

This Day in History

(February 17)

Today is Monday; 28th of the Iranian month of Bahman 1398 solar hijri; corresponding to 22nd of the Islamic month of Jamadi as-Sani 1441 lunar hijri; and February 17, 2020, of the Christian Gregorian Calendar.

1656 solar years ago, on this day in 364 AD, Roman Emperor Jovian died in Antioch during retreat from Mesopotamia following the shattering defeat inflicted by the Iranian army of Sassanid Emperor Shapur II eight months earlier at the Battle of Samarra in Iraq where his predecessor, Emperor Julian the Apostate, was killed.

1427 lunar years ago, on this day in 13 AH, Abu Bakr, who assumed the caliphate or political rule of the Islamic state, following the passing away of the Prophet of Islam, died at the age of 63, after a rule of 2 years, three months and 22 days. Son of Osman ibn Amer of the Tamimi clan of the Qureish, he is said to have given up idolatry and become the 40th Muslim in order of sequence of acceptance of Islam, in the early days of public proclamation of the divine mission by Prophet Mohammad (SAWA). He found himself propelled to the caliphate at the dubious gathering of Saqifa Bani Sa’dah, where following a heated dispute and a fistfight for political leadership between the Mohajer or Migrant Muslims of Mecca and the Ansar or the Muslim Helpers of Medina, his friend Omar ibn Khattab suddenly clasped his hand and pledged allegiance to him as caliph. This action created the greatest discord in the Islamic ummah, the scars of which are still evident on the body politic of the Muslim World. Many of the Prophet’s companions questioned Abu Bakr’s credentials in the absence of any ayah of the holy Qur’an or a statement from the Prophet in his favour. Most of them vividly remembered that only two months and ten days earlier on 18th Zilhijja, 10 AH, the Prophet while returning from his Farewell Hajj pilgrimage, had halted at Ghadeer-Khom on God’s express commandment to proclaim as vicegerent his dear cousin and son-in-law, Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (AS), regarding whose prime position in Islam and his God-given merits, God’s Messenger had always emphasized upon. It is also an undeniable fact of Islamic history, as found in all reliable texts, the Prophet’s daughter, Hazrat Fatema Zahra (SA), strongly protested the usurpation of the political right of leadership of her husband in an eloquently moving sermon, but she became the target of wrath of the new regime. In short, before his death, Abu Bakr made a will in favour of his friend, Omar ibn Khattab, as the next caliph, ignoring the protests of several of the Prophet’s companions, such as Talha ibn Obaidollah.

1098 solar years ago, on this day in 923 AD, the renowned Iranian Islamic historian and exegete of the holy Qur’an, Abu Ja’far Mohammad bin Jarir at-Tabari, passed away in Baghdad at the age of 84. Tabari’s monumental work is titled **“Tarikh ar-Rusul wa’l-Mulouk”** (History of Prophets and Kings). He also wrote a two-volume book titled **“al-Wilayah”** in which he has collected various sources of the historical event of Ghadeer-Khom, where on 18th Zilhijja, 10 AH, Prophet Mohammad (SAWA) while returning from his farewell Hajj pilgrimage, was commanded by God Almighty to proclaim Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (AS) as vicegerent.

1050 lunar years ago, on this day in 391 AH, Iranian scholar, literary figure, and poet, Hussain ibn Hajjaj al-Baghdadi, passed away at the age of 61. He wrote delicate poetry using attractive terms. Most of his poems are in praise of the Prophet of Islam and the Infallible Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt. His verses were compiled in book-form by his famous contemporary, the theologian and literary figure, Seyyed Razi – compiler of the celebrated book **“Nahj al-Balagha”**, which is a selection of the sermons, letters and maxims of the Prophet’s vicegerent, Imam Ali (AS).

452 solar years ago, on this day in 1568 AD, while the 10th Ottoman sultan and 3rd self-styled Turkic caliph, Selim II, had given up all state affairs and immersed himself in wine and pleasures of the flesh, his able Grand Vizier, Mohammad Sokollu (an ethnic Bosnian), succeeded in concluding a treaty with the Habsburg Holy Roman Emperor, Maximilian II, who agreed to pay an annual tribute of 30,000 ducats and cede authority to the Turks in Walachia (in present day Romania) as well as in Moldavia.

420 solar years ago, on this day in 1600 AD, Giordano Bruno, the Italian philosopher, mathematician, and astronomer, was burned at the stake on charges of heresy by the Christian church for suggesting the Sun was essentially a star, and moreover, that the universe contained an infinite number of planets. Bruno was deeply influenced by the astronomical facts of the universe which he learned from Latin translations of Arabic works written by Islamic scholars and scientists several centuries before. He refused to renounce his scientific discoveries and was brutally killed by the Catholic sect of Christianity.

211 solar years ago, on this day in 1809 AD, the gory Battle of Zaragoza between French and Spanish forces ended with French victory and occupation of the city of Zaragoza in eastern Spain. The war broke out as of November 15, 1808, with Napoleon’s attack that aroused strong resistance by the Spanish people. Both sides were ruthless, and countless people were killed in this war. Although Spain was occupied by France, after Napoleon’s retreat from Russia and his subsequent defeat by the allied European armies, Spain was liberated.

192 solar years ago, on this day in 1827 AD, the Swiss scientist, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, died at the age of 81. An expert in natural sciences and mathematics, he was fluent in several languages.

103 solar years ago, on this day in 1917 AD, Egyptian philosopher and poet, Abdur-Rahman Badawi, was born in the village of Sharabas, some 150 km from Cairo. He has been called the “Master of Arab Existentialism.”

31 solar years ago, on this day in 1989 AD, the Arab Maghreb Union was formed in Morocco by the host country along with Algeria, Libya, Tunisia, and Mauritania, for facilitating trade, commerce, and cultural ties in North Africa. However, disputes among member states, especially Algeria and Morocco, have obstructed the materialization of the Union’s goals.

20 solar years ago, on this day in 2000 AD, eminent historian and litterateur, Professor Mohammad Deyhim Tabrizi passed away in Tehran at the age of 92. His masterpiece is **“Biography of Poets of Azarbaijan”** in five volumes. The term Azarbaijan in his writings imply the two Iranian provinces of East and West Azarbaijan, as well as the northern part of historical Azarbaijan, which the Russians seized from Iran in the 19th century and which is known today as the Republic of Azerbaijan.

12 solar years ago, on this day in 2008 AD, Kosovo declared independence from Serbia, after endorsement by its parliament with Hashem Tachi as Prime Minister.

9 solar years ago, on this day in 2011 AD, people’s protests began in Libya against the dictatorial rule of Mu’ammar Qadhafi, who was eventually overthrown and killed the following year.

9 solar years ago, on this day in 2011 AD, in a bid to crush the popular uprising of the people of Bahrain that formally started three days ago, forces of the repressive Aal-e Khalifa minority regime launched a deadly pre-dawn raid on the peaceful protesters assembled at the Maidan Lu’lu (Pearl Square) in Manama. The day is known as Bloody Thursday and saw several people martyred and injured.

4 solar years ago, on this day in 2016 AD, the famous Egyptian journalist, Mohammad Hassanain Haikal, passed away in his hometown Cairo at the age of 93. Born in a wealthy merchant family, he was highly educated, and chose journalism as his career. For 17 years from 1957 to 1974, he was editor-in-chief of Egypt’s leading Arabic newspaper **“al-Ahram”**. For more than half-a-century he was an authoritative commentator on Arab affairs. Haikal articulated the thoughts of President Jamal Abdun-Nasser earlier in his career, and worked as a ghostwriter for him and his ideology of pan-Arabism. He was appointed minister of information in 1970 by the next president, Anwar Sadaat, but resigned from government in 1974 over differences. Throughout his career he was a critic of the military regimes of Anwar Sadaat and Hosni Mubarak, which he perceived as having departed from Nasser’s original nationalist dream. He visited Iran following the triumph of the Islamic Revolution, and met with Imam Khomeini (RA). The result of the meeting was a book in English published in 1981 and titled **“The Return of the Ayyatollah”**.

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

Big Success Feature Awarded at Asia Pacific Festival



A still from Iranian feature ‘Rona, Azim’s Mother’.

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iranian feature **Jamshid Mahmoudi**, received the ‘Rona, Azim’s Mother’, directed by Cultural Diversity Award under the

patronage of UNESCO at the 13th Asia Pacific Screen Awards.

‘Rona, Azim’s Mother’ centers around Azim (Mohsen Tanabandeh), an afghan refugee, who lives and works in Tehran along with his family. Being the head of the entire family and as the eldest brother, he arranges for his brother Farooqh, and his family along with their mother to be smuggled into Germany. But at the last moments, Farooqh shamefully makes his decision known to Azim that he’s not going to take their mother who is very attached to her grandchildren. Azim who feels lonely and is furious, accidentally finds out that his mother is in dire need of a kidney transplant, otherwise she’ll die in 2

months. He has to choose between his own life and his mother’s whom he has always claimed as the most important one in his life.

The Iranian feature had previously won the Ecumenical Jury Prize at the IFF Mannheim-Heidelberg 2019 and the Kim Jiseok Award at the 23rd Busan International Film Festival, as well as the best film award at the 2019 Sama Film Festival in Sweden.

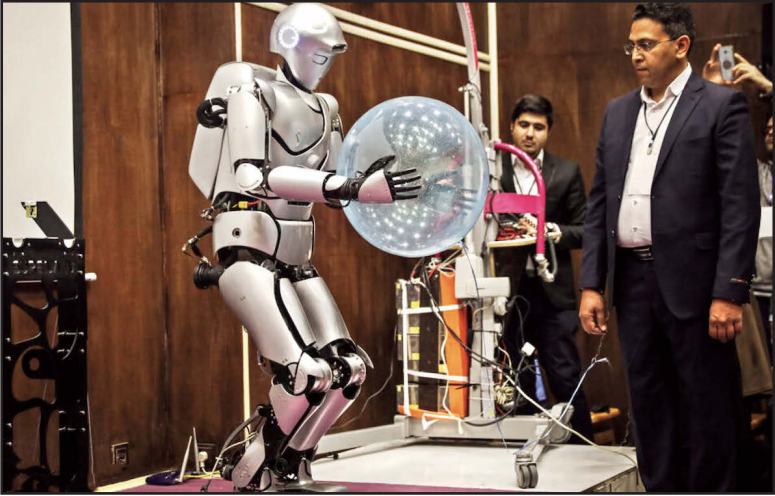
Established in 2007, the Asia Pacific Screen Awards (APSA) is an international cultural program supported by Brisbane City Council and powered by Brisbane Marketing. The 13th Asia Pacific Screen Awards were held on 21 November 2019 in Brisbane, Australia.

University of Tehran Researchers Unveil Surena IV

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Iranian roboticists have unveiled Surena IV, a new robot that is a major improvement over previous designs.

A little over a decade ago, researchers at the University of Tehran introduced a rudimentary humanoid robot called Surena. An improved model capable of walking, Surena II, was announced not long after, followed by the more capable Surena III in 2015.

A team of more than 50 researchers built Surena IV at the University of Tehran’s Center for Advanced Systems and Technologies (CAST). Led by Dr. Aqil Yousefi-Koma, a professor of mechanical engineering, the group



worked for the past four years to develop the new robot.

Surena IV is also more nimble.

Custom force sensors on the bottom of its feet help the robot step over uneven surfaces by

adjusting the angle and position of each foot. Walking speed increased to 0.7 kilometers per hour from 0.3 km/h in the previous generation.

While Surena IV is not a highly dynamic machine-like Atlas, the famously agile humanoid from Boston Dynamics, it relies on a whole-body motion controller that continuously adjusts its posture to avoid falls. In its overall design, Surena is probably more comparable to humanoids like UBTECH’s Walker, Honda’s Asimo, Pal Robotics’ Talos, KAIST’s Hubo, and AIST’s HRP-2, although these robots have already publicly demonstrated a broader range of capabilities.

‘The Fisherman in Spring’ Makes It to Children’s Festival in U.S.

TEHRAN (IFILM) -- The 11th edition of the Providence Children’s Film Festival (PCFF) in the U.S. has nominated Iranian short animation ‘The Fisherman in Spring’.

Made by Seyyed-Hassan Soltani, the Iranian animation, to go on the U.S. screen on February 16 in ‘Let’s Get Animated’ section, is nominated for audience choice award and jury special award at the U.S. event.

The 10-minute animation tells the story of a fisherman who is waiting for spring, but the spring’s return takes too long.

Waiting for the spring, he makes blossoms at home. Once he sees a blossom outside and chases it until he learns that an iceberg has blocked the spring’s way back.

“A fisherman eagerly awaits the arrival of spring. Looking for any sign of seasonal change feels interminably long.... Until he spots a blossom!” the PCFF website wrote.

The PCFF presents the best of independent and international children’s cinema to inspire,

delight, educate, and connect a diverse community of children and families from Rhode Island and throughout New England.



A still from Iranian short animation ‘The Fisherman in Spring’.

Picture of the Day



The 13th International Tourism Fair and the 33rd National Handicrafts Fair of Tehran are underway in Tehran Permanent Fairground. (Courtesy of Mehr News Agency)