

This Day in History

(November 17)

Today is Saturday; 26th of the Iranian month of Aban 1397 solar hijri; corresponding to 9th of the Islamic month of Rabi al-Awwal 1440 lunar hijri; and November 17, 2018, of the Christian Gregorian Calendar.

1375 lunar years ago, on this day in 65 AH, Omar ibn Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas, the commander of Yazid's army in the Battle of Karbala, was executed for his unpardonable sin of perpetrating the tragic martyrdom of Imam Husain (AS), his family, and his companions, including the 6-month old infant, Ali Asghar; decapitating the martyrs and mounting their heads on lances; trampling the corpses of martyrs by horses; and dragging as captives to the courts of the tyrants in Kufa and Damascus, the noble women and children of the household of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA). A seditious person throughout his life, Omar ibn Sa'd who failed to heed the earnest advice of Imam Husain (AS) before the battle to save his soul from perjury, was executed by his own brother-in-law (i.e. his wife's brother), Mokhtar ibn Abi Obayda Thaqafi, a virtuous Muslim who had vowed to avenge the martyrdom of Imam Husain (AS). Mokhtar's uprising succeeded in driving out the Omayyads from Iraq and bringing to justice all the principal killers of the Prophet's grandson.

1180 lunar years ago, on this day in 260 AH, marks the first day of the divinely-decreed Imamate or leadership of mankind of Imam Mahdi (AS), the 12th and Last Infallible Heir of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA). A day before his father, Imam Hasan al-Askari (AS), was martyred through poisoning. His mother was the noble and virtuous Greek lady, the Byzantine emperor's granddaughter, Hazrat Narjis (SA), who on her mother's side she was descended from Simeon the loyal disciple of Prophet Jesus (AS). When he was orphaned the 12th Imam was 5 years old and was brought up in secrecy, since the Abbasid caliphs were fearful of the Prophet's famous hadith that the 12th and the Last of his Infallible Heirs would rise as Qa'em al-Mahdi to cleanse the world of all traces of oppression and corruption by establishing the global government of peace, prosperity, and justice. The Abbasids launched a manhunt to find the orphaned boy but by God's Grace he was safe from his enemies in what is called the state of "Ghaybat as-Soghra" (Minor Occultation). In 329 AH, the "Ghaybat al-Kobra" (Major Occultation) started, which still continues, and by the Grace of God, the Redeemer of mankind, along with Prophet Jesus, will reappear in the end times when the earth would be filled with injustice.

740 solar years ago, on this day in 1278 AD, 680 Jews were arrested in England for counterfeiting coins, and 293 of them found guilty and hanged. Throughout European history Jews have been ostracized for their miserliness, charging of usury, and above all insulting the fundamental beliefs of Christians by slandering Prophet Jesus and his mother, Virgin Mary.

613 solar years ago, on this day in 1405 AD, Sharif al-Hashim established the Sultanate of Sulu comprising many of the islands of the Sulu Sea, parts of Mindanao, certain portions of present-day Sabah (then North Borneo) and North Kalimantan. Of Yemeni origin and born in Johore in what is now Malaysia, he was a direct descendant of the Martyr of Karbala, Imam Husain (AS), the younger grandson of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA). He promulgated the first Sulu code of laws called Diwan that were based on the holy Qur'an. He introduced Islamic political institutions and the consolidation of Islam as the state religion.

599 lunar years ago, on this day in 841 AH, work started for construction of the Gowharshad Mosque in the southern courtyard of the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS), the 8th Infallible Heir of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA). This magnificent mosque was built on the orders of Empress Gowharshad Begum, the virtuous Iranian wife of Shahrukh Mirza, the son and successor of the fearsome Turkic conqueror, Amir Timur. Gowharshad also set up a "waqf" (endowment) for maintenance of this grand mosque and its library.

526 solar years ago, on this day in 1492 AD, the prominent Persian poet and literary figure, Noor od-Din Abdur-Rahman Jami died in the Khorasani city of Herat, at the age of 78. Born in a family that had migrated from Isfahan to Khorasan, he went to Samarqand to learn Islamic sciences, literature and history, and visited several other lands, before settling in Herat. He has left behind a large number of works in prose and verse, including "Baharestan". Jami has also composed beautiful odes in praise of Prophet Mohammad (Blessings of God upon him and his progeny) and the Ahl al-Bayt.

460 solar years ago, on this day in 1558 AD, Elizabeth I ascended the throne of England at the age of 42 upon death of her half-sister Mary, thus starting the 45-year "Elizabethan Epoch" that gave national identity and stability to the country. The period is famous for the flourishing of English drama, led by playwrights such as William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe, and for the seafaring prowess of English adventurers such as Francis Drake. The 5th and last ruler of the Tudor Dynasty, she remained unmarried and was succeeded on her death by King James of Scotland, who united the British Isles.

268 solar years ago, on this day in 1750 AD, French researcher, Nicolas Appert, was born. He discovered the method of pasteurization of food for removing microbes, which marks a major development for preserving foodstuffs. He died in 1841 mired in poverty.

222 solar years ago, on this day in 1796 AD, Empress Catherine the Great, the German wife of Tsar Peter III of Russia, died at the age of 67 after a reign of 34 years (following her husband's death in 1762), and the news led to a humiliating retreat of Russian forces from the Caucasus in the midst of the war against Iran which she had started.

149 solar years ago, on this day in 1869 AD, Suez Canal, which links the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea, was inaugurated.

148 solar years ago, on this day in 1870 AD, the united German Empire was founded by Prussia following its victory over Denmark, Austria, and France. The main implementer of the unity plan was Otto von Bismarck, known as the Iron Chancellor. The German Empire, also known as the Second Reich, collapsed in 1918, following its defeat in World War I, and the Republic system was established in Germany.

96 solar years ago, on this day in 1922 AD, with the exile to Italy of the 36th Ottoman Sultan, Mohammad VI, after a 4-year reign, following the Turkish Grand Assembly's decision on November 1 to abolish the monarchy, the state that was declared independent of Seljuqid rule in 1299 by Osman Khan Ghazi, came to its end after six centuries of rule over the regions overlapping Asia, Europe and Africa.

91 lunar years ago, on this day in 1349 AH (1930 AD), Grand Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Sistani was born in the holy city of Mashhad, Khorasan, northeastern Iran, in a family of religious scholars. His father was Hujjat al-Islam Seyyed Mohammad Baqer, while his grandfather, also famous as Ayatollah Seyyed Ali al-Sistani, had travelled to Iraq to study under the famous Mirza Mohammad Hassan Shirazi (who issued the fatwa on tobacco ban), before returning to Mashhad in 1318 AH (1900-01 AD). The family had long been residing in holy Mashhad. During the Safavid period, his ancestor Seyyed Mohammad was appointed by Shah Sultan Hussain to the office of Sheikh ol-Islam in Sistan province, where he settled, and hence became known as "Sistani".

75 solar years ago, on this day in 1943 AD, the Cairo Conference was held in the Egyptian capital by Allied Powers during World War II. Among the decisions adopted by Britain, the US, and Russia, was to strip imperialist Japan of all territories that it had seized in the Pacific and the Asian continent, and to declare Korea as an independent country.

42 solar years ago, on this day in 1976 AD, prominent Bengali Muslim leader, Mowlana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, whose political career spanned British India, Pakistan and Bangladesh rule, passed away in Dhaka at the age of 96.

32 solar years ago, on this day in 1986 AD, Professor Mohammad Taqi Modarres Razavi, the prominent Iranian literary figure, author, and researcher, passed away at the age of 95. He has left behind a large number of valuable works. Among the books edited by him, mention could be made of "Diwan-e Anwari" (collection of poems of the Persian poet of the later Seljuqid era, Auhad od-Din Ali Anwari) and a manuscript of "Tarikh-e Bukhara" (History of Bukhara), translated into Persian by Ahmad Ibn Mohammad Ibn Nasr al-Qubavi in 1128 AD from the original Arabic of Mohammad bin Ja'far Narshaki, who presented it around 948 AD to Nuh Ibn Nasr of the Samanid Dynasty of this important region of ancient Iran which now forms the republic of Uzbekistan.

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

Vatican Lauds Iran's Cultural Richness



Vatican's Culture Minister Gianfranco Ravasi

TEHRAN (FNA) - Vatican's Culture Minister Gianfranco Ravasi hailed the richness and diversity of Iranian culture, and called for expansion of bilateral ties in different cultural areas with Iran.

Ravasi who is President of the Pontifical Council for Culture made the remarks on Wednesday in a meeting with Iranian Ambassador to Vatican Taha Hashemi in the Vatican City.

He expressed hope that the two sides would boost their cultural ties, especially with a focus on strengthening the presence and increasing the activities of Iranian artists, painters, calligraphers and musicians in Vatican.

The Vatican official highlighted the significance of Iranian cinema as well as Persian language and literature, and urged for making the necessary conditions to hold joint events showcasing religious movies and art works in the city of Vatican.

The Iranian official, for his part, said Iran is ready for boosting bilateral cooperation and exchanging delegations in a bid to deepen cultural and educational ties with the ecclesiastical state.

In February 2015, Iranian Vice-President

for Women and Family Affairs Shahindokht Molaverdi and President of Vatican's Pontifical Council for the Family Vincenzo Paglia called for the enhancement of mutual cooperation on family affairs.

Speaking in a joint press conference in Vatican City, Vincenzo Paglia urged expansion of bilateral ties and called for more meetings in the future.

He said that the Pontifical Council and the Iranian delegation discussed the problems of family in modern world and concluded that Muslims and Christians should cooperate on this issue.

For her part, Molaverdi, who was heading a delegation to Italy, said that medical, legal, and sociological problems of family were discussed during the meeting, describing these problems as global.

Later in 2016, Iran's President Hassan Rouhani visited Italy and then met with Pope Francis in Vatican where Pope Francis underlined the need for Iran to play a leading role in campaign against terrorism.

Scientists Detect Early Stage Cancer From Blood Test



TORONTO (Dispatches)- Cancer scientists have combined 'liquid biopsy,' epigenetic alterations and machine learning to develop a blood test to detect and classify cancer at its earliest stages.

The study led by Cancer scientist principal investigator Dr. Daniel De Carvalho at Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, describe not only a way to detect cancer, but hold promise of being able to find it earlier when it is more easily treated and long before symptoms ever appear, says Dr. De Carvalho, Senior Scientist at the cancer centre, University Health Network.

By profiling epigenetic alterations instead of mutations, the team was able to identify thousands of modifications unique to each cancer type. Then, using a big data approach, they applied machine learning to create classifiers able to identify the presence of cancer-derived DNA within blood samples and to determine what cancer type. This basically turns the 'one needle in the haystack' problem into a more solvable 'thousands of needles in the haystack', where the computer just needs to find a few needles to define which haystack has needles.

The scientists tracked the cancer origin and type by comparing 300 patient tumour samples from seven disease sites (lung, pancreatic, colorectal, breast, leukemia, bladder and kidney) and samples from healthy donors with the analysis of cell-free DNA circulating in the blood plasma. In every sample, the "floating" plasma DNA matched the tumour DNA. The team has since expanded the research and has now profiled and successfully matched more than 700 tumour and blood samples from more cancer types.

Iran Bans Promotion of Harmful Products

TEHRAN (IFP) -- Iran has banned running advertisements for three dozen products, including Olivier salad, carbonated beverages, potato chips, and all types of frying oil and cream cheeses that are considered to be harmful according to the health ministry.

Last weekend, Iranian Minister of Health and Medical Education Seyyed Hassan Qazizadeh Hashemi sent letters to Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi and the chief of state broadcaster IRIB Abdolali Ali-Asgari to inform them of the ban on advertising the harmful products in all media.

An official with Iran's Food and Drug Organization announced that the list of harmful products has been reviewed and prioritized following a series of meetings with the health authorities, as well as the representatives of National Standard Organization.

According to the Food and Drug Organization, these products have been classified into three groups:

Sausages, ham, all types of sandwiches and pizza,

ready-to-eat frozen pizzas, Olivier salad, samosas, falafel, processed cheese, all kinds of carbonated or non-carbonated beverages, energy drinks, flavored malt drinks, carbonated fruit drinks, cooking oils, frying oils, margarine or vegetable butter, potato chips, fried corns and beans (snacks), cocoa products, fatty desserts, and makeup products for skin and hair (lipstick, mascara, foundations, pancakes, eyeliners, lip-liners, hair dye, and sun tan lotions) are all in the Group 1 due to the existence of heavy metals and the frequency of consumption.

All types of cream cheeses, syrups and non-alcoholic drinks, high-fat sauces (mayonnaise and salad dressings) with a fat content of over 30%, sweets made from flour, toffees, candies, various anti-cellulite products and topical slimming products are in the second group of the banned products.

Group three includes semi-prepared kebab, hamburgers, edible icy products, instant drinks powder, Minerin crème, tattoo and skin design products, hair straighteners, and hair regenerators.

Picture of the Day



The epic play, Rostam and Sohrab, a part of the 10th-century Persian epic Shahnameh (Book of Kings) by the renowned poet Ferdowsi, has finally been staged by 30 elderly and disabled actors in Tehran's Vahdat Hall after nearly a decade of rehearsal.

Courtesy: Tasnim News Agency