

## This Day in History

(3-3-1399)

Today is Saturday; 3rd of the Iranian month of Khordad 1399 solar hijri; corresponding to 29th of the Islamic month of Ramadhan 1441 lunar hijri; and May 23, 2020, of the Christian Gregorian Calendar.

**1176 solar years ago**, on this day in 844 AD is the spurious date of the fictional Battle of Clavijo in northern Spain between Muslims and Christian that never took place. Stories invented centuries later claimed it saw the victory of Ramiro I of Asturias over the Emir of Cordoba. In this myth, Saint James Matamoros, suddenly appeared and helped a vastly outnumbered Christian army to gain victory. Aspects of the historical Battle of Monte Laturce (859) were incorporated into this fiction. The myth, as it survives, was first fabricated about 300 years after the supposed battle on a spurious charter. A forged grant to the Church of Santiago de Compostela by which Ramiro reportedly surrendered a part of the annual tribute owed him by all the Christians of Spain also dates from the mid-twelfth century. The history of the cult of Saint James is rich in such frauds. Such myths were coined to instill a false sense of religiosity amongst the Spanish Christians to make them rise against Spanish Muslims. Modern Spanish scholarship has noted the heavy borrowings from the historical Battle of Monte Laturce that led to the defeat of Musa Ibn Musa, of the Islamicized Bani Qasi (descendants of the Hispano-Visigoth nobleman Cassius). After Monte Laturce, which was the result of family feud between Spanish Christians and Spanish Muslims, Musa was forced to fully submit to the Emir of Cordoba, who taking advantage of his weakness, removed him as Wali or Governor of the Upper March, initiating a decade-long eclipse of the Banu Qasi.

**496 solar years ago**, on this day in 1524 AD, Shah Ismail I, the founder of the Safavid Dynasty of Iran, passed away at the age of 37 after a reign of 24 years, and was succeeded by his young son, Shah Tahmasp I. To Ismail and the Safavids goes the credit of giving Iran its present political, cultural, religious, and national identity, although in terms of geography many of the areas of the Safavid Empire were lost to the aggressors and colonialists by the subsequent dynasties. Ismail I was devoted to the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA). Born in Ardabil to the head of the Safaviyya Sufi order, Shah Haidar, and his wife Martha, the daughter of the Aq Qoyounlu ruler, Uzun Hassan, by his Greek wife Theodora, better known as Despina Khatun, he was the direct descendant of the famous mystic, Safi od-Din Ardabili, and hence traced lineage to the Prophet's 7th Infallible Heir, Imam Musa Kazem (AS). At the age of 13, Ismail launched his campaign in Erzinjan (presently in Turkey), and with the help of a 7,000 force of Qizil-Bash (literally 'Red-Heads' from the colour of their caps) Turkic tribes of Rumlu, Shamlu, Ustajlu, Qajar, Afshar, Zul-Qadr, Tekulu, and Varsak, he defeated the Shirvan-Shah, took control of Baku (presently in the Republic of Azerbaijan) and crowned himself as King of Azarbaijan in Tabriz. By 1509, he unified all of Iran, Iraq, the Caucasus, parts of Central Asia, and western Afghanistan, and took the title of Shah of Persia. He was an adventurous personality and the dynasty founded by him lasted 235 years, reviving Iran's Islamic glories in science, art, architecture, philosophy, culture, and literature. Hence he wielded spiritual influence outside Iran as well amongst the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt in Iraq, Syria, Anatolia (modern Turkey), the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Deccan Plateau of India. The Timurid prince, Babar, who later founded the Mughal Empire in northern India, regarded Shah Ismail as his suzerain, and so did the Deccan Sultanates of Yusuf Adil Shah of Bijapur and Sultan Quli Qutb Shah of Golconda. For this reason, the Ottomans and Uzbeks were his mortal enemies, whose political ambitions, he decisively checked despite the setback he suffered in the Battle of Chaldiran against the former. Shah Ismail I was an accomplished poet in both Persian and his native Azeri Turkish, and wrote under the penname of "Khatai".

**402 solar years ago**, on this day in 1618 AD, the 30-year sectarian war started in Europe between the Catholic and Protestant sects, and involved almost all major countries. Europe has a history of gory sectarian and ethnic wars among the various sects that make up Christianity. These senseless wars have claimed millions of life.

**75 solar years ago**, on this day in 1945 AD, Heinrich Himmler, Chief of Nazi Germany's notorious intelligence agency, Gestapo, committed suicide while being held in prison by the Allied Powers, a few hours prior to his execution.

**38 solar years ago**, on this day in 1982 AD, the southwestern Iranian city of Khorramshahr was liberated from the yoke of the Ba'athist invaders by Iran's Muslim combatants in the heroic Bayt al-Moqaddas Operations, after a year and 8 months of occupation. It was a decisive victory that completely turned the tide of the imposed war against Saddam, thereby shattering the equations of his backers in the West and the East, including the Arab reactionary regimes of the Persian Gulf, which had bankrolled his aggression on Islamic Iran. This historic event is marked every year as "The Day of Resistance and Victory".

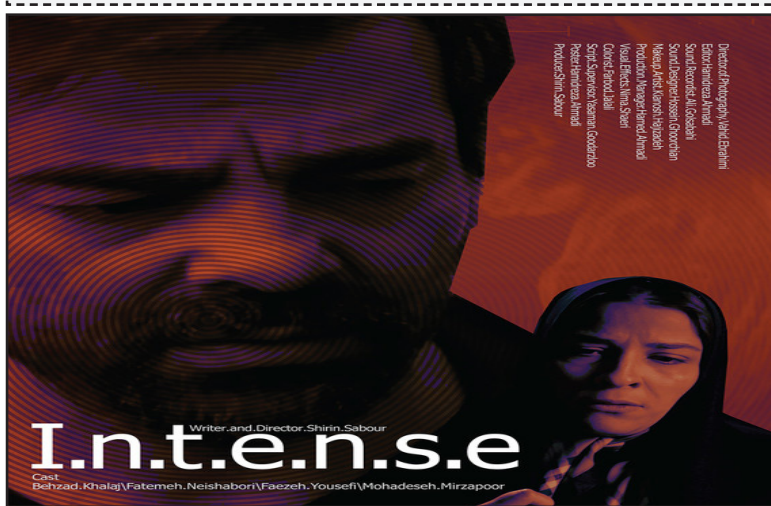
**30 solar years ago**, on this day in 1991 AD, almost worldwide demonstrations were staged by Muslims against Saddam of the repressive Ba'ath minority regime of Baghdad, in protest to his desecration of the holy shrines in Karbala and Najaf, coupled with the massacre of hundreds of thousands of Shi'a Muslims, on the orders of the US and Arab regimes, when the popular uprising of the people of Iraq was about to topple him.

**15 solar years ago**, on this day in 2005 AD, Iranian poet Mohammad Reza Aqasi, passed away at the age of 46. Born in Tehran, he is famous for his long ode (Mathnavi) on the history of the Shi'a Muslim Creed. He also wrote excellent poetry on the heroics of Iran's Muslim combatants on the battlefields of the 8-year war imposed by the US on the Islamic Republic through Saddam of Iraq's repressive Ba'ath minority regime.

**8 solar years ago**, on this day in 2012 AD, Iran's navy, as a humanitarian gesture and efforts to safeguard international waters, saved the US-flagged Maersk Texas cargo ship that was being attacked by pirates in the Gulf of Oman.

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

# 'Intense' Crowned Best Documentary at Venice Festival



TEHRAN (IFILM) -- Iranian short title 'Intense' has grabbed an award at the Venice Intercultural Film Festival of Italy.

According to the festival's website, Shirin Sabour's film won the award for Best Short/doc On Women at the 2020 edition of the Italian event.

"Nader, whose house is on the verge of destruction, asks his sister to help him on the pretext of his child's illness. His sister goes to his home, but..." a synopsis for the 15-minute film

reads.

Earlier reports said 'The Other', co-directed by Saman Hosseinpour and Ako Zandkarimi, won the award for Best Silent Film at the festival.

The Venice Intercultural Film Festival aims to "reward those productions that highlight significant aspects of local or national cultures", an online submission platform says.

The winning films will be screened at the festival, scheduled for May 29, 2020.

## Iran Puts Off Fajr International Film Festival

TEHRAN (FNA)- Amid ongoing coronavirus concerns worldwide, Iran's Fajr International Film Festival is the latest event to reschedule its dates to next year.

The annual festival has been deferred in consideration of the safety and health of all the guests, participants and the public, as well as to coordinate with the overall epidemic prevention work in the country.

According to the press headquarters of the annual cinematic event, Festival Director Mohammad Mehdi Asgarpour said on Thursday that they have pushed the 38th edition to 2021. "The festival is among many that are changing plans amid the spread of the virus globally. We felt incredibly sad about having to postpone the film festival



this year," he noted.

Despite Fajr's optimism that the show can go on, moving the festival to late May or early June was still a risky gamble considering countries are currently in lockdown mode and the outbreak in Iran is far from over.

In this respect, Asgarpour said, "We appreciate the tremendous

support and well wishes from our fans and colleagues during these uncertain times. We thought we could re-schedule the event for May or later, but with much regret and like many other international festivals, we are postponing the festival until 2021.

He added, "We can organize

the event online. We had an extraordinary line-up of wonderful films planned. However, we cannot have in-person gatherings. Many film makers and international guests would be unable to attend the festival. They come from countries that are still under lockdown. There are also several domestic issues and conditions that forced us to postpone the 38th edition to 2021. We did this in collaboration with Hossein Entezami, the head of the Cinema Organization of Iran, and FIAPF."

Many events around the world have also been cancelled amid the COVID-19 outbreak, including film festivals and music concerts. Release of much-awaited new movies have also been pushed by several months to the winter.

## Walking, Cycling Associated With Reduced Risk of Early Death

LONDON (Dispatches) -- People who walk, cycle and travel by train to work are at reduced risk of early death or illness compared with those who commute by car.

These are the findings of a study of over 300,000 commuters in England and Wales, by researchers from Imperial College London and the University of Cambridge.

The researchers say the findings suggest increased walking and cycling post-lockdown may reduce deaths from heart disease and cancer.

The study, published in The Lancet Planetary Health, used Census data to track the same people for up to 25 years, between 1991-2016.

It found that, compared with those who drove, those who cycled to work had a 20 per cent reduced rate of early death, 24 per cent reduced rate of death from cardiovascular disease (which includes heart attack and stroke) during the study period, a 16 per cent reduced rate of death from cancer, and an 11 per cent reduced rate of a cancer diagnosis.

Walking to work was associated with a 7 per cent reduced rate in cancer diagnosis, compared to driving. The team explain that associations between walking

and other outcomes, such as rates of death from cancer and heart disease, were less certain. One potential reason for this is people who walk to work are, on average, in less affluent occupations than people who drive to work, and more likely to have underlying health conditions which could not be fully accounted for.



## Picture of the Day



Chabahar, an Iranian port city known for its strategic position and access to high seas, has also remarkable natural places and tourist attractions. Courtesy of IFP News