well as the Turkish and Persian languages, developed a deep hatred for his brother because of his being favoured by the young prince Mohammad, the future Sultan. In 1447, on the death of his father he was installed as ruler of his homeland by the Ottomans, but instead of showing gratitude, he turned against them and started the brutal killing of Turkish envoys and traders. In 1462, fed up with his savagery, Sultan Mohammad II led a massive army across the River Danube, with Radu at the head of the famous Jan-Nisari Corps. Vlad fled and during his retreat burned and killed everything in sight. When the Ottoman forces approached, they encountered over 20,000 of their soldiers impaled by the forces of Vlad, creating a “forest” of dead or dying bodies on stakes. This atrocious, gut-wrenching sight was too much to bear and Sultan Mohammad turned back in disgust. Four years later Vlad, who fled to Hungary, was imprisoned for ten years by the local Christian ruler for crimes against humanity. On release in 1476, when he attempted to stir up sedition once again, he was killed by the Ottomans.

514 solar years ago, on this day in 1503 AD, French apothecary, astrologer and supposed seer, Michel de Nostredame, known by his Latin name “Nostradamus” was born in Provence. He published collections of so-called prophecies that have since become famous. The first edition appeared in his lifetime in 1555. He has since attracted a following that credits him with predicting many major world events. Academic sources maintain that the associations made between world events and Nostradamus’ quatrains are largely the result of misinterpretations or mistranslations (sometimes deliberate) or else are so tenuous as to render them useless as evidence of any genuine predictive power.

471 solar years ago, on this day in 1546 AD, Danish astronomer and mathematician, Tycho Brahe, was born in Scania, which was then under Denmark, but is now part of Sweden. He studied for a while in Germany, and later was helped by the Danish ruler to set up an observatory on Hven Island. Influenced by the discoveries of Muslim scientists, centuries earlier, he embarked on wide scale observations of the skies and discovered a supernova. He died in 1601.

218 solar years ago, on this day in 1799 AD, American military leader and the first president of the United States of America, George Washington, died at the age of 67.

212 solar years ago, on this day in 1805 AD, the British Blacksmith, George Brankton, discovered coal’s thermal power, while accidentally burning what was regarded as mere construction material. The first coal mine became operational in the port city of Plymouth.

114 solar years ago, on this day in 1903 AD, the renowned Iranian physician and researcher, Dr. Mahmoud Najmabadi, was born. In addition to his medical practice, he was a university lecturer, keenly interested in Islamic-Iranian medicine. He wrote several books to introduce the well-known physicians of Iran and the Islamic World, such as Mohammad ibn Zakariya Razi, and translated some of their books. He published 45 books and journals, including “*A Glance at Islamic Medicine*”; “*History of Medicine in Iran*”; and “*Mohammad Zakariya Razi: Iranian Physician, Chemist and Philosopher.*”

113 solar years ago, on this day in 1904 AD, several ulema and freedom-seekers of Tehran decided to leave the Iranian capital en masse in protest to the injustices of the Qajarid king, Mohammad Ali Shah. Ayatollah Seyyed Abdullah Bahbahani, and Ayatollah Seyyed Mohammad Tabatabai, the pioneers of Iran’s Constitutional Movement, migrated to the holy city of Qom, along with several of their followers. The condition set for their return was implementation of Islamic rules and regulations across Iran and establishment of the Ministry of Justice.

106 solar years ago, on this day in 1911 AD, Antarctica was discovered as several explorers raced each other to set foot on this frozen continent. Norwegian Captain Roald Amundsen beat his closest rival, Britain’s Captain Robert Falcon Scott, in hoisting the flag on the South Pole.

36 solar years ago, on this day in 1981 AD, Syria’s Zionist occupied region of Golan Heights was illegally declared part of Israel. Occupied in the 1967 war, the annexation statement led to wide scale protests worldwide. Syria has vowed to retake its territories and refused to enter into any deceptive talks with the Zionist entity.

22 solar years ago, on this day in 1995 AD, the Bosnian peace agreement, called the Dayton Accord, was ratified at the Paris meeting, following its signing on November 21 in Dayton, US, by the Bosnian, Serb, and Croat presidents. The only outcome of the Dayton Accord for Muslims was that it spelled an end to the barbaric bouts of massacre by the Serbs, which had claimed 250,000 lives till that date. Despite the relative majority of Muslims, the Republic was divided into two parts, namely the Muslim-Croat Federation and the Bosnian Serb Republic, with both of them under the supervision of a weak central government in the capital, Sarajevo. Meanwhile, despite the passage of years since the ethnic cleansing of Bosnian Muslims, issues related to the return of 1.2 million Muslim refugees to their homes and hearths have remained unsolved.

9 solar years ago, on this day in 2008 AD, Iraqi journalist, Muntadhar az-Zaidi, threw his shoes at the then US President George W. Bush during a press conference in Baghdad, becoming a hero in the eyes of the oppressed people of the world. Born in Sadr City, Baghdad, in a family adhering to the school of the Ahl al-Bayt of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA), he was resentful of the US occupation of his country and the killing of the Iraqi Muslim people. While throwing his first shoe at George Bush, who was flanked by Iraqi Prime Minister, Nouri al-Maleki, he shouted: “This is a farewell kiss from the Iraqi people, you dog”. As Bush ducked to avoid being hit in the face, az-Zaidi threw his other shoe at him, shouting: “This is for the widows and orphans and all those killed in Iraq.” Again, a badly shaken Bush barely evaded a direct hit on the face. The heroic Iraqi journalist was immediately pulled to the ground, as security guards kicked, beat and dragged him outside the conference hall, with blood dripping from his body. He was jailed, tortured, interrogated, put on trial, defended his action as the natural response to the killing of over a million Iraqis by the American occupiers, and sentenced to a year in prison. Nine months later, he was released for good conduct, and worked for a Lebanese TV channel.

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

Doc on Plasco Tragedy Premieres at Cinema Verite



The Documentary and Experimental Film Center is the organizer of the Cinema Verite festival, which will run until December 17.

TEHRAN (Honar) - A documentary that chronicles the tragic collapse of Tehran’s Plasco Building following an inferno premiered at the 11th Cinema Verite, Iran’s major international documentary film festival.

Directed by Mohammad-Hassan Ferdowsizadeh, “Panjshanbeh Suri” (“Thursday Fireworks”) was screened late last night and was warmly received by documentary cinema aficionados at Tehran’s Charsu Cineplex.

In the film, Ferdowsizadeh conducts interviews with colleagues of the firemen trapped in the 17-storey mega mall this year on January 19. The

collapse of the building claimed the lives of 16 firefighters and a number of citizens.

“Documenting tragic incidents has always been appealing to filmmakers and those people interested in documentary cinema,” Ferdowsizadeh said during a press conference.

“Due to the large extent of the catastrophic disaster and the number of firefighters trapped in the rubble when the building collapsed, and due to the fact that such an event was unprecedented in Iran, the issue of the Plasco tragedy was attractive for me,” he added.

Advances in Artificially Grown Body Parts

Much as a frame provides structural support for a house and the chassis provides strength and shape for a car, a team of Penn State engineers believe they have a way to create the structural framework for growing living tissue using an off-the-shelf 3-D printer.

“We are trying to make stem-cell-loaded hydrogels reinforced with fibers like the rebar in cement,” said Justin L. Brown, associate professor of biomedical engineering. “If we can lend some structure to the gel, we can grow living cells in defined patterns and eventually the fibers will dissolve and go away.”

The researchers’ report in a recent issue of the Journal of Advanced Healthcare Materials that their aim is to create a novel, low-cost and efficient method to fabricate high-resolution and repeatable 3-D polymer fiber patterns on nonconductive materials for tissue engineering with available hobbyist-grade 3-D printers. The method they use is a combination of 3-D printing and electrospinning, a method that uses electric charge to spin nanometer threads from either a polymer melt or solution.

Currently nearly all complex transplant tissues, from hearts and kidneys to tendons, come from living or dead donors. The researchers are looking for a way to grow replacement tissues reliably using inexpensive methods. The combination of 3-D printing and electrospinning to produce a scaffold for tissue engineering might also enable production of combined muscles and tendons, or tendons and cartilage, for example.

These current strategies create the different tissues separately and then combine them using some type of adhesive or connector. However, in the body, tissues such as cartilage and bone, and tendons and muscles, grow seamlessly together.

Much as a frame provides structural support for a house and the chassis provides strength and shape for a car, a team of Penn State engineers believe they have a way to create the structural framework for growing living tissue using an off-the-shelf 3-D printer.

The researchers’ report in a recent issue of the Journal of Advanced Healthcare Materials that their aim is to create a novel, low-cost and efficient method to fabricate high-resolution and repeatable 3-D polymer fiber patterns on nonconductive materials for tissue engineering with available hobbyist-grade 3-D printers.

‘Limit’ Packs up 4 Awards at American Filmfest

MINNESOTA (MNA) - Iranian short ‘Limit’ by Javad Daraei has won four awards at the 4th edition of 50 Fifty Reel Hallow’s Eve Challenge in Minnesota, United States.

‘Limit’ is an 8-minute narrative of the life a man in a quiet neighborhood who asks for help from people whom he is seeing, until someone suddenly enters his home. Daraei’s second film deals with protecting the rights of people with disability.

At the 4th edition of the 50 Fifty Reel Challenge hosted in Minnesota, ‘Limit’ scooped up Best Actor Award for Davoud Moeinikia, Best Editing Award, and Best Screenplay Award. It was also picked as runner-up and own \$500 in the Best Picture category.

The 50 in the title of the festival refers to the 50 days given to filmmakers as deadline to complete a 5-10 minute short film.

‘Limit’ has recently won the Best Short Fiction award at the 10th edition of Southampton Film Week 2017 in a port city on England’s south coast.

Meanwhile, four Iranian shorts, ‘Animal’, ‘Abbas Kiarostami: the Director’, ‘Whales’ and ‘Ascribed Achievements’, have won tickets to the Slamdance Film Festival.

‘Animal’ by Bahram by Bahman Ark, ‘Abbas Kiarostami: the Director’ by Mohsen Khodabakhshi, ‘Whales’ by Behnam Abedi and ‘Ascribed Achievements’ by Samaneh Shojaei are the four short films that will be screened at the 24th Slamdance Film Festival.

Approved by the Oscar Academy, the Slamdance Film Festival which is focused on emerging artists and low-budget independent films. Christopher Nolan is one of the discoveries of this festival who has always maintained a constructive engagement with it.

As an independent film festival arranged by filmmakers, the Slamdance Film Festival has adopted “By filmmakers for filmmakers” as its motto. The 24th Slamdance Film Festival is held from January 19-25, 2018 in Park City, Utah.

‘Birthday Night’ to Vie at Clermont-Ferrand Festival

PARIS (Dispatches) - Iranian short ‘Birthday Night’ directed by Omid Shams has won a ticket to this year’s 40th Clermont-Ferrand Film Festival.

‘Birthday Night’ which is written and directed by Omid Shams tells the story of two friends and business partners, Ahmad and Ali, who face unexpected challenges on their birthday night.

Omid Shams, known for ‘The Passage’, has won several awards and nominations for his films from Miami Short Film Festival, Ohio Independent Film Festival and Tehran International Short Film Festival. ‘Birthday Night’ has received the best short film award from Tehran International Short Film Festival.

The Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival is the

biggest international film festival dedicated to short films. It is held annually in Clermont-Ferrand, France, and is the second largest film festival in France after Cannes, in terms of audience and professional attendance, boasting over 160,000 attendees and 3,500 professionals annually.

The 40th Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival is slated for 2-10 February, 2018.

Meanwhile, Iranian successful short ‘Retouch’, which has already won different awards at international film festivals, lost the opportunity to take part in 2018 Academy Awards original list.

‘Retouch’ directed by Iranian director Kaveh Mazaheri, who has already been awarded titles at prestigious competitions Tribeca, Kra-

kow and Palm Springs, recognized by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, is not going to represent Iran in the 2018 Oscar contest.

‘Retouch’ latest achievement was winning the best film prize (Special mention prize in international competition WHOLE WIDE WORLD) at Zuberoffka International Short Film Festival in Poland, which was held on December 6-10, 2017.

‘Retouch’ tells the tragic story of a young woman whose husband dies before her eyes. Farnoush Samadi’s second short film is about a woman who has witnesses a crime on the bus on her way back home. The film tells her struggle over whether to reveal the crime or keep it a secret. It is co-written by Samadi and Ali Asgari

Picture of the Day



With director Hossein Parsaei at the helm, Charles Dickens masterpiece Oliver Twist has gone on stage in Vahdat Hall until January 20.