



THE PRIORY ACADEMY

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Political News

Mohammad Rizaii



Redesign of the EU banknotes

The European Central Bank (ECB) has announced that Euro banknotes are going to be redesigned to be 'more relatable to Europeans of all ages and backgrounds.' For the European Union, consensus is key and as such all 19 countries that use the Euro will be consulted which is expected to last until 2024. In fact, there is no designing to be done as the bank is currently only looking for a new theme to replace the old "ages and style" theme of the old notes. Once shortlisted the public will be consulted for feedback before a final decision is made. Once the themes are picked, the designer phase will begin right away with a full design competition expected, after which the ECB will once again ask the public to decide the final winner. Even once the new designs are agreed upon it will take time to roll out as we have seen from other countries introducing new money.

There are even fears or expectations that the EU will be moving away from physical money. The EU in response has said that physical money is expected to still be used as it is today remarking that physical Euros 'are a tangible and visible symbol that we stand together in Europe, particularly in times of crisis, and there is still strong demand for them.' In the end, the redesign is viewed by many as a political move by the EU to show solidarity within the increasing awareness of the threat of the ever expanding influence of Russia and China, and also an increasing unreliable US, to the current EU. Only time will tell if the move will promote such aims as physical money ever becoming obsolete within the modern world.

On this day in History- 14th December

Bella Chafer

On this day in History... The death of James V

On the 14th December 1542, James V of Scotland died after his defeat by the English at the Battle of Solway Moss. His only surviving legitimate child, Mary Stuart, succeeded him when she was only six days old. The death of James's mother in 1541 removed any incentive for peace with England and war broke out.

Initially, the Scots won the Battle of Haddon Rig in August 1542. The Imperial Ambassador in London, Eustace Chapuys, wrote on the 2nd of October that the Scottish ambassadors ruled out a meeting between James and Henry VIII until Mary of Guise delivered his child. Henry would not accept this condition and mobilized his army against Scotland. He was taken ill shortly after the Battle of Solway Moss, by some accounts this was a nervous wreck after the defeat, and he may have died from grief. John Knox later described his final moments. Whatever the cause of his illness, he was on his deathbed at Falkland Palace when his child was born.



World News

Mohammad Rizaii

Afghanistan's Famine

Following US withdraw from Afghanistan, its economy collapsed and an estimated 55% of the Afghan population will be facing the possibility of a famine this winter. Currently Afghanistan is suffering from widespread food insecurity and as the winter hits full force, it is expected to get a lot worse. Afghanistan is a mostly mountainous and arid country, meaning that Afghanistan suffers from boiling hot summers that average 35°C as well as freezing cold winters that average below freezing and in some mountainous regions are as low to -25°C .

But why is this winter so special? Even before the Taliban took over this August, Afghanistan was in dire straits because it is an extremely poor country, with a GDP per capita of only \$500. This year has particularly difficult as Afghanistan has been dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, an abrupt change in government and the worse drought in years. The result of these factors: this year's wheat harvest for Afghanistan is down by 25%. If you think that's the worst of it then you're wrong, as when the Taliban took control of the country through an illegal insurgency, foreign aid and grants drained up as governments didn't want to fund a group with strong links to terrorism. Previously foreign aid accounted for 43% of Afghanistan's GDP and 75% of public spending. The situation looks dire as the previous government's assets have been frozen leaving the Taliban with nothing to build on. If the situation doesn't stabilise soon then a number of experts are saying that a mass refugee exodus will happen and the effects of this could be disastrous.



Sports News

William Mayall

Verstappen on top of the world

Recent attention was focused on Abu Dhabi for the end of the Grand Prix where a controversial decision was made which in turn helped Verstappen win his first F1 title.

It all started when Lewis Hamilton was 11 seconds ahead of Verstappen's Red Bull car. A crash by Sebastian Vettel gave Verstappen an easier race to contend for. This was until some manipulation by Red Bull let the cars between Hamilton and Verstappen pass the safety car. This started an exciting final lap of the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix with Hamilton and Verstappen battling it out. Hamilton stayed ahead with old tyres for the first half of the lap, however Verstappen's new tyres would come out on top as the thrilling final lap ended with a win for Verstappen.

"That was so not right" shouted Toto Wolff. This race, if won by Hamilton, would have been his record 8th surpassing Michael Schumacher who many say is the best F1 driver of all time. Mercedes are hoping next year will be an easier ride and that there will be less controversy.



Film of the Week

Orlagh Oldfield

Spiderman: No Way Home (2021)

Marvel and Sony came out with the third film in this Spiderman trilogy on 15th of December starring Tom Holland, Zendaya, Benedict Cumberbatch as our heroes and Willem Dafoe, Jamie Fox and Alfred Molina as previous Spiderman villains. No Way Home is directed by Jon Watts.

The film follows Peter Parker/ Spiderman after villain Mysterio previously revealed his identity to the whole world. Peter goes to Dr Strange for help however when they try to erase the memory of all the people who know about his identity they mess up the multiverse and all previous villains from the Spiderman movies come crawling back searching for Peter. It is up to Peter to fix the multiverse but it is certainly not easy!

Spiderman: No Way Home overtook Titanic as the biggest grossing film ever with a box-office of \$1.538 billion and a budget of \$200 million.



Environmental News

Elliot Richardson Bushell



How to repopulate the bird community

Due to the recent weather conditions, the bird population has been affected in several areas of the country. You may have also lost many birds from your garden or perhaps the bird feeders are still full. During the winter more natural food was consumed by birds so they had less need for birdfeeders but they also missed out on the warmth of the birdhouses that some people put out. A recent survey found that Starling and Song-thrush populations have declined by 80% and 79% respectively since 1979. They are both now classed as on the red list of endangered birds along with the House sparrow and their survival is very important.

To help get more birds in your garden here are a few tips. If you want a more distinct set of birds, niger seed is a magnet to Goldfinches and Siskin. If you want a more common set of birds then bird seed balls attracts species like blackbirds, doves and blue tits. Don't have a feeder? The RSPB recommends that an old chopping board will suffice.

When it is a low temperature at night birds can lose 40% of their body weight. Food that is high energy can save a bird's life. Foods that are very good for them are peanuts, sunflower seeds, mealworms and fruit. Remember even a small contribution can make a big difference and you can save a bird's life by doing this. You can help protect birds by joining the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch between 28th and 30th of January.

On this Day in History – Christmas Day!

Orlagh Oldfield

The Christmas truce

Just after midnight on Christmas morning 1914, many German troops in World War One ceased firing their guns and artillery to sing Christmas carols. At certain points along both the eastern and western fronts, British, French and Russian soldiers even heard brass bands joining the Germans in their joyous singing. Later that day, British and German soldiers met in no man's land and exchanged gifts, took photographs and some even played impromptu games of football. They also buried casualties and repaired trenches and dugouts. After Boxing Day, meetings in no man's land dwindled out.

The truce, sadly, was not observed everywhere along the Western Front. Elsewhere the fighting continued, and casualties did occur on Christmas Day. Officers were unhappy at the truce and worried that it would undermine fighting spirit. This was part of the reason truces were not nearly as widespread in 1915 and were in fact prohibited by commanders.



Health News

William Fitzgerald

Avian influenza (bird flu) in the UK

Several outbreaks of bird flu have been discovered across the UK. If not properly contained it can spread rapidly between birds although the risk of human infection is very low.

All bird keepers (whether you keep pet birds, commercial flocks or just a few birds in a backyard flock) must keep a close watch of them for signs of disease and maintain good security at all times. If you have any concerns about the health of your birds, seek prompt advice from your vet.

One thing you are obligated to do if you are a bird owner in the UK is to cover the top of the coop or pen they live in order to separate them from the other wild birds that could carry the disease. If you see a wild bird drinking, standing or defecating on your coop then you need to remove it and you are obligated to clean and disinfect the coop to keep your birds safe!



Science News

William Mayall

Man receives first ever pig heart transplant

David Bennett is doing well after undergoing a seven hour surgery to have the first ever pig heart transplant. Bennett had been deemed ineligible for a human heart transplant owing to his poor health, which is the case for many people in need of a transplant. The US Food and Drug Administration granted special dispensation for the transplant to be carried out on the grounds that he would have otherwise died. According to the University of Maryland, this could prove a turning point in transplants and in the long term could prove a solution to the organ shortage around the world. There are currently around 100,000 people on the waiting list for a transplant in the United States with 13 people on this list dying a day due to delays.

The pig used in the transplant had been bred to lack genes that would lead to rejection, similarly to the pig used in an experimental kidney transplant on a brain-dead patient last October. The heart transplant not only had huge potential benefits for the recipient but it also came with great risks. It is unknown what future effects it will have on Mr Bennett and as a precaution, an experimental anti-rejection drug is being used as well as conventional ones.

Of course using pig organs in humans raises several ethical issues: how the pigs are bred, how they cannot consent like humans, and whether pig organs should be used in humans at all. However, experts are still in the very early stages of developing such transplants and if they prove successful, these issues will undoubtedly be brought up.