

May 2017

Politics:

President Rouhani [announced](#) that his government will launch a new railway every month in Iran.

The Vice Chairman of the Iranian parliament Ali Motahhari [issued](#) a statement in support of President Rouhani's re-election bid.

Members of a faction of women parliamentarians [declared](#) their support for President Rouhani in the May 19 presidential election.

International Relations:

Ten Iranian border guards were [killed](#) in clashes with the Pakistani extremist group Jaish ul-Adl near the town of Mirjaveh in Sistan-and-Baluchestan province. Iran's foreign ministry [summoned](#) the Pakistani ambassador to discuss the incident. Pakistan also [summoned](#) the Iranian ambassador to Pakistan following remarks made by the Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces that Iran would fight terrorism alone if Pakistan would not assist.

Pakistan will [strengthen](#) border security by sending a senior military official to the Iran-Pakistan border for the first time.

A senior Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) commander General Mohammad Pakpour [said](#) that Iran will send more military advisers to Syria to combat terrorism.

The Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif [announced](#) in a press conference with his Kyrgyz counterpart that Iran will assist Kyrgyzstan to build hydropower plants.

Following a meeting with a Georgian delegation in Tbilisi, the Iranian first Vice President Eshagh Jahangiri [announced](#) that Iran will facilitate a new transport corridor connecting the Persian Gulf to the Black Sea.

Foreign Minister Zarif [discussed](#) border security issues with Pakistan's Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan during a meeting in Islamabad.

Foreign Minister Zarif [met](#) with the Speaker of Pakistan's National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq in Tehran. Zarif expressed Iran's willingness to export gas and electricity to Pakistan.

Foreign Minister Zarif [met](#) the Norwegian State Secretary Wegger Christian Strommen in Tehran to discuss enhancing bilateral relations.

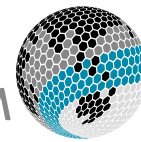
The Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Baqeri [discussed](#) Israeli and US attacks on Syrian territory during a phone conversation with his Syrian counterpart General Ali Abdullah Ayoub.

The Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani [met](#) with the Afghan president's national security advisor. Shamkhani said that some regional countries are fomenting the spread of terrorism from Syria and Iraq to Afghanistan.

The Iranian Defence Minister Brigadier General Hossein Dehghan was [among](#) 500 delegates at the sixth Moscow Conference on International Security. Dehghan [met](#) his Russian and Syrian counterparts Sergei Shoigu and Fahd Jassem al-Freij on the sidelines.

Iran [condemned](#) the Israeli airstrike on the Damascus International Airport in Syria.





The Iranian media [reported](#) on a speech by the European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini at a conference at the European University Institute, in which Mogherini declared that it was in no one's interest to scrap the Iranian nuclear deal.

The Supreme Leader's Senior Advisor Ali Akbar Velayati [met](#) with the visiting State Secretary at the German Federal Foreign Office Markus Ederer in Tehran. In the meeting, Velayati reiterated Iran's commitment to defending Syria, and discussed enhancing bilateral ties between Germany and Iran.

Foreign Minister Zarif [met](#) his Afghan counterpart Salahuddin Rabbani in Kabul to discuss the fight against terrorism.

Economics:

An explosion at a coal mine in Azadshahr [killed](#) 35 workers.

The Austrian Ambassador to Tehran Friedrich Stift [said](#) that Austria is optimistic that it will be able to normalise banking ties and commercial cooperation with Iran.

Iran's deputy Transport Minister Asghar Fakhrieh Kashan [said](#) that Iran will receive its first batch of planes from the European manufacturer ATR shortly.

Iran and the Philippines will [cooperate](#) to develop two oilfields and a LNG plant, all in Iran.

The head of Iran's Household Producers Union Mohammad Tahanpour [said](#) that Iran is negotiating with EU household brands to establish joint production plants in Iran.

Iranian imports from China have [increased](#) significantly since the lifting of international sanctions, reaching \$43.7 billion in the past year.

The fourth Iran-Europe Banking and Business Forum was [held](#) in Tehran with delegations from 35 European countries including Belgium, Britain, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, France and Holland.

Three of the largest Japanese banks have [initiated](#) major transactions with Iran.

Iran [launched](#) its first national fiber optic connectivity plan.

2017 elections

Iran's much anticipated presidential and municipal elections will take place this month, with the country going to the polls on May 19. The Iranian Interior Minister [announced](#) the final list of presidential contenders, approving just six of the 1,636 candidates that were [nominated](#). The incumbent, President Hassan Rouhani, was approved to stand for re-election, but his predecessor Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was [disqualified](#).

The Iranian Interior Ministry [broadcast](#) the three presidential debates live on television and on the internet after the country's Election Campaign Monitoring Committee reversed an earlier ruling that banned live broadcasts. The debates proved highly divisive, with candidates making [controversial](#) political claims, including about the normally off-limits Supreme Leader. A number of the candidates have submitted formal complaints to the Election Campaign Monitoring Committee about claims made against them during the debates. A Rouhani campaign official also [complained](#) that state television had censored a campaign documentary that used footage from the 2009 Green Movement protests.

The outcome of the election remained unclear just days before the vote. The Tehran Mayor Baqer Qalibaf [pulled out](#) of the race at the eleventh hour in an effort to unite the vote behind the conservative frontrunner Seyyed Ebrahim Raeisi. Late [polling](#) showed that President Rouhani remained in the lead, but far short of the absolute majority needed to win the election in the first round. Day-on-day polling has also shown that Rouhani has failed to win a significant number of new supporters, although as of May 14, 24 percent of voters remained undecided.

