

## This Day in History

(February 26)

Today is Wednesday; 7<sup>th</sup> of the Iranian month of Esfand 1398 solar hijri; corresponding to 02<sup>nd</sup> of the Islamic month of Rajab 1441 lunar hijri; and February 26, 2020, of the Christian Gregorian Calendar.

**2767 solar years ago**, on this day at noon in 747 BC, the “*Anno Nobonassari*” began in the reign of King Nabu-Nasir of Babylon, which the ancient Greco-Egyptian astronomer, Claudius Ptolemy, calls in his work “*Almagest*”, as beginning of the world’s first recorded calendar based on astronomical calculations. The Babylonian Chronicle covering the years 747 to 668 BC, the best preserved exemplar of this genre, was possibly collated from Babylonian astronomical diaries. The lists of celestial phenomena started with the lunar eclipse of 747–746 BC, a spectacular conjunction of the moon and the planets that may have inspired the commencement of recording of accurate astronomical observations. Although it is claimed that it was from the reign of Nabu-Nasir onward that the movements and duration of the stars were recorded, according to Islamic texts, it was Prophet Idris (Enoch), who centuries before the Great Deluge of the days of Prophet Noah, taught astronomy and devised the calendar. This is more or less confirmed by the 3rd century BC Hellenized Babylonian priest, Berossus, who in his work *Babyloniaca*, writes: “Nabu-Nasir gathered the records of his predecessors and destroyed them, thus ensuring that the history of the Chaldean kings began with him.” In view of these facts, it could be said that Nabu-Nasir’s reign marks the reform of the Babylonian calendar, introducing regular calculated intercalary months, the eighteen-year cycle texts and perhaps even the zodiac. Over two centuries later with the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus the Great of Persia, the astronomically advanced calendar of the Mesopotamian civilizations was adopted and fully Persianized by the Iranians.

**1220 lunar years ago**, on this day in 221 AH, the renowned Arabic poet, Ali ibn Abbas ibn ar-Rumi, was born in Baghdad. The son of an Iranian Muslim mother and a half Greek Muslim father, named Abbas ibn Jurayj, by the age of twenty he was an accomplished poet. His patrons included the Taherid ruler of Khorasan, Obaydallah ibn Abdullah, and the Persian Ismail ibn Bulbul. He was a follower of the School of the Ahl al-Bayt of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA). He composed numerous poems in praise of Imam Ali al-Hadi (AS) and Imam Hasan al-Askari (AS) – the Prophet’s 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Infallible Heirs. He died of illness at the age of 59, although some have suggested he was poisoned. His *Diwan* is a masterpiece of Arabic poetry.

**1073 lunar years ago**, on this day in 368 AH, the Iranian Arabic philologist, Hassan ibn Abdullah Sirafi, passed away in Baghdad. He was among the childhood teachers of Seyyed Radhi, the famous scholar and compiler of the “*Nahj al-Balagha*” – the collection of sermons, letters and maxims of Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (AS). Once the child Radhi had a lively discussion with him on the wrong track the caliphate took after Prophet Mohammad (SAWA).

**1001 lunar years ago**, on this day in 440 AH, the prominent Iranian Islamic scientist, Abu Rayhan Mohammad ibn Ahmad al-Berouni, passed away in the city of Ghazni, in present day Afghanistan at the age of 77. He was a multisided genius and wrote prolifically on history, geography, mathematics, astronomy, mineralogy, and various other topics. He wrote over 180 books. His work on geometry, arithmetic, trigonometry, and algebra, is titled “*at-Tajhim*” in which he has calculated the weight of objects. Born in Khwarezm, a region adjoining the Aral Sea and presently in Uzbekistan, Beiruni, who was a follower of the Ahl al-Bayt of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA), has written about the spherical shape of the Earth and its revolving on its axis as it orbits around the Sun, several centuries before Europeans were to discover these facts. He was conversant in Arabic, Persian, Greek and Sanskrit, and after visiting India and spending several months in the company of its sages, he wrote the valuable book, “*Tahqiq ma lil-Hind*”. Among his works, mention could be made of “*Kitab Sina’at at-Tanjim*” (The Book of the Elements of the Art of Astronomy), and “*Aasaar al-Baqiyah an-il-Qoroun al-Khaliya*” (The Remaining Signs of Past Centuries), which is a comparative study of calendars of different cultures and civilizations, interlaced with mathematical, astronomical, and historical information. He also wrote the “*Qanoun al-Mas’oudi*”, an extensive encyclopedia on astronomy, geography, and engineering.

**866 solar years ago**, on this day in 1154 AD, King Roger II of Sicily died at the age of 59 in his capital Palermo. Sicily, which for over three centuries was a Muslim island and part of the empire of the Fatemid Shi’ite Muslim Dynasty, was seized by his father, Roger I – a Norman adventurer from Normandy in northern France. Influenced by the rich culture and civilization of Islam, Roger II drew around him distinguished Muslim scientists, architects, statesmen, and even soldiers. The famous Islamic geographer Seyyed Mohammad al-Hassani al-Idrisi and the Spanish Muslim polymath Abu Salt al-Andalusi – who had formerly served the Fatemids in Egypt – were among the dignitaries at the Norman court in Palermo. Idrisi – a descendant of Imam Hasan (AS), the elder grandson and 2nd Infallible Heir of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA) – wrote for Roger the book “*Nuzhat al-Mushtaaq fi-Ikhteraaq al-Afaaq*”. Known in Latin as “*Tabula Rogeriana*”, it is a description of the world and the first world map ever drawn in Europe that later enabled navigators like Christopher Columbus, Amerigo Vespucci, Ferdinand Magellan and others to rediscover the Americas. It took Idrisi fifteen years to write this monumental work which contains commentaries and illustrations as well as the first perfect map of the Eurasian continent including its link to North Africa. Roger II also hired many Muslims who were trained in long-established traditions of centralized government. These included Abdur-Rahman an-Nasrani, a Greek convert whose name was Latinized as Christodulus and who served as the Emir of Palermo with the title “*ammiratus-ammiratorum*” (a corruption of “*Amir al-Omar*”), and later “*Amir al-Bahr*” (navy commander), which gave rise to the English word Admiral.

**521 lunar years ago**, on this day in 920 AH, the Battle of Chaldiran took place between the Ottoman and the Safavid Empires, in which Sultan Selim who was on the verge of defeat and contemplating flight, unexpectedly found victory as Shah Ismail’s forces suddenly gave way after brave resistance. The Turks, who were afraid of the growing influence of the Iranians in Anatolia and Syria, succeeded in checking Shah Ismail’s advance in what is now Turkey, but withdrew from Tabriz and retreated on hearing news of reorganization of the famous Qizilbash Corps by the Iranians. This was the first of the many battles between the two sides that continued intermittently for almost two-and-a-half centuries.

**297 lunar years ago**, on this day in 1144 AH, a treaty was signed after wars between the Ottoman and Safavid Empires, according to which the Turks withdrew from the western border areas of Iran and the Iranians regained sovereignty over Azerbaijan and parts of the Caucasus

**218 solar years ago**, on this day in 1802 AD, the acclaimed French poet and author, Victor Hugo, was born. He was a freedom-seeker and a supporter of social reforms in favor of the disadvantaged strata. He joined the French Academy at the age of 25, and was concurrently elected as a lawmaker. During the reign of Napoleon III, he stepped aside from the political scene due to his opposition to the repressive monarchic rule, and spent 20 years in exile. During this period, Hugo penned valuable works and can be considered as the pioneer of the Romanticism style. His important works include “*The Hunchback of Notre Dame*” and “*Les Miserables*”. He died in 1885.

**205 solar years ago**, on this day in 1815 AD, Napoleon Bonaparte, along with 1,200 of his men, escaped from his 10-month confinement on the Island of Elba in the Mediterranean Sea, to start the 100-day re-conquest of France, before his final defeat in the Battle of Waterloo on June 15 and the exile to St. Helena Island in the southern Atlantic Ocean, where he died in May 1821 – presumably by poison administered by the British.

**160 solar years ago**, on this day in 1860 AD, white-skinned European encroachers massacred a band of Wiyot Amerindians at the village of Tuluwat on Indian Island near Eureka, California. At least 60 women, children and elders were killed in cold blood. The US has a bleak and bloody record of genocide and ethnic cleansing of the native people.

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

# Top-Notch Director Grabs Women Leaders Award

TEHRAN (FNA)-- Iranian female movie director Narges Abyar received Hum Women Leaders Award 2020 in Pakistan.

Abyar received the award for her contributions for raising awareness about women and children’s plight in her films.

The HUM Women Leaders Award was held at the Governor House, Karachi, and celebrated

11 iconic women from Pakistan and abroad and a dynamic man for their contributions and achievement in the fields of diplomacy, finance, social work, healthcare, adventure sports, human rights, journalism and women’s rights, according to Pakistan In Vogue.

The awards ceremony was attended by Pakistani President

Arif Alvi, ambassadors, and other dignitaries and guests from the entertainment industry of Pakistan.

The Award is an initiative of Hum Network Limited, a Pakistani media company based in Karachi, Pakistan.

Abyar is the director of acclaimed movies such as “Track 143”, “Breath” and

“When the Moon Was Full”, and she received her award in recognition of her contributions for sensitively highlighting the plight of women and children in her films and also for defying the war genre’s convention by featuring female characters that rejected the gender norms expected of them, according to the website.

## Coronavirus Causes Cultural Events to Postpone Across Iran

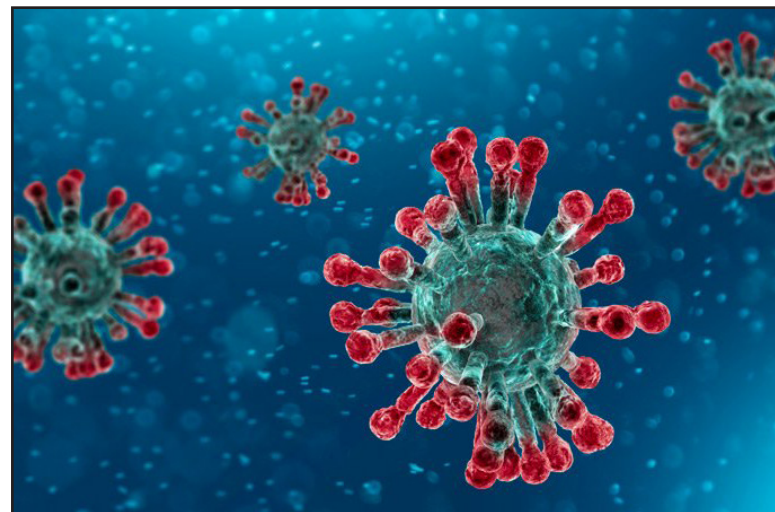
TEHRAN (IFILM) -- Iran has called off all art, cultural and cinematic events across the country in an attempt to stop coronavirus’ (COVID-19) spread.

Iran’s Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance canceled the events until Friday.

“Following strict health advice in the current situation to protect society’s health condition, all art and film events are canceled nationwide until Friday,” the ministry stated on Saturday.

The statement also noted that “it is obvious that the cancelation will be extended in case the condition continues”.

The cancelation includes all theater performances and film screenings, as well as concerts and other artistic



public events.

The organizers of the 17th edition of the Image of the Year Celebration, currently underway at the Iranian Artists Forum, have also announced

that the event’s film screening program has been postponed until Friday.

In addition, the 12th Fajr Festival of Visual Arts has postponed its closing ceremony,

which was slated for Friday.

“Spotlight on Italian Cinema”, a weeklong Italian film program, which opened at the Iranian Artists Forum in Tehran on Thursday, has also been postponed.

Moreover, the 33rd Tehran International Book Fair announced that it has suspended China’s presence following the new corona virus epidemic.

On Saturday, the number of people diagnosed with the corona virus in Iran increased to 43, of whom eight have so far have died.

Coronavirus appeared first in the Chinese city of Wuhan in December and has since spread globally. The World Health Organization has declared it a global health emergency.

## Documentary ‘Khatemeh’ Makes It to U.S. AmDocs

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iranian documentary ‘Khatemeh’, directed by Hadi and Mehdi Zarei, has been accepted into the screening program of the 9th American Documentary and Animation Film Festival and Film Fund (AmDocs) in the U.S.

The documentary tells the story of an Afghan girl who flees home because of early marriage and domestic violence.

It won Best Director for Full-length Documentary, as well as Best Editing for Babak Heidari at the 12th Iran International Documentary Film Festival, known as Cinema Vérité.

The Iranian documentary had its world premiere at the 2019 Florence Film Awards in Italy. It also took part at the 62nd International Leipzig Festival For Documentary And Animated Film in Germany.

According to the AmDocs’ screening program, ‘Khatemeh’ will go on screen on March 28.

AmDocs is one of the largest Docs and Animation only festivals in the United States, located near the media capital of Hollywood in Palm Springs. This event focuses on international films in both the short and feature categories as well as showcasing animation.

Recipients of the festival’s qualifying awards will be eligible for consideration in the Documentary Short Film category of the Academy Awards® without the standard theatrical run.

The 9th edition of the American Documentary and Animation Film Festival and Film Fund (AmDocs) will take place on March 27 – 31, 2020.



## Picture of the Day



The King’s oil extraction plant – Assarkhaneh Shahi – is a 16th-century building constructed on the orders of Shah Abbas of Safavid at the heart of Naghsh-e Jahan Square in Isfahan in central Iran. In the old days, oil seeds were extracted in the Assarkhaneh (Courtesy of Tasnim News Agency)