

This Day in History

(April 12)

Today is Thursday; 23rd of the Iranian month of Farvardin 1397 solar hijri; corresponding to 25th of the Islamic month of Rajab 1439 lunar hijri; and April 12, 2018, of the Christian Gregorian Calendar.

1778 solar years ago, on this day in 240 AD, Shapur I was crowned the 2nd Shahenshah (king of kings) of the Sassanid Empire by his father Ardashir I, the founder of the dynasty two years before his own death. During his 30-year rule, Shapur enlarged the empire in the east and the west that brought him into conflict with Roman Emperor, Gordian III, who was killed in 244 by Iranian soldiers in the Battle of Misikhe near present day Fallujah in Iraq. Shapur has recorded this victory in the stone inscription at Naqsh-e Rostam near Shiraz: *"When at first we had become established in the (Sassanid) empire, Gordian Caesar raised in all of the Roman Empire a force from the Goth and German realms and marched on Babylonia against the Empire of Iran and against us. On the border of Babylonia at Misikhe, a great frontal battle occurred. Gordian Caesar was killed and the Roman force was destroyed. And the Romans made Philip (the Arab) Caesar. Then Philip Caesar came to us for terms, and to ransom their lives, gave us 500,000 dinars, and became tributary to us. And for this reason we have renamed Misikhe, Peroz-Shapur."*

In 250 AD, another war started as a result of Roman incursions into Armenia, and Shapur I annihilated a Roman force of 60,000 at the Battle of Barbalissos in Syria. The Iranian armies swept across the region and reached the Mediterranean Sea coast. In the north, Armenia and Georgia came under the control of Iran. In 257, when the next Roman Emperor Valerian (notorious for his persecution of Christians and the monotheist followers of Prophet Jesus), marched against the Persian Empire with a huge force, Shapur I advanced into Asia Minor and decisively defeated him at Edessa in what is now south-central Turkey. Valerian was captured and brought to Iran as prisoner along with thousands of Roman captives, who were employed in the construction of the dam on River Karoun. The Roman Emperor's capture is presented in a mural at Naqsh-e Rostam, where Shapur I is represented on horseback wearing royal armour and crown, while before him kneels Valerian, asking for grace.

1281 solar years ago, on this day in 737 AD, Zayd, a son of Imam Zain al-Abidin (AS) – the 4th Infallible Heir of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA) – launched his uprising against the usurper Omayyad regime. Two years later he martyred near Kufa in Iraq by the forces of the tyrant Hesham bin Abdul-Malik. Zayd's martyrdom was foretold by the Prophet more than a hundred and ten years earlier when he put his hand on the back of his younger grandson, and said:

"O Husain, it will not be long until a man will be born among your descendants. He will be called Zayd; he will be killed as a martyr. On the day of resurrection, he and his companions will enter heaven."

Many of Zayd's followers made Yemen the base of their struggle against the Omayyad and Abbasid regimes. Zaydi Shi'a Muslims who make 40 percent of the population of Yemen, revere Martyr Zayd as an Imam, although he never claimed the imamate, and was obedient to his elder brother, Imam Mohammad Baqer (AS), and after him to his nephew, Imam Ja'far Sadeq (AS).

1256 lunar years ago, on this day in 183 AH, Imam Musa al-Kazem (AS), the 7th Infallible Heir of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA), attained martyrdom in Baghdad on eating poisoned dates given by jailor Sindi bin Shahak on orders of Haroun Rashid, the 5th self-styled caliph of the usurper Abbasid regime. During his 35-year Imamate, as son and successor of Imam Ja'far as-Sadeq (AS), he guided the seekers of truth to spread the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt in various lands, before passing the mantle of divinely-decreed leadership to his son, Imam Reza (AS).

1206 solar years ago, on this day in 812 AD, Imam Mohammad at-Taqi al-Jawad (AS), the 9th Infallible Heir of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA), was born in Medina. His birthday according to the Islamic calendar is 10th of Rajab 195 AH. Son and successor of Imam Reza (AS), his period of Imamate was 17 years during which he held interesting debates with adherents of various schools of thought to prove the truthful nature of teachings of the Prophet's Household.

1178 lunar years ago, on this day in 261 AH, Iranian Sunni compiler of hadith, Abul-Hussain Muslim ibn Hajjaj Nayshapuri, the author of *"Sahih Muslim"*, passed away. A student of the other famous Iranian Sunni Muslim hadith compiler, Mohammad bin Ismael Bukhari, he was in turn the teacher of the third famous Iranian Sunni Muslim hadith compiler, Mohammad bin Eisa Tirmizi. Of the thousands of hadith in his *"Sahih"*, 2000 are common with Bukhari's *"Sahih"*. There are many hadith in *"Sahih Muslim"* on merits of the Ahl al-Bayt including the unrivalled position of Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (AS). He states that the term Ahl al-Bayt in ayah 33 of Surah Ahzab exclusively pertains to Imam Ali (AS), Hazrat Fatema (SA), Imam Hasan (AS) and Imam Husain (AS) and does not include the Prophet's wives.

609 lunar years ago, on this day in 830 AH, famous mystic and Arabic-Persian poet, Shah Ne'matullah Vali, passed away in Mahan, Kerman, where he was laid to rest in the shrine built by his devotee, Ahmad Shah of the Bahmani kingdom of Iranian origin of the Deccan (southern India), stands as a site of pilgrimage. He traced his descent to Imam Musa al-Kazem (AS), the 7th Infallible Heir of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA). He travelled widely in the Muslim world, before settling down in Kerman. He was invited to the Deccan by Ahmad Shah Bahmani, but citing old age, sent his grandson. Ne'matullah has left behind treatises and a bulky divan of Persian poetry that contains prophecies on the end of monarchy in Iran, emergence of rule of the deputy of the Imam of the Age, the eventual reappearance of the Prophet's 12th and Last Successor, Imam Mahdi (AS), and establishment of the global government of peace, prosperity and justice.

547 lunar years ago, on this day 892 AH, Shah Ismael I, the Founder of the Safavid dynasty, was born in Ardebil. His father Haidar was head of the Safaviyya Sufi order established by his venerable ancestor Safi od-Din Ardebili. While in his teens, he was joined by thousands of devotees of the Safavid order and gradually took control of all of today's Iran, as well as Iraq, the Caucasus, parts of Anatolia, Central Asia, and western Afghanistan. During his 24-year rule, he declared as state religion the School of the Ahl al-Bayt of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA). To Shah Ismail and his successors, who ruled for 235 years, goes the credit of giving Iran its present religious, cultural, lingual and national identity and unity. Shah Ismail wielded spiritual influence outside Iran as well – in Iraq, Syria, Anatolia (modern Turkey), the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Deccan Plateau of India. The Timurid prince, Babar, who later founded the Moghal Empire in northern India, regarded him as his suzerain, and so did the Deccan Sultanates of Yusuf Adel Shah of Bijapur and Sultan Qoli Qotb Shah of Golconda.

157 solar years ago, on this day in 1861 AD, the US Civil War started with the Confederate forces firing on Fort Sumter, South Carolina. Over 620,000 soldiers died in the war.

154 solar years ago, on this day in 1864 AD, during the US Civil War, the Fort Pillow massacre occurred in Tennessee when Confederate forces killed in cold blood over 300 black soldiers after tricking them to surrender.

57 solar years ago, on this day in 1961 AD, Russian Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first recorded human being to travel into outer space and perform the first manned orbital flight.

11 lunar years ago, on this day in 1428 AH, over two thousand pilgrims lost their life during a general stampede on hearing rumours of bomb blasts on the Jasn al-Aimmah Bridge over the River Tigris connecting the Baghdad suburbs of Kazemain and Azamiyya, on the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Musa al-Kazem (AS), the Prophet's 7th Infallible Heir.

7 solar years ago, on this day in 2011 AD, Karim Fakhrawi, Bahraini journalist and co-founder of independent al-Wasat newspaper, was tortured to death in prison by the repressive Aal-e Khalifa minority regime at the age of 49. He was detained on April 5 when he complained that police were threatening to demolish his home. He was falsely accused of "deliberate news fabrication and falsification" by the Bahraini authorities and tortured for a week to death. (Courtesy: IRIB English Radio – <http://parstoday.com/en>)

'Macbeth Zar' to Open Azerbaijan Theater Festival



TEHRAN (MNA) – The Iranian musical comedy *"Macbeth Zar"*, a mix of Shakespeare's tragedy with a local Iranian rite will open Azerbaijan International Theater Festival on 13-20 May, 2018.

"Macbeth Zar" "is a production of Titowak Theater Group and Baran-Zagros, and directed

by Ebrahim Poshtekouhi. It is a musical comedy that blends the Zar ritual of Iran's southern Hormozgan Province with William Shakespeare's tragedy 'Macbeth'.

Zar is the term for an evil spirit that in southern parts of Iran is believed to possess individuals. A Zar ritual is the practice of exorcising such

spirits from the possessed individual, which comprises food and musical performances culminating in ecstatic dancing.

In Poshtekouhi's production, Macbeth lives on Hormoz Island, and kills Duncan, the chief organizer of the ritual called Babazar, in order to become the king of those possessed by the evil spirits, called Ahl-e Hava.

"Macbeth Zar" was the winner of the New Experience Section at the 28th Tehran International Theater Festival in 2009. It also went on to grab the award for the best theater ensemble and best performance in Moscow Nights Theater Festival in 2012. France's Avignon Festival and Armenia's HighFest Theater Festival also hosted the play.

Poshtekouhi was invited by the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory to stage "Macbeth Zar" on March 27, concurrent with the World Theater Day.

The play, which is over 10 years old and has been staged over 100 times since its first performance in various countries such as Germany, Armenia, India and Russia, will now open the International Theater Festival of the Republic of Azerbaijan on May 13. The festival will run through May 20, 2018.

Iranian Documentary 'The Rock' Goes on screen at U.S. Festival



Iranian short documentary *"The Rock"*, directed by Hamid Jafari, has been scheduled to go on screen at the 15th edition of Red Wasp International Film festival in the U.S.

The 25-minute documentary tells the story of a woman who lives near the southwestern Iranian city of Ramhormoz. Every day, she goes to the mountain with a sledgehammer and a crowbar in hand to smash and break the rocks so that she can sell them to provide for her family.

"The Rock" has awarded for Best Documentary Short award at the 2017 edition of the New Orleans Film Festival in the U.S. state of Louisiana.

Founded in 2004, the Red Wasp Film Festival is dedicated to bringing quality films to the Brazos Valley region and increasing appreciation of film and filmmaking.

The 2018 edition of the event is to be held May 6 in the Brazos Valley, Texas, the U.S.

Veteran Iranian Actor Mohammad-Ali Keshavarz to Be Honored

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Veteran Iranian actor Mohammad-Ali Keshavarz is to be honored during a ceremony held at Tehran's Shahrak Cineplex later in April.

The honoring ceremony will be held coinciding with Keshavarz's 88th birthday, manager of the Cineplex announced, adding that one of the halls of the cineplex has been named after the veteran actor and will be a venue of the 36th Fajr International Film Festival.

Keshavarz, born in 1930 in Isfahan, has graduated from the Tehran University Faculty of Dramatic Arts. He began his acting career with the play "Violinmaker" in 1960 and professional acting with plays such as "Uncle Vanya", "Antigone", and "Oedipus the King".

In 1968, he played in a number of TV series, including "Hezar Dastan", "Sarbedaran", "Sultan



Rogheyeh Chehreh-Azad and Mohamad Ali Keshavarz in Madar (1990)

and the Shepherd", "The Wolves", "The Patriarch", "The Young Lawyers", "Seasoned Rider", "Youth", "Lighter Than Darkness", "A House in the Dark", "The Unfamiliar Scent of Autumn", "The Way of Infatuation", and "Night Path".

He has appeared in movies such as "Mr. Simpleton", "The Last Supper", "Kamal-ol-Molk", "The

Man Who Became a Mouse", "Mirza Nowruz's Shoes", "Jafar Khan Returns from Abroad", "Nassereddin Shah Film Actor", "The Devoted", "The Fateful Day", "Ghazal", "The Legion", and "Waiting".

He was nominated for a Fajr Film Festival Crystal Simorgh for Best Male Actor for his role in "Mother" in 1989.

Picture of the Day



Tang-e Boraq village in southern Province of Fars, Iran.

Courtesy: IRNA