



MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

GÜNLÜK ORTADOĞU BÜLTENİ

Domestic Policy in the Middle East Countries	Bölge Ülkelerinde İç Siyaset
The Restructuring Proces of Iraq	Irak'ın Yeniden Yapılanma Süreci
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Non State Actors	Devlet-dışı Aktörler
Relations with the West	Batı'yla İlişkiler

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07 MARCH 2018

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1. IRAQ

- **Jaafari, Hakim Emphasize the Need to Consolidate the National Ranks and the Active Public Presence in the Elections**

The Minister of foreign affairs, head of the reform movement Ibrahim al-Jaafari and the head of the Iraqi National Alliance, Ammar al-Hakim confirmed the need to consolidate the national row and the active public presence in the elections. A statement to the media office of Jaafari said today, "The Minister of Foreign Affairs, head of the Reform Movement Ibrahim al-Jaafari received, in his office in Baghdad, head of the Iraqi National Alliance Ammar al-Hakim, and stressed the need to close the national row and the active public presence in the elections because of its significant impact in strengthening the momentum of the victories against Daesh gangs and to continue to lay the foundation for democratic experience".

More Details:

http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?mO38TdKilcrOjm1ZPlj4A%253d%253d

- **Arrest of Iraqi Shia cleric protested in Iraq's Karbala**

Protesters took to the streets in southern Iraq's Karbala province on Tuesday to protest against the detention of Iraqi Shia cleric Hossein Shirazi in Iran. Tens of people gathered in front of the Iranian consulate in Karbala and demanded the release of Shirazi. The demonstrators, bearing banners condemning the Tehran government, chanted slogans and said the Iranian intelligence would be held responsible for Shirazi's security and health.

More Details:

<https://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/arrest-of-iraqi-shia-cleric-protested-in-iraqs-karbala/1081741>

- **Seven Islamic State militants apprehended over plots to destabilize Mosul**

An Iraqi official source said on Wednesday that Iraqi troops foiled a terrorist plot by the Islamic State (IS) group to destabilize the situation in Mosul through targeting vital facilities with bombs and assassinating public figures there. Speaking to the London-based Al-Quds Al-Arabi daily newspaper, the source said, "Security forces arrested a terrorist group made up of seven IS members, who planned to detonate commercial and vital areas in Mosul, as well as assassinating well-placed figures and robbing houses to make the situation in the city unstable."

More Details:

<https://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/seven-islamic-state-militants-apprehended-plots-destabilize-mosul/>

- **Christians Unwilling to Return to Mosul**

Months after its liberation from the grip of the Islamic State (IS), Mosul in northern Iraq is yet to see its religious and ethnic minorities returning to their homes, said an official. “It is obvious that the greatest damage in Mosul is brought to Kurdish Yezidis, Shamas and Christians by the Daesh [IS]. Therefore, no Kurdish Yezidi, shabak and Christian has yet returned to the city,” said Abdulqader Shingali, Deputy Governor of Nineveh Province.

More Details:

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/iraq/420555>

- **German military launches new mission in Iraq**

Germany's armed forces, the Bundeswehr, plagued by a chronic shortage of everything from combat vests to submarines, is about to launch a new mission in Iraq that will deploy up to 800 soldiers to train local forces and clear mines. The draft mandate for the new mission, which Handelsblatt has seen, gives an official assessment of the situation in the Middle Eastern country for the very first time.

More Details:

http://www.shafaq.com/en/En_NewsReader/759e75b6-b24d-419e-93ca-186356a4ea7f

- **Japan Provides Support to Iraq's Newly Liberated Areas**

The Government of Japan announced a new assistance package from its supplementary budget of 2017 to assist the Republic of Iraq. With a combined total of USD 6.3 million, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) will be implementing two projects aimed at enhancing the living conditions and safety of the Iraqi population, in particular those living in the newly liberated areas.

More Details:

http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN_Direje.aspx?Jimare=42894

- **ISIS still keeps 3,000 Anbar residents in captivity - Official**

About 3,000 citizens of Anbar governorate are still captives by ISIS terrorist, most of them are from al-Qa'im district, according to statements of Anbar Council member Eid al-Ammash on Wednesday. “The fate of those prisoners is still unknown, despite expelling ISIS from the governorate,” Ammash told reporters, calling on security apparatuses to intensify their efforts to detect their location and liberate them if they were alive.

More Details:

<http://www.thebaghdadpost.com/en/story/24530/ISIS-still-keeps-3-000-Anbar-residents-in-captivity-Official>

- **Iraq, UN launch joint plan to return 1 million displaced persons to their homes in 2018**

The Iraqi government and the United Nations have launched the Humanitarian Response Plan which aims to help one million displaced Iraqis return to areas liberated from Daesh, the Iraqi Minister of Migration and Displacement, Hasem Mohammad Al-Jaf said Tuesday. Speaking at a joint press conference with the Secretary General of the Iraqi Council of Ministers, Mahdii Al-Alaq, Minister, al-Jaf said according to the plan one out of approximately 2.5 million displaced persons will return to their areas in addition to providing services and logistics for displaced people in refugee camps".

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180307-iraq-un-launch-joint-plan-to-return-1-million-displaced-persons-to-their-homes-in-2018/>

- **Joint launch of humanitarian plans for Iraq in 2018**

On 6 March, the Government of Iraq as well as the United Nations and its partners launched their 2018 plans for Iraq – the Plan for Relief, Shelter and Stabilization of Displaced People and the Humanitarian Response Plan. With the end of large-scale military offensives in late 2017, many families have been returning and are trying to rebuild their lives and homes. As many as two million displaced Iraqis are expected to return in 2018; hence, all efforts must be made to support them in this transition. This year approximately 8.7 million people, nearly half of them children, will require some form of humanitarian assistance.

More Details:

<https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/joint-launch-humanitarian-plans-iraq-2018-enarku>

- **Iraq slams EU calls for forced repatriation of refugees**

Iraqi Immigration Minister Jassim Mohamed al-Jaf on Tuesday criticized calls by certain European countries to forcibly repatriate Iraqi refugees following the defeat of the Daesh terrorist group. Al-Jaf's criticisms reportedly came during a meeting in Baghdad with Switzerland's non-resident ambassador, Hans Peter Linz. According to a ministry statement issued after the meeting, the two men discussed Iraq's large displaced population and the issue of Iraqi refugees overseas.

More Details:

<https://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/iraq-slams-eu-calls-for-forced-repatriation-of-refugees/1081457>

- **Iran, Iraq consider ways to bolster cooperation in electricity, energy**

Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade Mohammad Shariatmadari in meeting with Iraqi Minister of Electricity Qassem al-Fahadawi here on Tuesday discussed and considered ways to consolidate bilateral ties in the field of energy and electricity. Al-Fahadawi appreciated Iran for providing some part of Iraq needed electricity and expressed the hope that visit of first Vice-President Eshaq Jahangiri to Baghdad on Wednesday to be fruitful.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82854037>

- **Iraq Takes Third Position in Middle East for Corruption: REPORT**

Iraq has just scored 18 out of 100 for transparency whereas 0 would be most corrupt and 100 the least, according to reports. According to Transparency International which has used World Bank data, the World Economic Forum, and additional institutions to rank 180 countries by perceived levels of corruption, amongst the 21 countries in the Middle East and North Africa, only Libya, Syria, and Yemen have scored less than Iraq.

More Details:

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/iraq/420413>

2. SYRIA

- **Russian military plane crash in Syria kills dozens**

The An-26 plane crashed during landing at Hmeimim airbase, near the coastal city of Latakia, the ministry is quoted as saying by Russian media. It says all 39 military personnel on board died, not 32 as earlier reported. The plane was not fired upon, the ministry says, and preliminary data suggests a technical malfunction could have caused the crash.

More Details:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-43305835>

- **More than 1,000 children killed or injured this year in Syria, UN says**

The grim statistic, from UNICEF regional communications chief Juliette Touma, comes as violence rips through the rebel-held enclave of Eastern Ghouta, where about a third of the nearly 400,000 besieged civilians are children, according to the agency. In all, 342 children were killed and 803 were injured in Syria in the first two months of 2018, Touma said, citing multiple sources.

More Details:

<https://edition.cnn.com/2018/03/06/middleeast/russia-syria-ghouta-safe-passage-intl/index.html>

- **US-led forces accused of breaking international law in Syria air strike that killed 150 people**

United Nations investigators have accused the US-led coalition of breaking international law in an air strike on territory held by the Islamic State (IS) group near Raqqa in March last year. The investigators, from the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria, said the strike at al-Mansoura on the night of March 20 killed "at least 150" people, as US-backed forces closed in on Raqqa, the defacto capital of the so-called caliphate.

More Details:

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-03-07/un-accuses-us-led-forces-of-breaking-international-law-in-syria/9521958>

- **Ghouta's desperate plead with aid workers after weeks without help**

Until Monday, the aid worker had only seen the destroyed landscape in pictures. From the wreckage of the neighbourhood of Douma, which has borne the brunt of the Syrian government's offensive on besieged rebel-held Eastern Ghouta, came families desperate for food.

More Details:

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/03/06/ghoutas-desperate-plead-aid-workers-weeks-without-help/>

- **Eastern Ghouta crisis: Aid shipment reaches civilians amid reports of chlorine attack and fresh air strikes**

The first aid delivery to reach a besieged rebel area of Damascus in weeks had to be cut short because of government-led shelling while aid workers were still in the vicinity, the International Red Cross Committee (ICRC) has said.

More Details:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/eastern-ghouta-crisis-latest-news-aid-reaches-civilians-chlorine-attack-air-strikes-death-toll-a8242016.html>

- **2,940 terrorists 'neutralized' in Afrin op: Turkey**

A total of 2,940 terrorists have been "neutralized" since the start of Operation Olive Branch in Syria's northwestern Afrin region, the Turkish General Staff said in a statement on Wednesday. Turkish

authorities often use the word "neutralized" in their statements to imply the terrorists in question either surrendered or were killed or captured. On Jan. 20, Turkey launched Operation Olive Branch to clear YPG/PKK and Daesh terrorists from Afrin, northwestern Syria.

More Details:

<https://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/2-940-terrorists-neutralized-in-afrin-op-turkey-/1081885>

- **Russia offers rebels safe passage out of eastern Ghouta**

The Russian military has offered Syrian rebels safe passage out of eastern Ghouta, setting out a proposal to let the insurgents surrender their last major stronghold near Damascus to President Bashar al-Assad, which fighters have so far rejected, Reuters reports. The Russian defence ministry said rebels could leave with their families and personal weapons through a secure corridor out of eastern Ghouta, where Moscow-backed government forces have made rapid gains in a fierce assault.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180307-russia-offers-rebels-safe-passage-out-of-eastern-ghouta/>

- **Victims Of Syrian Conflict Denied Any Meaningful Justice: UN**

The brutal conflict in Syria has not only claimed civilians as unintentional victims but has seen all warring parties deliberately target them with complete impunity employing unlawful methods of warfare, a new report by a United Nations-mandated inquiry on the war-ravaged country has said.

More Details:

<http://www.app.com.pk/victims-syrian-conflict-denied-meaningful-justice-un/>

3. IRAN

- **Iranian VP to depart for Baghdad today**

Leading a political and economic delegation, Iran's First Vice President Es'hagh Jahangiri will leave Tehran for Baghdad on Wednesday to meet and consult with Iraqi high-ranking officials. On his visit, Jahangiri will consult with a number of prominent Iraqi officials on bilateral, regional and international issues.

More Details:

<https://en.mehrnews.com/news/132659/Iranian-VP-to-depart-for-Baghdad-today>

- **Netanyahu launches another tirade against Iran at AIPAC**

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu claims that Iran is responsible for "darkness descending" on the Middle East, hailing the US administration's threat to withdraw from the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and the P5+1 group of countries. "Iran is building an aggressive empire. Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Gaza, Yemen, more to come," Netanyahu claimed in a hawkish address in Washington on Tuesday to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), a day after a meeting with US President Donald Trump.

More Details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2018/03/06/554590/AIPAC-Netanyahu-Iran-JCPOA>

- **France won't gain anything against Iran's interests'**

Ali Akbar Velayati, a top foreign policy adviser to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, said on Tuesday that the visiting French foreign minister won't gain anything against Iranian people's interests. "The French foreign minister visited Iran at the official invitation of his Iranian counterpart, and certainly, our officials have explained the Islamic Republic of Iran's views to him," Velayati told reporters in Tehran on Tuesday.

More Details:

<http://www.tehrantimes.com/news/421850/France-won-t-gain-anything-against-Iran-s-interests>

- **Iran, Russia sign final document of joint economic commission**

The final document of the 14th session of Iran-Russia Joint Economic Cooperation Commission was signed in Moscow Tuesday night by the Iranian minister of economy and financial affairs and Russian minister of economic development. The document contains a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on cooperation between the Russian energy ministry and Iranian petroleum ministry regarding Iran-India-Pakistan gas pipeline, one on joint geological cooperation, one on financing and investing in Iranian mine and industry sector and one on conduction of joint research and development of the Caspian Sea resources, IRNA reported.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82854170>

- **India's OVL signs \$900 million Iran oilfield deal**

India's ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL) has signed a cooperation agreement with Iran's IDRO Oil to jointly bid for a \$900 million development plan of Susangerd oilfield in southwest Iran, IRNA reported on Tuesday. The agreement is similar to the one which IDRO Oil signed with Russia's Zarubezhneft last

month in order to qualify for negotiating the Susangerd contract with the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC).

More Details:

http://parstoday.com/en/news/iran-i78311-india%E2%80%99s_ovl_signs_900_million_iran_oilfield_deal

- **Iranian MP calls for implementation of Iran-Armenia agreements**

Iranian lawmaker told the Armenian ambassador to Tehran that speedy implementation of agreements between Iran and Armenia can boost the level of bilateral relations between the two countries. "The speedy implementation of the agreements between the Iranian-Armenian joint economic commission can significantly increase the level of relations between Iran and Armenia," said Mohammadreza Aref, the Head of the Reformist parliamentary faction.

More Details:

<http://irannewsdaily.com/iranian-mp-calls-implementation-iran-armenia-agreements/>

- **Iran: Dozens of ISIL Plans to Attack Shiite Shrine in Mashhad Thwarted**

Security forces have defused tens of ISIL plots to launch terrorist attacks on the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS) in Iran's Northeastern city of Mashhad, Deputy Custodian of Astan Quds Razavi Morteza Bakhtiari revealed on Tuesday. "The shrine of Imam Reza (AS) was a target of the ISIL terrorist group and tens of plots to attack the shrine have been defused with God's help," Bakhtiari said on Tuesday.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13961215001536>

- **Russia offers Iran to intensify trade in national currency**

Russia and Iran need to step up work to increase the volume of trade in national currencies, the Russian Energy Minister and co-chairman of the Russian-Iranian commission for trade and economic cooperation, Alexander Novak, said at a meeting of the commission, RIA Novosti reported. Overall, the trade turnover between the countries is at a high level, he said, adding that in 2017, the bilateral trade amounted to \$1.7 billion.

More Details:

<https://en.trend.az/iran/business/2869630.html>

4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **Israeli forces demolish Palestinian-owned structures in East Jerusalem**

Israeli bulldozers demolished a cement wall and a carwash belonging to a Palestinian in the occupied East Jerusalem neighborhood of Silwan on Tuesday morning. The structures belonged to Silwan resident Abed Odeh, from the Bir Ayyoub area of the town. Odeh told Ma'an that the structures were demolished by Israeli authorities without any prior notice, adding that they were destroyed under the pretext of being built without difficult-to-obtain Israeli-issued construction permits.

More details:

<http://www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?id=779910>

- **As government crisis mounts, minister said to claim PM wants early elections**

UTJ leader Yaakov Litzman blames Netanyahu for not making effort to solve coalition rift; source close to prime minister says only a long-term fix will stave off snap vote. Talk about the possibility of calling early elections due to a government crisis intensified on Tuesday, with a key coalition partner claiming that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is interested in going to the polls soon, and Netanyahu conveying a message that, short of a long-term agreement to stabilize his coalition, the government would indeed collapse.

More details:

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/as-government-crisis-mounts-minister-said-to-claim-pm-wants-early-elections/>

- **Israeli settler attempts to run over a Palestinian human rights defender**

An Israeli settler Tuesday attempted to run over a Palestinian human rights defender while he was on his way home to Tel al-Ramida in Hebron. The human rights defender, Imad Abu Shamsiyya, said 'the extremist Israeli settler, Ofer Hanna who regularly intimidates Palestinian peaceful demonstrations, attempted to run him over, however he managed to escape unharmed.' Abu Shamsiyya said this is not the first time he was attacked by settlers in the area, however this time he was able to recognize the face of the person who tried to attack him. The activist filed a complaint with the Israeli police against the extremist settler. Settlers violence against Palestinians and their property is routine in the West Bank and is rarely prosecuted by Israeli authorities.

More details:

<http://english.wafa.ps/page.aspx?id=rz6Z5fa96781859064arz6Z5f>

- **Israelis Poison Gaza Crops with Herbicides**

Israeli aircraft on Sunday sprayed herbicides along border with the Gaza Strip, according to a Palestinian official. "These chemicals cause damage to agricultural crops and harm farmlands," Nizar al-Wahedi of the Palestinian Agriculture Ministry told Anadolu Agency.

More details:

<http://www.palestinechronicle.com/36291-2/>

- **Netanyahu, Trump discuss war preparations against Iran**

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's five-day trip to the US has been dominated by a growing drumbeat for war against Iran, a regional struggle that would eclipse the immense carnage wrought by the past 15 years of uninterrupted US military intervention in the Middle East. Netanyahu's meeting with US President Donald Trump Monday was followed Tuesday by his appearance before the annual conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the principal US Zionist lobby, in Washington. There, he proclaimed before a cheering audience that "Iran, Iran and Iran were the main topic of the meeting."

More details:

<http://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2018/03/07/aipa-m07.html>

- **US: Netanyahu avoids corruption allegations in address**

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu urged Americans to rally behind Tel Aviv as it seeks to confront what he calls Tehran's growing malign influence. "Iran is building an aggressive empire," Netanyahu said during his keynote address at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. "I will not let that happen. We will not let that happen." "We must stop Iran. We will stop Iran," he added.

More Details:

<https://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/us-netanyahu-avoids-corruption-allegations-in-address/1081605>

- **Preparations Kick Off for PLO Elections**

Palestinians are preparing for a round of elections to choose members of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) Executive Committee, as the final step to renew the legitimacy of authorities, with the aim to arrange a smooth transition in the case of any forced absence of President Mahmoud Abbas. The upcoming elections should take place during the Palestinian National Council, which is expected to start in May, and come about a year after Fatah Movement's election of a new central committee and a revolutionary council.

More Details:

<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1195996/preparations-kick-plo-elections>

- **Knesset approves bill banning handover of Palestinian corpses**

The Israeli Knesset's Internal Affairs Committee approved on Monday the first reading of a bill which is intended to prevent the authorities from handing over the bodies of Palestinians killed by the occupation forces for burial by their families, Quds Press reported on Tuesday. The bill, which was initiated by Public Security Minister Gilad Erdan, received preliminary parliamentary approval on 27 February, passing by 57 votes to 11; the remaining MKs abstained. According to Quds Press, the authorities fear the possibility that funerals of Palestinians killed by the Israelis will lead to incitement against Israel. In order to prevent this, the bill also provides a number of conditions which must be fulfilled before funerals may be held.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180307-knesset-approves-bill-banning-handover-of-palestinian-corpses/>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Lebanon to Face Many Risks Over High Water Shortage**

Lebanon is in danger of an increased water shortage in the coming years that will leave the country ill-equipped to satisfy growing demand, according to a study released by Fransabank on Monday.

More Details:

<https://www.albawaba.com/news/lebanon-face-many-risks-over-high-water-shortage-1098516>

- **Israel to Prevent Iran from Building Missile Factories in Syria, Lebanon - PM**

Israel will stop Iran from developing or building factories in Syria and Lebanon for the construction of missiles that would be used to attack Israel, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Tuesday in Washington, DC.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201803061062286403-israel-syria-missile-factories/>

- **Lebanon: Shouf-Aley District to Turn into Electoral Battleground**

The Shouf-Aley district in Mount Lebanon is heading towards a fierce electoral confrontation between several parties, after failing to reach an understanding over the names of candidates for the

parliamentary polls, except for an alliance between the Mustaqbal Movement and the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP).

More Details:

<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1196916/lebanon-shouf-aley-district-turn-electoral-battleground>

- **Landmine Kills 1, Wounds 2 in Arsal's Outskirts**

A landmine left behind by jihadist groups on Tuesday killed a Lebanese citizen and wounded two others in the outskirts of the eastern border town of Arsal.

More Details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/243060-landmine-kills-1-wounds-2-in-arsal-s-outskirts>

- **Jordan, NATO draw map of continued cooperation**

His Majesty King Abdullah and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg on Tuesday discussed the partnership between Jordan and NATO and current regional developments, according to a Royal Court statement.

More Details:

<http://jordantimes.com/news/local/jordan-nato-draw-map-continued-cooperation>

- **King presents Supreme Commander's Flag to army battalion**

His Majesty King Abdullah II, the Supreme Commander of the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF), on Tuesday presented, in a ceremony, the Supreme Commander's Flag to Prince Mohammad 9th Mechanized Battalion from Al Hashemi 51st Mechanized Brigade that was established in 1949.

More Details:

<http://en.ammonnews.net/article.aspx?articleNO=37332>

- **EEU business forum to be held in Jordan**

Cooperation prospects between the Eurasian Economic Union and Jordan have been discussed by Tatyana Valovaya, minister for integration and macroeconomy of the Eurasian Economic commission and ambassador of Jordan to Russia Amjad Odeh Adaileh in the EEC headquarter in Moscow.

More Details:

<http://www.kaztag.kz/en/news/detail.php?ID=604594>

6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **UAE now requires licenses for ‘social media influencers’**

The United Arab Emirates says it will now require anyone conducting “commercial activities” through social media to register for a government-issued license. The new rules announced Tuesday target so-called “social media influencers,” who parlay their internet fame into advertising products.

More details:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/uae-now-requires-licenses-for-social-media-influencers/2018/03/06/db9486ec-2139-11e8-946c-9420060cb7bd_story.html?utm_term=.9787006b84bb

- **CJCSC meets UAE defence minister**

Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee of Pakistan Army General Zubair Mahmood Hayat met UAE Minister of Defence Affairs Mohammed bin Ahmed Al Bowardi in Abu Dhabi on Monday. During the meeting, they discussed mutual cooperation and strategic partnership between Pakistan and United Arab Emirates.

More details:

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/289510-cjcsc-meets-uae-defence-minister>

- **Oman speeds up employment of nationals**

More than 13,000 Omani job-seekers have been employed in the public and private sectors since December, officials of the Ministry of Manpower said. The drive is part of Omani government plans to provide jobs to nationals. On October 3, the Council announced 25,000 jobs would be created for Omanis in both the private and public sectors starting from December.

More details:

<http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/oman/oman-speeds-up-employment-of-nationals-1.2183870>

- **Expatriate government employees in Kuwait need double clearance for private sector visa**

Expats working in Kuwait’s public-sector will be required to get permission from their government employers, as well as security approval from the interior ministry before taking a job in the private sector under new rules, national daily Kuwait Times reported.

More details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1260881/business-economy>

- **Kuwait to allow 'stateless people' to serve in army**

Kuwait's National Assembly (parliament) on Tuesday approved the second reading of a draft legislation that would, if passed, allow "stateless people" -- i.e., residents of Kuwait who do not have citizenship -- to serve in the army.

More details:

<https://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/kuwait-to-allow-stateless-people-to-serve-in-army/1081168>

- **Bahraini king: Qatari solution lies in Riyadh**

Bahraini King Hamad al-Khalifa met with Timothy Lenderking, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Arabian Gulf Affairs in the Near East Bureau at the US Department of State and the former Commander in Chief of the United States Central Command Anthony Zinni at the al-Sakhir palace in Manama.

More details:

<https://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/gulf/2018/03/07/Bahraini-king-Qatari-solution-lies-in-Riyadh.html>

- **Blockade impact on Qatar fading but risks remain: IMF**

The economic and financial impact on Qatar of a nine-month Saudi-led blockade is fading, but some risks for the Gulf emirate remain, the International Monetary Fund has said. The economic and financial impact on Qatar of a nine-month Saudi-led blockade is fading, but some risks for the Gulf emirate remain, the International Monetary Fund has said.

More details:

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/blockade-impact-on-qatar-fading-but-risks-remain-imf-128337>

- **Saudi Arabia defends 'just' Yemen war ahead of UK visit**

Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister on Tuesday defended his country's "just" war in Yemen, on the eve of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's controversial visit to Britain. "They criticize us for a war in Yemen that we did not want, that was imposed on us," Adel Al-Jubeir told BBC Radio 4.

More details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1260531/saudi-arabia>

- **Saudi Arabia's crown prince gets the royal treatment for UK state visit**

The U.K. is bending over backwards to welcome Saudi Arabia's crown prince as he starts a three-day state visit aimed at deepening economic ties between the two countries.

More details:

<https://www.cnbc.com/2018/03/07/saudi-arabia-crown-prince-uk-visit.html>

7. EGYPT

- **King hails Bahraini-Egyptian ties**

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa has hailed the solid longstanding Bahraini-Egyptian relations highlighted by progress in various fields. Receiving Al-Ahram Chairman, Head of Egypt's Press Syndicate, Abdel-Mohsen Salama, and the accompanying delegation at the Sakhir Palace yesterday, HM the King paid tribute to Egypt's role led by President Abdul Fatah Al-Sisi in supporting Arab national security, noting its efforts to counter terrorism and extremism and promoting regional and international peace and security.

More Details:

<http://www.newsofbahrain.com/viewNews.php?ppld=42576&TYPE=Posts&pid=21&MNU=2&SUB=>

- **1st Egyptian-Chinese fiber optic cable factory inaugurated in Cairo**

The first Egyptian-Chinese fiber optic cable factory was inaugurated in northeastern Cairo Governorate on Tuesday.

More Details:

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-03/07/c_137020735.htm

- **Egypt gets Israel's approval to hand over the two islands to Saudi Arabia**

The Israeli newspaper Israel Hayom has said that "Egypt needs Israel's approval to transfer sovereignty of the Tiran and Sanafir islands to Saudi Arabia, especially since the two islands are part of the peace agreement between Egypt and Israel."

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180307-egypt-gets-israels-approval-to-hand-over-the-two-islands-to-saudi-arabia/>

- **British MPs ask to visit Egypt's ailing former president**

Senior British Members of Parliament said Tuesday they had asked Egyptian authorities to allow them to visit former president Mohammed Morsi, deposed and now in prison, over concerns that his health is deteriorating because of poor detention conditions.

More Details:

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/british-mps-ask-to-visit-egypts-ailing-former-president/>

- **Jailed Egypt Ex-Leader Morsi's Family Raise Alarm over His Medical Condition**

The family of Mohammed Morsi, Egypt's former elected president, says his health is deteriorating in prison, raising a potential political flashpoint weeks before a sensitive presidential election later this month.

More Details:

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/jailed-egypt-ex-leader-morsis-family-raise-alarm-over-his-medical-condition-1520360607>

- **Common Interests between Riyadh, Cairo Reinforce Historical Ties**

Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman recent visit to Egypt this week was a sign that Riyadh and Cairo have maintained close ties, which date back to 1926. Ambassador El Sayed Amin Shalaby, the Executive Director of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA), said that in light of the difficult situation in the Arab world, "the overall Arab situation imposes on the two major powers in the region, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, the need for constant and continuous coordination and consultation."

More Details:

<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1195981/common-interests-between-riyadh-cairo-reinforce-historical-ties>

- **Cairo, Riyadh reiterate rejection of interference by Iran and Qatar, Saudi calls on countries to respect Egypt's Nile water rights**

Egypt and Saudi Arabia reiterated on Tuesday their rejection of interference by Iran and Qatar in the politics of Arab countries, while stressing that they are continuing to counter Doha's backing of terrorism.

More Details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/292280/Egypt/Politics-/Cairo,-Riyadh-reiterate-rejection-of-interference-.aspx>

8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Libya's stalled US\$ 110 bn, 22,000 contract projects to be reviewed again**

A meeting was held in Tripoli yesterday headed by the Chief of Staff of the Faiez Serraj-led Presidency Council / Government of National Accord to review Libya's stalled projects. The meeting included the heads of all the various Libyan project implementation agencies, including the General Projects Authority. Libya's last LD 142 billion (US\$ 110 bn) 2008-2012 Development Plan, which consists of more than 22,000 contracts in various sectors, was reviewed and possible ways of reactivating Libya's stalled projects were discussed at the meeting.

More details:

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2018/03/06/libyas-stalled-us-110-bn-22000-contract-projects-to-be-reviewed-again/>

- **Prince Moulay Rachid Chairs Opening Ceremony of Morocco in Abu Dhabi**

On Tuesday, Prince Moulay Rachid chaired the opening ceremony of the 3rd annual "Morocco in Abu Dhabi" event, which will be held from March 6-19. With the ultimate goal of reinforcing ties between Morocco and the UAE, "Morocco in Abu Dhabi" offers UAE communities a glimpse on the Moroccan culture, heritage, and its ability to preserve craftsmanship throughout generations.

More details:

<https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2018/03/241895/prince-moulay-rachid-chairs-opening-ceremony-morocco-abu-dhabi/>

- **Terrorist surrenders to military authorities in Tamanrasset**

A terrorist in possession of weapons and a quantity of ammunition on Tuesday has surrendered to the military authorities in the province of Tamanrasset, announced the National Defence Ministry in a statement.

More details:

<http://en.aps.dz/algeria/23163-terrorist-surrenders-to-military-authorities-in-tamanrasset>

- **Saif bin Zayed heads meeting of ministers of interior of International Security Alliance member countries**

H.H. Lt. General Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, today chaired, at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre, ADNEC, a meeting of the ministers of interior of member countries of the International Security Alliance, which includes the UAE, France, Italy, Spain, Senegal, Bahrain and Morocco, as well as Singapore, which officially joined the alliance today. The meeting was attended by Lt. General Sheikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, Minister of Interior of Bahrain, Kasiviswanathan Shanmugam, Minister for Home Affairs and Law of Singapore, and Mamodo Diyub, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Interior of Senegal, as well as representatives of the ministers of interior of the Alliance's member countries, security and police officials, and several Ministry of Interior officials.

More details:

<http://marocgazette.com/story-z2958537>

- **Moroccan Urban Project Wins Dubai International Award for Best Practices**

A Moroccan project was awarded the prestigious Dubai International Award for Best Practice in the category of national urban policies, UN Habitat and Dubai municipality announced. The initiative "We are Medina Learning from Jnane Aztout" implemented in the northern city of Larache won the "best practice for improving the environment" in the field of national urban policy, said officials of the UN agency at a meeting at the United Nations headquarters in Nairobi.

More details:

<http://northafricapost.com/22580-moroccan-urban-project-wins-dubai-international-award-best-practices.html>

- **Libya: AU Facilitates Return of Thousands from Libya**

Some 15 000 migrants have been assisted to return home from Libya through the voluntary humanitarian returns programme. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) facilitated the returns with the support of the European Union (EU) and the cooperation of the African Union (AU). On its side, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has evacuated over 1 300 refugees from the North African country.

More details:

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201803060356.html>

- **Saiqa Force fighters block main roads in Benghazi as telecom network goes offline**

Gunmen from Saiqa Force blocked a number of main roads in east and west Benghazi including airport road, in addition to burning tires in areas blocked since Monday, eyewitnesses reported. The reasons for the riots by Saiqa Force are not known yet, however, some sources said they are likely in protest of the detention of some Saiqa leaders such as Mahmoud Al-Werfalli, who is wanted for war crimes by the International Criminal Court, or the news about placing Saiqa commander Wanis Bukhamada under house arrest.

More details:

<https://www.libyaobserver.ly/news/saiqa-force-fighters-block-main-roads-benghazi-telecom-network-goes-offline>

- **21 illegal migrants drown off Libyan coast en route to Italy**

21 illegal migrants were missing and probably drowned after a rubber dinghy and a wooden boat set off from Libya for Italy and had to be rescued, the International Organisation for Migration said on Tuesday. The 21-people missing were all among the 51 on the wooden boat, and two dead infants had reportedly been discovered on board, bringing the likely death toll to 23, IOM spokesman Joel Millman told a regular UN briefing in Geneva. All 132 people on the rubber dinghy were rescued, he said.

More details:

<http://www.libyanexpress.com/21-illegal-migrants-drown-off-libyan-coast-en-route-to-italy/>

- **Partnership declaration signed to fund "Second Chance Education" project**

A partnership declaration aiming to fund the «Second Chance Education» project with 16.5 million dinars was inked on Tuesday between the Minister of Social Affairs, the United Kingdom ambassador to Tunisia and the UNICEF Representative in Tunisia, "This project to combat school dropout consists of reopening some schools in Jendouba and Tunis as well as in certain southern governorates after undergoing a makeover", Minister of Education Hatem Ben Salem said at the signing ceremony in Tunis.

More details:

<https://www.tap.info.tn/en/Portal-Top-News-EN/9931725-partnership>

9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- Pakistan's anti-terror operations reduce terrorism: US intel chief**

Director US Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) Lt Gen Robert P Ashley has said that Pakistan's counter-insurgency operations and border management efforts have reduced the menace of terrorism in the country.

More details:

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/289255-terrorism-reduced-in-pakistan-says-director-us-dia>

- Afghan, Pak ulema to attend West Java peace event**

Afghan and Pakistani religious scholars will attend a peace conference in West Java later this month, says Indonesian Vice-President Jusuf Kalla. Organised by the Indonesian government, the meeting of ulema is aimed to find a solution to the decades-long conflict in Afghanistan, according to the Jakarta Globe.

More details:

<https://www.pajhwok.com/en/2018/03/07/afghan-pak-ulema-attend-west-java-peace-event>

- Daesh social media network being operated from area near Pak-Afghan border**

The sources inside Federal Investigation Authority (FIA) on Wednesday stated that social media network of the global terrorist organisation Daesh was being operated from the area near Pakistan-Afghanistan border.

More details:

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/03/07/daesh-social-media-network-being-operated-from-area-near-pak-afghan-border-fia/>

- Pakistan, Taliban have legitimate grievances**

The United States has acknowledged that both Pakistan and the Taliban have legitimate grievances and the United States is willing to address those concerns.

More details:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1393696/pakistan-taliban-have-legitimate-grievances-us>

- **One policeman martyred, another injured in Quetta firing**

One policeman was killed while another was martyred Wednesday when they were guarding vegetable sellers belonging to the Hazara community in the city. According to the police, unidentified persons opened fire at an armoured police vehicle when it was being driven from Hazar Ganji to Shalkot.

More details:

<https://www.geo.tv/latest/185215-one-policeman-martyred-another-injured-in-quetta-firing>

- **6850 seats allocated for female students in university entrance exams**

The Ministry of Higher Education of Afghanistan (MoHE) officials say the ministry has allocated 6850 seats for the female high school graduates in the upcoming entrance exams for the universities and high education institutes.

More details:

<https://www.khaama.com/6850-seats-allocated-for-female-students-in-university-entrance-exams-04587/>

- **Switzerland's Aid to Be Spent through National Budget**

At the Brussels Summit in 2016, the Swiss government pledged \$35 million in aid to Afghanistan on an annual basis. Afghanistan's Finance Ministry and the Swiss government on Tuesday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Kabul that funds raised by its government will be spent on development projects, and in the technical and humanitarian fields in the country in line with the national budget.

More details:

<https://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/switzerland%E2%80%99s-aid-be-spent-through-national-budget>

- **March 8th; Challenges & problems of Afghan women**

March 8th is celebrated in the country, while still many Afghan women are facing with different challenges. Beside all the challenges, today women also have problems in access to urban transports.

More details:

<http://thekabultimes.gov.af/index.php/opinions/social/16565-march-8th-challenges-problems-of-afghan-women.html>

10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- Turkey to set up refugee camps near Syria's Idlib**

Turkey will set up refugee camps with a total capacity of 170,000 at various locations under the control of Turkish army and Turkish-backed rebels, Hami Aksoy, the Turkish foreign ministry spokesman, said.

"More Details:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/03/turkey-set-refugee-camps-syria-idlib-180306093813355.html>

- Turkey expects US to stop shifting terrorists to Afrin**

Turkey expects the US to stop "shifting" YPG/PKK terrorists from Manbij to Afrin in Syria, presidential spokesman Ibrahim Kalin said on Wednesday. Speaking to reporters at the presidential complex in capital Ankara, Kalin said: "With this regard, we [Turkey] took the necessary steps via official channels, and we will continue to take [such steps]. It is particularly expected [by Turkey] that the U.S. must certainly step in and halt the shifting of YPG/PYD forces, which moves under its control, in Manbij to Afrin. This is our natural right."

More Details:

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/turkey/199512/premiers-of-turkey-trnc-meet-in-ankara>

- Turkey, Russia, Iran summit likely in early April**

A trilateral summit of leaders from Turkey, Russia, and Iran is expected to be held on April 4 in Istanbul. According to diplomatic sources, who asked not to be named due to restrictions on speaking to the media, said the summit is planned to be held following Turkey-Russia High-Level Cooperation Council (UDIK) on April 3. The main topic in the agenda of the leaders' summit is expected to be Syria as other regional matters are also planned to be addressed.

More Details:

<https://aa.com.tr/en/politics/turkey-russia-iran-summit-likely-in-early-april-/1082015>

**This media summary is prepared by ORSAM Middle East Research Assistant Firuze Yağmur Gökler. It covers news and commentaries as reported by the national media sources publishing in the Middle Eastern countries. The views expressed are not those of ORSAM and their inclusion does not imply factual accuracy.*



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