

April 2017

Politics:

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei [declared](#) in his Persian New Year message that the new year would be a year of production and employment.

The registration period for candidates contesting the May 19 Iranian municipal elections [closed](#), with the electoral commission [recording](#) a 14 percent increase in the number of nominations. Officials also noted a six percent [increase](#) in the number of women standing as candidates. The last municipal poll was held in 2013.

President Hassan Rouhani [received](#) an honorary doctorate from Moscow State University.

Iran's Interior Ministry spokesman Seyyed Salman Samani [declared](#) that members of the executive central election commission have been elected ahead of the upcoming presidential and municipal polls.

An Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) commander was [killed](#) in Kurin district in Sistan-and-Baluchestan Province.

Iran's Judiciary spokesman Gholam Hossein Mohseni-Ejei [told](#) a press conference that lawsuits filed against the country's former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Vice President Hamid Baqaei remain open.

International Relations:

The Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif [met](#) with the Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani to discuss bilateral cooperation on regional conflicts.

Iran's Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Morteza Sarmadi [met](#) with the Singaporean Senior Minister of State Mohamad Maliki bin Osman to discuss enhancing bilateral economic cooperation and trade.

Foreign Minister Zarif [announced](#) that Russia would be permitted to use Iranian military bases in its mission against terrorism in Syria if necessary.

The Iranian Vice President for Parliamentary Affairs Hossein Ali Amiri [met](#) with the Hungarian deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjén in Tehran. Zarif [expressed](#) Iran's objections to the recent US missile strikes on a Syrian airbase.

An Iranian friendship flotilla [sailed](#) across the Caspian Sea, docking at the Russian port city of Makhachkala to send a message of peace to Russia. The flotilla has since [returned](#) to Iran.

The Iranian Ambassador to Kuwait Alireza Enayati [delivered](#) an official letter from the Iranian President Hassan Rouhani to Kuwait's Emir Sabah Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah. The letter expressed President Rouhani's desire to improve Iran's relations with GCC states.

Supreme Leader Khamenei's representative on Hajj and Pilgrimage Affairs Seyyed Ali Qazi-Askar [announced](#) that Iran and Saudi Arabia had reached an agreement that would permit 86,000 Iranian pilgrims to visit Mecca this year.

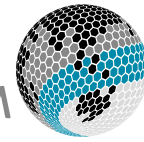
Senior Iranian officials including President Rouhani [met](#) with the Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev in Moscow. During the visit, the two countries [signed](#) 14 documents on cooperation across economics, defence, politics and cultural relations.

Iran [welcomed](#) China's offer to act as a mediator in the Iran-Saudi Arabia conflict.

Foreign Minister Zarif [met](#) the Latvian State Secretary of Foreign Affairs Andrejs Pildegovičs in Tehran to discuss expanding the two countries' cooperation on agriculture and transportation.

President Rouhani and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin [held a phone conversation](#) to discuss the US missile strike on a Syrian airbase.

Foreign Minister Zarif [undertook](#) a three-day tour of Turkmenistan, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan with a 20-member delegation of Iranian businesspeople.



Azerbaijan's Defense Minister Lieutenant General Zakir Hasanov [arrived](#) in Tehran for talks with Iranian officials, including Defence Minister General Hossein Dehghan. The two countries agreed to enhance military cooperation.

Economics:

New trade figures [show](#) that bilateral trade and economic cooperation between Denmark and Iran has increased by 60 percent since the signing of the Iranian nuclear deal.

Iran's Aseman airline [signed](#) a US\$3 billion deal with Boeing for the purchase of 30 Boeing 737 planes.

Iran [announced](#) sanctions on 15 US companies linked to Israel, including ITT Corporation, Magnum Research INC, Military Armament Corporation and Bushmaster Firearms International.

Russia and Iran [signed](#) an agreement for the purchase of 12 Sukhoi superjet 100 medium-haul passenger planes.

The European Union [enacted](#) sanctions on Iran in response to human rights violations.

Hungary and Iran will [jointly construct](#) a small nuclear plant in Iran that will be used for educational and technological purposes.

Iran's total exports of crude oil and condensate [exceeded](#) 3 million barrels per day in the month beginning February 20.

An Iranian central bank delegation will [attend](#) the international joint assembly of International Monetary Fund and World Bank group in Washington DC.

Iran [officially opened](#) new projects in the South Pars natural gas hub.

Iran's first cruise ship [completed](#) a trip between the two Islands of Qeshm and Kish, docking at the Persian Gulf resort island of Qeshm.

The State Bank of Pakistan and Central Bank of Iran [reached an agreement](#) to facilitate banking payments, which will support an increase in bilateral trade to US\$5 billion.

Iran's Presidential Election

Iran's much anticipated presidential election will take place next month on May 19, the same day as the municipal elections. The five-day [candidate registration period](#) for the presidential poll was held from April 11.

1,636 candidates [nominated](#) for election, including 137 women. The Guardian council [allowed](#) women to register, but only [two](#) of the female nominees, Azam Taleghani and Rafat Bayat, are current politicians. Several high profile Iranian political figures, including the incumbent [President Hassan Rouhani](#), the custodian of the Shrine of Imam Reza [Hojjatoleislam Seyyed Ebrahim Raeisi](#), the Mayor of Tehran [Mohammad Baqer Ghalibaf](#), former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and former Vice President [Hamid Baghaie](#) are amongst those who have registered as candidates. Iran's Guardian Council has now begun the process of vetting the credentials of the nominees. By law, the final list of candidates will be [announced](#) within five days of the nomination period closing. Most candidates are expected to be excluded by the Guardian Council.

The conservative or 'principalist' political faction, which is aligned with Supreme Leader Khamenei, [announced](#) their five preferred candidates, including Hojjatoleislam Seyyed Ebrahim Raeisi and Mohammad Baqer Ghalibaf. Iran's reformist coalition has [backed](#) President Rouhani in his bid for re-election.

The likely outcome of the May 19 election is far from certain. In a poll [released](#) on April 16, 56 percent of those surveyed thought that it was 'very likely' or 'somewhat likely' that President Rouhani would lose his re-election bid.

