

This Day in History

(April 17)

Today is Tuesday; 28th of the Iranian month of Farvardin 1397 solar hijri; corresponding to 30th of the Islamic month of Rajab 1439 lunar hijri; and April 17, 2018, of the Christian Gregorian Calendar.

1274 solar years ago, on this day in 744 AD, Waleed II, the 11th self-styled caliph of the usurper Omayyad regime, was killed in Aghdaj in what is now Jordan after a reign of a year and two-and-a-half months, because of his immoral habits. On assuming power he had ordered his forces in Khorasan to harass Yahya Ibn Zayd, the grandson of Imam Zain al-Abedin (AS) – the 4th Infallible Heir of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA). Yahya was martyred in a battle in Jowzajan, which is presently in Afghanistan, and his severed head was sent to Damascus, where it is believed to be buried in the Omayyad Mosque in the spot which is mistakenly known today as the tomb of Prophet Yahya (John the Baptist). He built in his palace a fountain of wine in which he used to take dips. On one occasion he threw the holy Qur'an and riddled it with a volley of arrows. Once, in the state of intoxication and in the act of cohabiting with a drunken concubine, when he heard the call for the Fajr Prayer, he promptly asked the ritually unclean woman to put on his clothes, enter the mosque, and lead the Morning Prayer. In a famous hadith, the Prophet had foretold about this ungodly Omayyad ruler by name, and called him Pharaoh of the ummah.

1235 lunar years ago, on this day in 204 AH, jurispudent, Mohammad bin Idris ash-Shafe'i, who founded the Shafe'i School, passed away in Egypt, due to injuries inflicted by adherents of the Maleki School. Born near Asqalan in Gaza, he moved to Hijaz and became a student of Malek ibn Anas, who had studied for some time under Imam Ja'far as-Sadeq (AS), the 6th Infallible Heir of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA), before deviating and founding the Maleki School. Shafe'i shifted to Baghdad, where he set up his own school of jurisprudence in position to the schools of Abu Hanifa and Malek. Under pressure from the Hanafis, he left for Egypt in 198 AH. Perhaps, because of fear of the repressive Abbasid regime, Shafe'i failed to establish direct contact with Imam Musa al-Kazem (AS) and Imam Ali ar-Reza (AS), respectively the Prophet's 7th and 8th Infallible Heirs, and thus could not ascertain the authenticity of the legal code he had learned and collected. Nonetheless, in obedience to the Prophet's famous Hadith Thaqalayn, he was deeply influenced by the blessed Ahl al-Bayt, and has explicitly stated that the daily ritual prayer is invalid if *salawat* or blessings are not sent on the Prophet's progeny in the *tashahhud*. He says in this regard in a quatrain:

"O Ahl Bayt of the Prophet of Allah! Allah has decreed your love obligatory for us in the revealed Qur'an; It is sufficient for your dignity (that); His (ritual) prayer is invalid, if there is no blessings sent upon you."

In many of his Arabic poems, Shafe'i has shown his devotion to the Prophet's divinely-decreed vicegerent Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (AS). He writes:

"They say: You are a Rafedhi (heretic), I say: No; Never did I reject my religion or my belief; But in my heart without the least doubt; There is much love (and respect) for the Greatest Leader (Imam Ali); If loving the Wali of Allah (Friend of God) is Rafidh; Then I am the foremost Rafedhi!"

He has also said:

"When I saw different creeds and jurisprudential schools steering towards ignorance and misguidance; I embarked in the Name of God on the Ark of Salvation; That is the progeny of Mustafa the Seal of Prophets; And got hold of the Divine Rope which is the very love of them; Indeed, God commands us to hold fast to the (Divine) Rope."

Today, the Shafe'i School of jurisprudence is followed in Indonesia, Malaysia, Egypt, Somalia, Yemen, Sri Lanka, southern parts of India, and the Kurds of Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Syria.

669 solar years ago, on this day in 1349 AD, with the murder of Fakhr od-Dowla Hassan II, the Bavand dynasty of Mazandaran came to its end, and Kiya Afrasiyab crowned himself the first ruler of the new Afrasiyabi dynasty – which ended 155 years later in 1504 with the annexation of Mazandaran by Ismail I, the founder of the Safavid Empire.

621 solar years ago, on this day in 1397 AD, Geoffrey Chaucer of England recited for the first time his magnum opus *"The Canterbury Tales"* at the court of King Richard II, in the colloquial language of the ordinary English masses, rather than the church language Latin or the court language French, thus paving the way for emergence of English as the official language.

228 solar years ago, on this day in 1790 AD, US politician, inventor, diplomat, and printer, Benjamin Franklin, died. One of the Founding Fathers of the United States of America that was set up by the 13 rebellious New England colonies, he was born in Boston to British parents. He earned fame for his reports of electrical experiments and theories. When the colonies rebelled against Britain, he became a supporter of independence, served as diplomat both at home and in Europe, and was regarded as second only to President George Washington in power and prestige. Franklin emphasized that the US could survive only if the people were virtuous, followed religious rules in both personal and civic life, and abstained from corruption, oppression, violence, and immoralities – all of which are dragging the US today towards its eventual doom.

138 solar years ago, on this day in 1880 AD, British archeologist, Charles Leonard Woolley, was born. His excavations of the ancient Sumerian city of Ur in modern Iraq greatly advanced knowledge of the ancient Mesopotamian civilization. His finds revealed much about everyday life, art, architecture, literature, government, and religion in the cradle of civilization. He discovered tombs of great material wealth, gold and silver jewelry, large paintings of ancient Mesopotamian culture at its zenith, and other furnishings. The most extravagant tomb of Queen Pu-Abi was untouched by the hands of looters through the millennia, with many well-preserved items, including a cylindrical seal bearing her name in Sumerian. His widely read book titled *"Ur of the Chaldees"* is a record of seven years of excavation.

123 solar years ago, on this day in 1895 AD, Japan forced upon China the Treaty of Shimonoseki, marking end of the First Sino-Japanese War, and compelling the defeated Qing Empire to renounce its claims on Korea and to concede the southern portion of the Fengtien province, Taiwan and the Pescadores Islands to Japan. Japan's arrogantly imperialist attitude towards China and Korea led to destructive wars and massive killing of people.

103 solar years ago, on this day in 1915 AD, chemical gases were used for the first time in a war. In this inhuman measure, which took place during World War I, German forces attacked British and French forces with chemical gas, killing a large number of them. Following the end of World War I, the use of chemical weapons was banned as per international treaties, but this did not prevent the US to use chemicals against the Vietnamese in the 1960s and 1970s. The US, along with Germany, also supplied internationally-banned chemical weapons to Saddam for use against Iran during the 1980-88 imposed war.

72 solar years ago, on this day in 1946 AD, the last French troops left Syria following formal recognition of its independence earlier in the year. Bilad ash-Shaam or Greater Syria, which for four centuries had been occupied by the Ottoman Turks, was seized by Britain and France in 1917 during World War I. The victors divided this land between them, with the British creating Jordan and Palestine, and the French creating present-day Syria and Lebanon. Following independence, Syria went through instability for 24 years with frequent coups, counter-coups and overthrow of military and civilian governments that saw the rise and fall of more than a dozen regimes. The situation was stabilized and progress became possible, only with the coming to power in 1970 of President Hafez al-Assad, who during his 30-year rule made Syria a strong bulwark of resistance against the designs of the West and the illegal Zionist entity. He was succeeded in 2000 by his son, Dr. Bashar al-Assad, who for the past 18 years has ably led the country, although at present he is facing an insurrection and state-sponsored terrorism incited by the US, Britain, France, Israel, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

14 solar years ago, on this day in 2004 AD, Palestinian activist and Leader of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, Dr. Abdul-Aziz Rantisi, was martyred when the car carrying him was targeted with missiles by Zionist choppers. Born in Palestine in 1947, he graduated in medicine from Egypt's Alexandria University in 1967, and joined the struggle against the usurper state of Israel. He was imprisoned, tortured and exiled to "no man's land" on the frontier of Occupied Palestine with southern Lebanon, where the contact of Rantisi and his group with members of the legendary anti-terrorist movement, the Hezbollah, positively changed their outlook, and infused new spirit into Hamas.

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

Iranian Cinema Shines at Beijing Int'l Film Festival



A still from "Searing Summer".

TEHRAN (MNA) – Two Iranian films "Searing Summer" by Ebrahim Irajzad and "Untaken Paths" by Tahmineh Milani have been nominated for the Best Film Award at Beijing International Film Festival.

The 8th edition of Beijing International Film Festival, which is one of the best film festivals in Asia, started April 15 and will continue until April 22, 2018 in the capital city of China Beijing.

The best films will receive the Tiantan Award.

The "Searing Summer" tells the story of a married woman called Nasrin who wants to get a divorce but knows she won't be able to get custody of her six-year-old daughter in the case. Without her husband knowing, she moves to another part of town with her daughter. When her husband catches up with her, their lives take an unexpected turn.

Tahmineh Milani's film shows the story

of Mali, a young girl, who meets Sia and starts a secret relationship with him. Soon Mali's traditional family find out about their relationship. According to the cultural rules, the only way she can continue her relationship with Sia, is for them to get married. Despite disapproval of Mali's family, it happens very quickly. Sia, incapable of managing his new life, starts practicing his father's methods with using physical violence on Mali. Now Mali, with destructed self-confidence and personality and losing her family's support, becomes more and more depressed as each day goes by...

The two Iranian films have been nominated along with two Chinese films to receive the best award of the festival.

Last year at the 7th edition of the festival, Iranian actress Golab Adineh won Best Actress award for her inspiring performance in the Iranian film "Abji".

Globe International Silent Film Festival Announces Jury Members

TEHRAN (IFILM) The third edition of Globe International Silent Film Festival announces the jury members.

Bahram Dehghan, Mahmoud Kalari, Kambozia Partovi, Hamidreza Nasiri, Housman Seyyedi, Bahram Tavakkoli and Ann Marie Fleming are the jury members of the event.

A lineup of 49 short silent films is to be judged at the five different sections of the third edition of the U.S.-based Iranian festival.

Initially launched by Iranian film buffs of the Persian Students Association of the Michigan State University, the first edition of the Globe International Silent Film



Festival was held in Iran.

The first year had received incredible reception on the international scale – around 2,200 films were submitted to the festival, the official website of the festival wrote.

The GISFF is planned to be held in a new country every year, so that the silent cinema industry is introduced to all enthusiasts.

Silent films refer to films without dialogue or narration and recount their stories through the language of imagery, just as a painting.

The 2018 edition of the festival will be held from April 21 to 29 in the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the U.S.

Pollution Increases Suicide Risks For Alzheimer's

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - A new study reveals increased risks for Alzheimer's and suicide among children and young adults living in polluted megacities.

A University of Montana researcher, Dr. Lilian Calderón-Garcidueñas and her group studied 203 autopsies of Mexico City residents ranging in age from 11 months to 40 years. Metropolitan Mexico City is home to 24 million people exposed daily to concentrations of fine particulate matter and ozone above U.S. Environmental Protection Agency standards. The researchers tracked two abnormal proteins that indicate development of Alzheimer's, and they detected the early stages of the disease in babies less than a year old.

"Alzheimer's disease hallmarks start in childhood in polluted environments, and we must implement effective preventative measures early," said Calderón-Garcidueñas, a physician and Ph.D. toxicologist in UM's Department of Biomedical and Pharmaceutical Sciences. "It is useless to take reactive actions decades later."

The scientists found heightened levels of the two abnormal proteins -- hyperphosphorylated tau and beta amyloid -- in the brains of young urbanites with lifetime exposures to fine-particulate-matter pollution

(PM2.5). They also tracked Apolipoprotein E (APOE 4), a well-known genetic risk factor for Alzheimer's, as well as lifetime cumulative exposure to unhealthy levels of PM2.5 -- particles which are at least 30 times smaller than the diameter of a human hair and

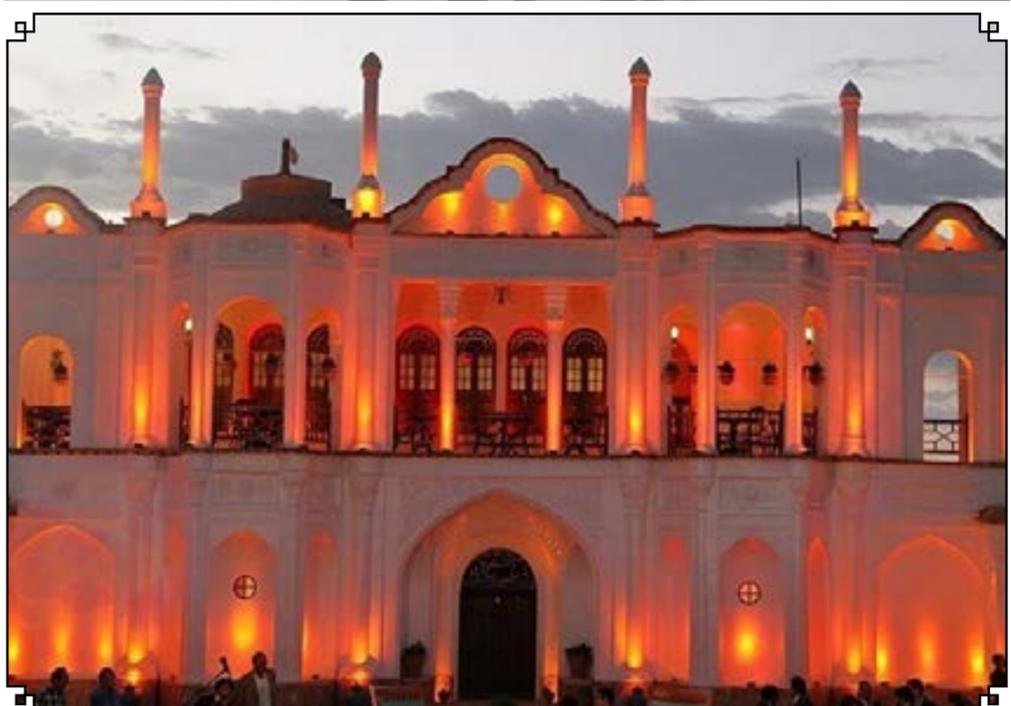
frequently cause the haze over urban areas.

Findings indicate Alzheimer's starts in early childhood, and the disease progression relates to age, APOE 4 status and particulate exposure. Researchers found hallmarks of the disease among

99.5 percent of the subjects they examined in Mexico City. In

addition, APOE 4 carriers have a higher risk of rapid progression of Alzheimer's and 4.92 higher odds of committing suicide versus APOE 3 carriers, controlling for age and particulate exposure.

Picture of the Day



Fathabad garden is located about 25km outside Iran's southeastern city of Kerman. Although this garden isn't registered as a part of the Persian Gardens on the UNESCO World Heritage Sites, it's still definitely worth visiting.

Courtesy: Tasnim News Agency