

This Day in History

(May 16)

Today is Sunday; 26th of the Iranian month of Ordibehesht 1400 solar hijri; corresponding to 4th of the Islamic month of Shawwal 1442 lunar hijri; and May 16, 2021, of the Christian Gregorian Calendar.

519 solar years ago, on this day in 1502 AD, Honduras in Central America, which was the centre of the Mayan civilization, was occupied by Spain. Spain subsequently decimated the indigenous Mayan people. In early 19th century, due to the chaotic state of affairs in Spain, Honduras like the majority of the American colonies gained independence from Spanish colonial rule. Honduras covers an area of more than 112,000 sq km. it is a republic and shares borders with Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua.

233 solar years ago, on this day in 1788 AD, German poet and orientalist, Friedrich Ruckert, was born in the city of Hamburg. He was a researcher on eastern languages and lectured at German universities. He has translated numerous poems from Persian, Arabic, and Chinese to German language. He is one of the German poets who have translated the Diwan of poems of renowned Iranian poet, Hafez, to German language, which has been published on several occasions.

182 lunar years ago, on this day in 1260 AH, the prominent Indian Islamic scholar, Seyyed Mohammad Dildari, was born. He initially learned sciences under his father and later on under the renowned Islamic scholars of his day. Thereafter, he compiled numerous valuable books. Among the 40 works he left behind, mention can be made of “*Emad al-Ijتهad*” on jurisprudence.

105 solar years ago, on this day in 1916 AD, the scandalous Sykes-Picot Accord was signed by representatives of Britain, France, and Russia in Paris for dividing up the Arab lands of the Ottoman Empire and limiting the Turkish possessions to Anatolia or present day Turkey. Even before the formal defeat of the Ottomans in 1917, lines were drawn on paper to share the spoils by the two principal European colonial powers. The British took control of Iraq and the Hijaz. Shaam or Greater Syria was split up into four parts, with the British taking Jordan and Palestine, and the French taking Syria and Lebanon. The main goal of this plan was to set up in Palestine, an illegal entity called Israel as a homeland for European Jews.

100 lunar years ago, on this day in 1342 AH, Grand Ayatollah Abdul-Hussain Lari passed away at the age of 79 and was laid to rest in Jahrom. He completed his higher studies in holy Najaf, Iraq, where after attaining the status of Ijتهad, he was deputized to Iran’s Fars Province by Grand Ayatollah Mirza Hassan Shirazi – famous for his fatwa against tobacco to save Iranian economy from British exploitation. Ayatollah Lari led the people of Shiraz and Fars during the Constitutional Revolution, and firmly backed the people of Tangistan, near Bushehr in the struggle against British invasion of 1915. He groomed several students and wrote around 40 books on jurisprudence, theology, Hadith, and social issues.

46 solar years ago, on this day in 1975 AD, India annexed Sikkim and abolished the Chogyal monarchy. The Himalayan land of Sikkim was part of the British subcontinent, but in 1947 when India became independent, a popular vote rejected Sikkim’s joining the Indian Union and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru agreed to a special protectorate status for Sikkim. The land, however, came under the suzerainty of India, which controlled its external affairs, defense, diplomacy and communications, but otherwise retained administrative autonomy. A state council was established in 1955 to allow for constitutional government under the Chogyal. Meanwhile, the Sikkim National Congress demanded fresh elections and greater representation for the Nepalese majority. In 1973, riots in front of the Chogyal palace led to a supposed request for protection from India. In 1975, the Prime Minister of Sikkim reportedly appealed to the Indian Parliament for Sikkim to become a state of India. In April, the Indian Army took over the city of Gangtok and disarmed the Chogyal’s palace guards. A referendum was held in which over 90 percent of the electorate allegedly voted to join the Indian Union. On 16 May 1975, Sikkim was formally declared the 22nd state of the Indian Union.

24 solar years ago, on this day in 1997 AD, the autocratic president of Congo (formerly Zaire), General Mobutu Sese Seko, fled after the united forces, led by Lauren Kabila, closed in on the city of Kinshasa. He came to power in the wake of a coup in 1965 and ruled Congo with an iron fist for 32 years. Although he was a violent and ruthless dictator, he was always supported by the Western regimes, especially the US and France. Congo has always been on the spotlight of the Western regimes, given its strategic position in Central Africa and existence of ample copper and diamond resources. A day after the escape of Sese Seko, the opposition forces captured Kinshasa; and Lauren Kabila was installed as the president. A while later, the refusal of Kabila to allow his Tutsi allies a share in the government, once again fanned the flames of civil war resulting in the assassination of Kabila on January 16, 2000, by one of his bodyguards.

28 solar years ago, on this day in 1993 AD the researcher, author, and lecturer of Persian language and literature at Tehran University, Dr. Mahdi Derakhshan, passed away at the age of 75. For a while, he also researched and lectured at Turkey’s Ankara University. He has left behind a large number of valuable compilations

10 solar years ago, on this day in 2011 AD, philologist and grammarian of the Persian language, Professor Hassan Ahmad Givi, passed away at the age of 84. A prominent student of the famous Professor Badi oz-Zaman Farouzanfar, after obtaining PhD from Tehran University, for over four decades he taught at his alma mater as well as other universities. He actively participated as a contributor to the Dehkhoda Lexicon (Loghatnameh), accounting for over 20 percent of the voluminous project. He compiled over 50 books, including “*A Comparative Study of Persian and Turkish Literature.*”

8 solar years ago, on this day in 2013 AD, Takfiri terrorists backed by Saudi Arabia and the US detonated car bombs in the Shi’a Muslim neighbourhoods of Baghdad and Mosul, resulting in the martyrdom of dozens of men, women, and children, and injury to scores of others, as part of their failed plot to stir sectarian clashes in Iraq. Seven years earlier on this same day in 2006, Takfiri terrorists had raided a parking lot in a predominantly Shi’a Muslim neighborhood of Baghdad, shooting dead several guards, and leaving behind an explosives-rigged car that led to the martyrdom of over a score of would-be rescuers.

Iranians Celebrate National Day of Ferdowsi



Renowned poet Ferdowsi and his magnum opus ‘Shahnameh’ (Book of Kings).

TEHRAN (IFILM) -- Ordibehesht 25 in the Persian calendar corresponding with May 15 is considered a major cultural event for Iranians to both commemorate the Persian Language Day and the renowned

poet Ferdowsi and his magnum opus ‘Shahnameh’ (Book of Kings), the world’s longest epic poem written by a single author.

National Day of Ferdowsi is paying tribute to

Iran’s national values and religious beliefs as Ferdowsi is believed to immortalize the Persian language, culture, history by creating the everlasting work of ‘Shahnameh’ which has become one of the symbols of Persian-speaking history and culture.

The long-lasting permanence of the Persian language is indebted to the famous Iranian poet. Ferdowsi designed the Persian language and literature in such a way that his epic book Shahnameh, about the Persian kings that took him three decades to write, played a key role in the revival of this language and spread the Persian literature beyond the borders of Iran.

Today Ferdowsi’s tomb is one of the tourist attractions in Iran. Millions of visitors from various provinces of Iran come to see the tomb every year. Foreign dignitaries, tourists, and other Persian-speaking people from Europe, Asia, and the Middle East also visit the site.

Every year, a number of literati and scholars from around the world gather at the mausoleum on May 15 to commemorate the great Persian. However, this year the annual national celebration to observe Ferdowsi Day is to be held online due to the pandemic.

Director Mehrjouee Granted Iran’s Short Film Academy Award

TEHRAN (IFILM) -- Prominent Iranian filmmaker Dariush Mehrjouee has been honored at the 11th edition of the Iranian Short Film Academy Awards (aka ISFA awards) in Tehran.

The Iranian Short Film Academy Awards announced the winners of its 2021 edition during a closing ceremony of ISFA Awards that took place online on Thursday due to the coronavirus pandemic.

During the ceremony, a video was broadcast showing the ISFA medal being handed to the veteran director at his home.

In the video, Mehrjouee addressed the



Prominent Iranian filmmaker Dariush Mehrjouee

directors of short films, and stressed the importance of making a short film, saying, “It is hard work as you have to make your point in a short time.”

The 81-year-old director made his directorial debut in 1966.

He has made 10 short films as well as several features including ‘Sara’ and ‘The Orange Suit’, which were aired on ifilm English TV channel.

His movies garnered several awards at domestic and international film festivals.

The ISFA Awards is an annual event organized by the Iranian Short Film Association.

Dementia Linked to Smoking, Cardiovascular Disease

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) -- Researchers at the Translational Genomics Research Institute (TGen) say that smoking impairs the ability to learn and memorize and that its effects are more pronounced among females, while males are more impaired by cardiovascular disease.

By analyzing data representing more than 70,000 individuals worldwide -- generated through TGen’s online cognitive test called MindCrowd -- the current study produced results that indicate definitive trends.

According to Matt Huentelman, Ph.D., TGen Professor of Neurogenomics, a MindCrowd founder, and the study’s senior author, the results suggest that smoking and cardiovascular disease impact verbal learning and memory throughout adulthood, starting as early as age 18 and that smoking is associated with decreased learning and memory function in women, while cardiovascular is associated with decreased learning and memory function in men.

Besides Alzheimer’s disease, the most significant cause of cognitive decline is known

as “vascular contributions to cognitive impairment and dementia” or VCID, which arises from stroke and other vascular brain injuries that cause significant changes to memory, thinking and behavior: smoking and cardiovascular disease exacerbate VCID.



Picture of the Day



Four Persian leopards have been spotted at the Naybandan Wildlife Sanctuary in Tabas, South Khorasan Province. With a size of 1,500,000 hectares, Naybandan Wildlife Sanctuary has recently been given legal protection and is known to have held the highest population of Asiatic cheetahs.

Courtesy of Mehr News Agency