

A bus overturned in northwestern Iran on Wednesday which killed two and injured 40 others, said a deputy governor general of East Azarbaijan Province, Rahim Shohrati.

Turkish narcotics seizures surge, \$460m worth captured this year



A Turkish anti-narcotics police officer counts confiscated narcotics during a drug raid in Istanbul, Turkey, on January 16, 2018.

OSMAN ORSAL/REUTERS

Turkey seized more than \$460 million worth of narcotics in the first nine months of 2018, authorities said on Wednesday, a surge from a year earlier as Turkey ramps up its fight against illegal drug trafficking.

Both heroin and cocaine seizures rose by 51 percent, with ecstasy seizures up 245 percent, the

Turkish Interior Ministry said, Reuters wrote.

Turkey is on the so-called Balkan Route of drugs trafficking which is used to supply the West with drugs from Asia and the Middle East, including heroin moving from Afghanistan to Europe.

A ministry statement said drug trafficking is one of the main financing sources for terrorist

groups. Police operations against drug smuggling are up about 31 percent and detentions up around 28 percent this year, the Interior Ministry said.

Turkey has in recent years expanded its anti-narcotics activities following a rise in drug use and deaths caused by synthetic marijuana consumption.

How libraries boost our wellbeing

When staff volunteered to open Plymouth's, southwest England, central library for two-and-a-half hours last Christmas Day, they thought it might give a few homeless residents somewhere warm and welcoming to go.

Instead, explained librarian Mandy McDonald, they were taken by surprise, theguardian.com reported.

People of all ages came to the library to enjoy free mince pies, biscuits and hot drinks, as well as a festive film showing.

One family even brought some of their Christmas presents to open.

"We had a massive response," said McDonald, adding, "There were people who just wanted to come and have some company, or use our computers to contact family."

That included one man living in temporary accommodation who used the library systems to get in touch with his son, to whom he hadn't spoken for some time.

"It's about health and wellbeing. We helped to combat loneliness on Christmas Day."

The event cost nothing 'apart from a little bit of electricity': It was run by volunteers, including McDonald's own teenage son, and local residents and businesses donated food, clothing and toiletries.

"A lot of volunteers, me included, felt it was in the spirit of Christmas. It was humbling."

The library will open again this year, for slightly longer — and with more party games.

Libraries up and down the UK may have been financially squeezed, closed or forced to rely on volunteers, but they are fighting back and asserting their vital role in local communities.

National Libraries Week, from

October 8-13, focuses on how libraries benefit wellbeing.

That's fitting, given that World Mental Health Day this year falls in the middle of the week, on October 10.

In Rhoose, near Barry, the community-run library is offering a free mindfulness taster session on Friday, October 12.

In Blackpool, residents can sample Pilates and story time for

Victoria Varley.

These discussions, in which more than 100 young people took part, were then documented by writer Rachael Smith and illustrator Jacob Phillips, who produced a graphic novel called Jack and Lucy.

"The young people told us that sharing their stories had a really positive effect on their wellbeing, and the graphic novel also provides a unique resource for young

consultants from Shared Intelligence and Essex Libraries, funded by Arts Council England, has demonstrated that sharing rhymes in a group in a library gives mums an instant mood boost.

Synchronizing movements produces higher levels of the maternal dopamine associated with mood and pleasure and stronger parent-child bonding. Row Row Row Your Boat is a particularly good song for this, with parents and children holding hands and rocking back and forth.

"The research saw a very noticeable improvement in mothers' moods immediately after rhyme time — with the percentage describing themselves as 'very happy' more than doubling from 25 percent to 59 percent in the space of 30 minutes," said Sarah Mears, the programs manager at Libraries Connected, the membership organization for public libraries

in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

It's about more than just singing: The researchers found mothers' moods improved by the interaction with other like-minded parents, which reduced loneliness, boredom and stress, while adding structure to the day helped with self-motivation and promoted feelings of achievement through the simple act of getting to the session.

Libraries are good for our health. One research project from 2015 showed that not only were library users more satisfied with their lives than non-library users, being a regular library user was also estimated to save the National Health Service just under £30 million a year. Those are big claims. But if they help prove the value of libraries, and prevent the closure of any more, that will be a huge benefit for all our wellbeing.



ADRIAN SHERRATT/theguardian.com

adults, while libraries in, among other places, Wolverhampton and Northumbria are providing wellbeing and health checks.

And on Monday, Leeds central library hosted a performance by the Giving Voice choir for adults with neurological conditions and their carers.

Meanwhile, Oldham Library, which last year became the first public library to offer a free Comic Con event, has been able to use interest in comics to get young people talking about their mental health. The Comics and Cosplay: Caring for Young Minds project was funded by Carnegie UK and the Wellcome Trust.

"We invited young people in Oldham to watch a performance and take part in a workshop in which they explored the issues affecting their mental health," explained senior library officer

people struggling with the same issues and the people supporting them," said Varley.

The novel was launched at the second Oldham Comic Con, held in the library in May, and organized in partnership with Dennis Whittle, who runs a comic shop in the town.

Until recently, there has not been a lot of evidence to back up the feeling that libraries support health and wellbeing, but that is starting to change. Nearly every library in the country runs regular rhyme time sessions for parents and under-fives. The sessions are fun for children, and help with language development, socialization and empathy.

New research has also highlighted the positive effect rhyme times have on the mental health and wellbeing of mothers. A recent research project run by

Mental health services under-resourced, says Britain's Hancock

The UK health secretary, Matt Hancock, conceded that mental health services have been under-resourced and undervalued as he announced the appointment of a minister for suicide prevention.

Jackie Doyle-Price, a health minister, will be given the new brief and tasked with ensuring that every local area has effective plans in place to stop unnecessary deaths, and investigating how technology can help identify those most at risk, theguardian.com reported.

A report by Whitehall's spending watchdog, released on Wednesday, found that even if current plans to spend an extra £1.4 billion on the sector were delivered, there would be 'significant unmet need' because of staff shortages, poor data and a lack of spending controls on NHS clinical commissioning groups.

Hancock said the National Audit Office report showed service provision was "still way off where we need to be" but improvements had been made.

"The truth is that, for an awfully long time, mental health has simply not had the same level of support — both in terms of resources, but also in terms of how we as a society talk about it — compared to physical health, and we want to change that," he told BBC Radio 4's Today program.

As well as having a minister for suicide prevention, the government wanted to ensure that "as we write the long-term plan for the future of the NHS, which we are writing at the moment, we make sure that mental health is a crucial component of that."

Doyle-Price, whose new title will be minister for mental health, inequalities and suicide prevention, said she would put bereaved families at the heart of her strategy.

She is believed to be the world's first minister for suicide prevention.

She said in a statement: "I understand how tragic, devastating and long-lasting the effect of suicide can be on families and communities. In my time as health minister I have met many people who have been



ROB STOTHARD/GETTY IMAGES
Jackie Doyle-Price, a British minister for mental health, inequalities and suicide prevention

bereaved by suicide and their stories of pain and loss will stay with me for a long time.

"It's these people who need to be at the heart of what we do and I welcome this opportunity to work closely with them, as well as experts, to oversee a cross-government suicide prevention plan, making their sure their views are always heard."

Theresa May pledged to tackle 'burning injustices' when she became the prime minister of the UK.

The prime minister has also pledged up to £1.5 billion to ensure the Samaritans' helpline remains free for the next four years, as well as new mental health support teams for schools, who will be given help to measure their students' health, including their mental wellbeing.

However, the children's commissioner for England, Anne Longfield, thought the proposed five-year plan was too long to wait for some children, and said five years "feels like a lifetime to a young child".

"I want to see a counselor in every secondary school, every primary school having access to counselling services, a closing of the huge gap in what is spent on adult and children's mental health and a system in place that provides support and treatment for every child who needs it, when they need it," she said.

"Today's announcement is a step forward that must now be matched by proper funding and more ambitious delivery."

Indian employers under pressure to respond to surge in #MeToo allegations



thehindu.com

Pressure is building on major Indian employers to take allegations of sexual harassment more seriously after a surge in the number of complaints against prominent public figures in the past week.

At least one major Indian newspaper, some politicians and women's groups have said that the requirements of the 2013 Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act need to be enforced by companies and organizations, and if necessary by the authorities, Reuters reported.

The #MeToo movement, that began in the US more than a year ago with decades of allegations of sexual harassment against the film producer Harvey Weinstein, gained traction in India in late September after the actress Tanushree Dutta said prominent actor Nana Patekar behaved inappropriately on the sets of a film they were shooting in 2008. Patekar has denied any wrongdoing.

Since then, more than a dozen men in the media, entertainment, arts and political worlds have been accused of offenses.

India is traditionally a conservative country where discussions about sex are still taboo for many, and where women have long lagged behind men in workplace participation.

Hundreds of millions of Indians also work in the informal economy, or in small businesses where official channels of complaint are scarce, and the #MeToo movement will have little leverage.

The sexual harassment law stipulates any organization with more than 10 employees should have an independent committee to investigate allegations.

But critics say that many organizations are not adhering to the letter of the law, or only paying lip service to it.

"The committees required to address these complaints and grievances are either not properly constituted or simply do not exist," said TK Rajalakshmi, the president of the India Women's Press Corps, that lobbies for the rights of female journalists.

"The fact that many of the complaints have gone unheard despite being brought to the notice of the appropriate authorities is disturbing and a matter of grave concern."

An editorial in the Economic Times, one of India's leading business publications, said on Tuesday that too often these committees have been 'dysfunctional or ineffective'.

"The cost of complaining has been too high," it said. "It is time to implement the law more effectively, both in letter and in spirit."