

This Day in History

**This Day in History (February 20)**  
Today is Thursday; 1<sup>st</sup> of the Iranian month of Esfand 1398 solar hijri; corresponding to 25<sup>th</sup> of the Islamic month of Jamadi as-Sani 1441 lunar hijri; and February 20, 2020, of the Christian Gregorian Calendar.

**762 solar years ago**, on this day in 1258 AD, Musta’sim-Billah, the 37th and last self-styled caliph of the usurper Abbasid regime, was wrapped in a carpet and trampled to death under the feet of horses on the orders of the Mongol conqueror Hulagu Khan, ten days after the sack of Baghdad. The incompetent Musta’sim, whose 16-year rule was confined to Iraq and some eastern parts of Syria, had neither raised an army to defend Baghdad nor did he attempt to negotiate with Hulagu, to whom two years earlier he had supplied troops to conquer the Ismaili Nizari stronghold of Alamout (150 km west of modern Tehran). The contemporary Italian traveler, Marco Polo, reports in his “Travels” that upon finding the caliph’s great stores of treasure which could have been spent for the defence of the realm, Hulagu locked him in his treasure room without food or water for a while, telling him: “Eat of your treasure as much as you want, since you are so fond of it.” The curtain thus came down on 508 solar years of the Abbasid caliphate founded by Abu’l-Abbas as-Saffah on defeating the Omayyads in 750 AD by hijacking the sentiments of the Arab and Iranian masses for the Ahl al-Bayt, thereby depriving once again the progeny of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA) of their political right to rule the Islamic realm.

**732 lunar years ago**, on this day in 709 AH, Ahmad ibn Mohammad Ibn Ataollah al-Iskandari, the third sheikh of the Shadhili Sufi Order, passed away in Cairo. Ibn Ataollah authored a treatise on *“dhikr”*, titled *“Miftah al-Falah”* (Key to Salvation), which is a Sufi manual of invocation. His compilation of aphorisms helped to make the group very popular. The wide circulation of his written works led to spread of the Shadhili order in North Africa.

**343 solar years ago**, on this day in 1677 AD, France defeated the Spanish in the Caribbean Sea and took control of Haiti, which it ruled for 130 years. In 1804, a major uprising of the black people enslaved in the Americas by the Europeans, took place in Haiti, which emerged as the first independent country in Latin America.

**154 solar years ago**, on this day in 1866 AD, France defeated Mexican freedom fighters and crowned its Austrian client, Prince Maximilian, as king of Mexico. Five years later, the Mexicans rallied under former President, Benito Juarez, to reinstate him on ousting Maximilian.

**93 solar years ago**, on this day in 1928 AD, Britain granted ‘protectorate’ status to Jordan – a state it had created in 1920 by the river of the same name, by dividing the historical land of “Shaam” (Greater Syria) in collaboration with France on the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War 1. Britain installed as king of Jordan, Abdullah, a son of their agent Sharif Hussain of Hejaz, for his services to London during World War 1 against the Turks. Faisal, another son of Sharif Hussain, was placed as king in Damascus, but when driven out by the French four months later, was installed in Baghdad as king in 1921 against the wishes of the Iraqi people after Britain crushed the popular uprising led by Ayatollah Mirza Taqi Shirazi and Ayatollah Kashef al-Gheta. In the mid-1920s when Sharif Hussain lost Hejaz, including the religious cities of Mecca and Medina and the commercial centres of Jeddah and Ta’ef, to another British agent, Abdul-Aziz ibn Saud and his Wahhabi brigands from Najd, Britain bestowed upon the new strongman in 1932 an artificial entity called Saudi Arabia. Though Britain granted independence to Jordan in 1946, it continued to dictate orders before handing it over to the US which today exercises hegemony over this land. Jordan, like several other Arab states of West Asia, has no historical roots and almost 80 percent of its population is made up of Palestinians. It is part of the historical land of “Shaam” which was carved up by Britain and France into Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine – where in 1948 the British planted Israel after illegally settling on this Muslim land, hundreds of thousands of European Jews. Demonstrations frequently rock the Jordanian capital, Amman, and other cities, calling for reforms and scrapping of the monarchy due to its subservience to the US and its treasonous ties with Israel.

**73 solar years ago**, on this day in 1947 AD, Britain agreed to grant independence to the Subcontinent in August, but after partitioning it into India, West Pakistan, and East Pakistan (which in 1971 became Bangladesh), while deliberately leaving Muslim-majority Kashmir as a bone of contention. The fate of Haiderabad-Deccan which was a Muslim kingdom and the largest of the subcontinent’s semi-independent states (nearly the size of France) was left by Britain in limbo despite the fact that its ruler, Nizam ul-Mulk Asef Jah VII, had generously helped Britain in both the World Wars with tens of millions of pounds-sterling in addition to troops. Landlocked Haiderabad-Deccan, which for a year functioned as an independent sovereign state with membership in the UN, was forced to surrender to India in September 1948 following a week-long war. It is worth noting that the British had entered Muslim-ruled India as traders in the 17th century. With weakening of the Moghal Empire, they treacherously seized in mid-18<sup>th</sup> century the province of Bengal (today’s Bangladesh and the Indian state of Bengal) from its Muslim rulers of Iranian origin – Siraj-od-Dowla, Mir Ja’far, Mir Qassem – and thereupon gradually expanded their influence by taking control of the Subcontinent through wars and imposed treaties. In 1856 they annexed the Shi’ite Muslim kingdom of Awadh and deposed Wajed Ali Shah to end the 134-year rule of the Naishapuri Dynasty of Iranian origin. In 1857, when both the Muslims and Hindus rose against British rule in northern India, they were crushed, Delhi was stormed, and the nominal Moghal ruler, Bahadur Shah Zafar, was imprisoned and exiled to Burma. India was subsequently declared a part of the British Empire with Queen Victoria as Empress of India. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, because of the struggles of the Indian people against colonialism under the leadership of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the Ali Brothers, Jawaharlal Nehru, etc, the British were forced to agree to independence. India despite being a non-Muslim country has the world’s largest population of Muslims of around 250 million.

**60 solar years ago**, on this day in 1960 AD, British archaeologist Charles Leonard Woolley, whose excavation of the ancient Sumerian city of Ur in modern Iraq greatly advanced knowledge of Mesopotamian civilization, died.

**40 solar years ago**, on this day in 1980 AD, as per a decree of the Father of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeini (RA), the Council of Guardians was formed to act as a supervisory body to oversee whether the laws passed by the parliament are in conformity with the Islamic shari’a and the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran. This 12-member council is made up of six leading jurists nominated by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution and six judicial experts nominated by the Judiciary Chief. The members have to win the confidence of the parliament. The Council of Guardians plays a unique role in overseeing the presidential, parliamentary and other elections, and to determine whether or not the candidates have the required qualifications and eligibility. It is a superb example of popular religious rule in Iran in line with the aspirations of the people.

**29 solar years ago**, on this day in 1991 AD, Iranian researcher and writer, Hojjat al-Islam Mostafa Zamani died at the age of 58. His famous work is *“Ibrahim Bot-Shikan ya Qahreman-e Towhid”* (Abraham the Iconoclast or Champion of Monotheism).

**26 lunar years ago**, on this day in 1415 AH, Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Ali Araki passed away in holy Qom at the age of 103. A student of the Reviver of the Qom Seminary, Ayatollah Abdul-Karim Ha’eri, he taught for 35 years, and for 30 years led the daily prayer at the Faiziyeh Theological School. He was among the teachers of the Father of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeini (God bless him).

**23 solar years ago**, on this day in 1997 AD, a terrorist attack on Iran’s Cultural Centre in Multan, Pakistan, by Saudi-funded Takfiri terrorists of the Lashkar-e Jhangvi outfit, resulted in the martyrdom of 8 persons, including its director, Seyyed Mohammad Ali Rahimi, career diplomat who had served with distinction earlier in India, Afghanistan, and Nigeria.

**17 solar years ago**, on this day in 2003 AD, an Iranian military plane carrying 275 personnel crashed in southeastern Iran, resulting in the martyrdom of all on board, including some senior commanders.

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

Iranian Cities Hold Italian Film Week



TEHRAN (MNA) – **The Italian Film Week, organized by the Embassy of Italy in Tehran and Art and Experience Cinema, is set to open in three Iranian cities this week.** Entitle ‘Spotlight on Italian Cinema’; the film event will take place at movie theaters in Tehran, Shiraz, and on Kish Island. Organized by the Embassy of Italy in Tehran and Art and Experience Cinema, the film week will open on February 20 and run

through February 26. The screening program includes seven notable Italian films, such as ‘Happy as Lazzaro’ by Alice Rohrwacher, ‘Where the Shadows Fall’ by Valentina Pedicini, ‘A Lonely Hero’ by Gianni Amelio, and ‘Martin Eden’ by Pietro Marcello. The event also hosts a number of esteemed guests including Italian filmmaker Vincenzo Marra. All screenings are free of charge and open to everyone.

Finland Hosts Iranian Short Films

TEHRAN (IFILM) -- **Four more Iranian short films are set to be screened at the 2020 Tampere Film Festival in Finland.** The Iranian Youth Cinema Society reported that ‘Blister’ by Morteza Shams, ‘Azadeh’ by Mirabbas Khosravinejad and Amir Gholami’s ‘The Sea Swells’ will take part in the festival’s non-competitive section ‘Special Programmers’. The animated film



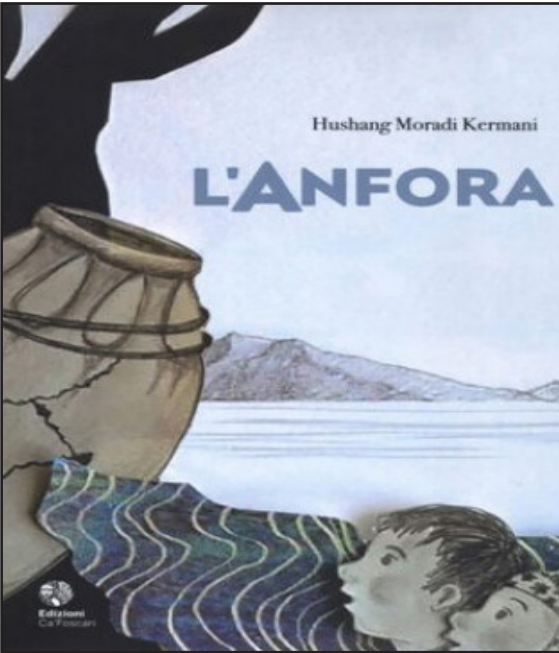
‘Dreams in the Depths’ by Reza Mohammadi is also among the Iranian films slated to be featured at the Finnish event next month. Earlier reports said Iran’s short film ‘Exam’, directed by Sonia Haddad, will represent Iran at the festival’s International Competition section. The upcoming edition of the Tampere Film Festival will take place on March 4-8, 2020.

Time of Day Affects Global Brain Fluctuations

SINGAPORE (Dispatches) -- **As the day progresses, the strength of the brain’s global signal fluctuation shows an unexpected decrease, according to a new study.** Circadian rhythms govern diverse aspects of physiology including sleep/wake cycles, cognition, gene expression, temperature regulation, and endocrine signaling. But despite the clear influence of circadian rhythms on physiology, most studies of brain function do not report or consider the impact of time of day on their findings. To address this gap in knowledge, the team analysed functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) data of approximately 900 subjects who were scanned between 8 am and 10 pm on two different days as part of the Human Connectome Project. Multiple studies have shown that the brain’s global signal fluctuates more strongly when one is drowsy (e.g. after insufficient sleep), and fluctuates less when one is more alert (e.g. after coffee). Based on known circadian variation in sleepiness, the authors hypothesized that global signal fluctuation would be lowest in the morning, increase in the mid-afternoon and dip in the early evening. Instead, they observed a cumulative decrease in global signal fluctuation as the day progressed. This global decrease was most prominent in visual and somatosensory brain regions, which are known for expressing dynamic fluctuations within individuals over time. Across the whole brain, time of day was also associated with marked decreases in resting-state functional connectivity -- the correlated activity between different brain regions when no explicit task is being performed.

Moradi Kermani’s ‘Vat’ Available in Italian

TEHRAN (IBNA) -- **Supported by the Grant Plan of Iran’s Culture Ministry, the children book, ‘The Vat’ by the acclaimed Iranian author Houshang Moradi Kermani has been translated into Italian and published.** ALi Fereidouni, Secretary of the Grant Plan of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance said that the book received 1500 € through the plan and has been published by Ca’ Foscari University Press in Venice. The Grant Plan of Iran’s Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance aims to back the translation and publication of Iranian books into other languages. ‘The Vat’ by Moradi Kermani has been translated into Italian by a professor of Persian language and literature Daniela Meneghini and released by Edizioni Ca’ Foscari in 165 illustrated pages and 1000 copies. The story of ‘The Vat’ is set in an Iranian village where the vat of the school from which to students drink water is broken and not usable anymore. The school manager, students and some village people try to find a solution for the problem and the story describes their efforts. Six Iranian children books have also been published in Chinese through the Grant Plan by Cnpiec Publishing



in that country such as ‘I’m scared’, ‘The Amiable Sarah’, ‘The Moon and the Fox’ and ‘Mr. Frog’ by receiving 6000 €.

Picture of the Day



**The 9th edition of Fajr International Fashion and Costume Festival is underway in Tehran with the participation of domestic artists and guests from 11 other countries.** Courtesy of Honaronline