

It appears Michael Gove is more interested in protecting Boris Johnson's job than the liberty of a British citizen in jail in Iran – Jon Trickett

Jon Trickett MP, Labour's Shadow Minister for the Cabinet Office, responding to Michael Gove's comments on the Andrew Marr Show this morning, said:

"Boris Johnson's cavalier approach to international diplomacy is compounded this morning by Michael Gove claiming he has no idea what Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe was doing in Iran. It has always been clear, she was on holiday visiting her family.

"It appears Gove is more interested in protecting Johnson's job than the liberty of a British citizen in jail in Iran.

"Theresa May must ensure Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe does not pay the price for her ministers' bungling."

Government must guard against using Brexit to undermine hard-won environmental gains – Sue Hayman

Sue Hayman MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, commenting on proposals for a new environmental watchdog, said:

"We will have to wait to see whether the proposed watchdog will have the independence, powers and funding it needs to properly enforce environmental law after Brexit. The Government must now put its warm words into action by supporting Labour's environmental amendments to the Withdrawal Bill next week.

“Securing the future of our environment and the natural world requires more than just movement on governance and enforcement. Ensuring that environmental standards and protections are properly protected after Brexit requires a series of further changes to the Withdrawal Bill including the incorporation of the precautionary and polluter pays principles into UK law.

“Labour will be urging the Government to go further next week and take additional steps to guard against the desire of some in the Tory party to use Brexit as an opportunity to undermine hard-won environmental gains”.

Over £37bn paid out in dividends by privatised companies

Labour

research reveals that a total of £37bn was paid out in dividend payments to shareholders by privatised companies since 2010.

The

research, conducted in consultation with the respected House of Commons Library, reveals that in 2017 alone these companies paid out a total of £4.8 billion in dividend payments to shareholders.

The list includes some well-known

household names such as Centrica, which runs British Gas and has paid out £5.2

billion to shareholders since 2010.

The Shadow Chancellor spoke today

at an economic conference in Lincoln to mark the 800th anniversary of the Charter of the Forest, which in 1217 enshrined the rights of people to access common necessities of the day.

John McDonnell MP, Labour’s Shadow Chancellor,

speaking at Labour’s regional economic conference in Lincoln today, said:

“These figures show what could

have gone into investment in these public services in order to expand and improve them or keep their charges down.

“The last seven years of austerity

has seen working families suffer from stagnant wages not being able to keep up

with prices of items like energy bills, and underfunded public services, yet billions has gone into the hands of shareholders.

“The next Labour government will call an end to the privatisation of our public sector, and we will look to bring back in to public ownership many of the vital services sold off by the Tories, which are undermining the living standards of millions of working households.”

[The gender pay gap remaining the same for the past three years is an indictment of this Government's failure – Dawn Butler](#)

Dawn Butler MP, Labour's Shadow Women and Equalities Secretary, commenting on Equal Pay Day today, said:

“From today onwards women effectively work the rest of the year for free, which means fifty days of unpaid labour until we hit 2018.

“The fact that the gender pay gap has remained the same for the past three years is a shocking indictment of the Government's failure to tackle unequal pay and the underlying structural issues that allow these disparities to exist.

“Labour is the party of equality. It was Labour that introduced the Equal Pay Act in 1970 and the next Labour Government will take the necessary action to end the scourge of unequal pay once and for all.”

[Once again there has been no acceleration in the Brexit talks – Keir Starmer](#)

Keir Starmer MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Exiting the European

Union, commenting on latest round of negotiation talks between David Davis and Michel Barnier, said:

“Once again, there has been no acceleration in the Brexit talks. With the December deadline just weeks away, the British people and businesses are no clearer about what the next phase will look like or how it will affect them.

“Both sides need to work flat out between now and the next EU Council meeting to ensure sufficient progress can be made and the talks can move to the next phase. Labour are committed to a Brexit deal that puts jobs and the economy first. Failure to reach an agreement would be catastrophic for people’s living standards. The longer there is no progress in the Brexit talks, the greater the risk of no deal.”