



MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

GÜNLÜK ORTADOĐU BÜLTENİ

Domestic Policy in the Middle East Countries

Bölge Ülkelerinde İç Siyaset

The Restructuring Procees of Iraq

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1. IRAQ

- **Islamic State militants developing own social media platform: Europol**

Islamic State militants are developing their own social media platform to avoid security crackdowns on their communications and propaganda, the head of the European Union's police agency said on Wednesday.

More Details

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/islamic-state-militants-developing-social-media-platform-europol/>

- **Less Than 1000 IS Militants Left in Mosul**

Less than 1,000 Islamic State (IS) militants remain in western Mosul as the Iraqi troops, backed by the US-led coalition, continue pushing deeper into the areas held by the group, said the spokesperson of the Operation Inherent Resolve.

More Details

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/iraq/347698>

- **Iraqi painter quietly documented life under Islamic State**

After the Islamic State group swept into his town nearly three years ago, Mustafa al-Taei resolved to bear witness to the militants' brutal rule by secretly painting what he had seen with his own eyes. The result was a gallery of horrors: car bombs, dead children, an IS defector beheaded in a public square, a former police officer strung up by his legs for hours before being shot dead.

More Details

http://www.shafaaq.com/en/En_NewsReader/793d6865-b7cb-482b-885a-1c62e770d935/-Iraqi-painter-quietly-documented-life-under-Islamic-State-

- **ISIS Attacks Areas in Anbar**

Fighters from ISIL have killed at least 10 Iraqi soldiers in the country's western province of Anbar, according to officials. No claim of responsibility for the killing has been made.

More Details

http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN_Direje.aspx?Jimare=40326

- **Iraqi police foil ISIS attack on power pylons, says official**

Spokesman for Interior Ministry, Sa'ad Ma'an said on Wednesday security forces had foiled a terrorist attack to target power pylons in northern Babel province.

More Details

<http://www.thebaghdadpost.com/en/story/10119/Iraqi-police-foil-ISIS-attack-on-power-pylons-says-official>

- **ISIS claims over 250 civilian casualties in Mosul following four days of US airstrikes**

Through a bulletin released by Amaq Agency on Wednesday, ISIS stated that US airstrikes and Iraqi shelling had killed hundreds of non-combatants in densely populated districts of western Mosul.

More Details

<https://www.almasdarnews.com/article/isis-claims-250-civilian-casualties-mosul-following-four-days-us-airstrikes/>

- **Daesh Drones Appear in West Mosul Multiple Times Every Day**

Daesh terrorist group launched drones, especially quadcopters, every day near the Iraqi city of Mosul, according to former Operation Inherent Resolve Task Force Strike commander Col. Brett Sylvia.

More Details

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201705031053251973-us-coalition-drones-iraq/>

- **Iraqi MPs call on Baghdad to block forced returns of Iraqi refugees**

More than 100 Iraqi MPs have signed a resolution urging the government to block the deportation and forced removal of Iraqi nationals who have sought refuge in other countries.

More Details

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/iraqi-mps-sign-resolution-block-deportation-iraqi-nationals-241417393>

- **11 journalists killed in Iraq in past year: watchdog**

Eleven journalists died covering conflict or were assassinated in Iraq during the past year, a Baghdad-based watchdog said in a report released Wednesday to mark World Press Freedom Day.

More Details

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/03/05/2017/11-journalists-killed-in-Iraq-in-past-year-watchdog>

- **Iraqi forces open new front against Daesh in Mosul, commander says**

Iraqi armed forces on Thursday opened a new front against Daesh in Mosul, attacking the militants' enclave in the city from the northwest, a military commander told Reuters.

More Details

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1094311/world>

- **Iraqi refugee, 35, 'used asylum seeker friends he met at Christmas Island detention centre as passengers in staged minibus crash - so he could make \$1.2million insurance claim'**

An Iraqi asylum seeker allegedly staged a minibus crash to rip off insurance companies by \$1.2 million. Thamer Ari, 35, was arrested on Tuesday after allegedly providing a group of refugees he met at Christmas Island Detention Centre to be the bus' passengers in the May 2015 crash at a Liverpool intersection, The Daily Telegraph reported.

More Details

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4471372/Iraqi-refugee-35-used-asylum-seekers-stage-bus-crash.html>

- **Scholarship Fund to Honor Soldier Killed by IED in Iraq**

A friend of 1st Lt. Weston Lee, who himself will report to the Army this weekend, has joined with others to set up a scholarship fund in honor of the 25-year-old platoon leader from Bluffton, Georgia, who was killed by an improvised explosive device in Iraq last Saturday.

More Details

<http://www.military.com/daily-news/2017/05/03/scholarship-fund-honor-soldier-killed-ied-iraq.html>

- **Masrour Barzani: Process toward independence has already begun**

The Chancellor of the Kurdistan Region Security Council (KRSC) Masrour Barzani on Wednesday discussed Kurdish independence in a supportive gathering for the referendum organized by the Kurdistan Student Union (KSU).

More Details

<http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/bf3eb440-689a-48ea-80a7-88c9379a15ed/Masrour-Barzani--Process-toward-independence-has-already-begun>

- **Iraq calls for propaganda support against Daesh**

During an event marking Arab Information Day for audio media held in Baghdad yesterday, the Iraqi government called for propaganda support against Daesh, Anadolu reported.

More Details

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170503-iraq-calls-for-propaganda-support-against-daesh/>

- **Five years, billions of dollars needed to rebuild Mosul**

Mosul's wrecked roads, bridges and broader economy will take at least five years to repair and need billions of dollars of development that Iraq's government will struggle to afford, officials returning to the battle-scarred city said.

More Details

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/d3cbc462-7898-4a55-9f99-65b462172ce6.aspx>

- **Iraqi camp families search for ways to make a living**

In northern Iraq's vast desert Khazer camp, residents are opening street stalls, taking on odd jobs and trying out entirely new professions, anything to scrape out a living. Aysar Issa has turned his hand to fixing shoes to support his family of eight. "My brothers and I are working in the camp to survive" he said. "We receive little more than 5,000 Iraqi Dinars (\$4.28) a day, but we have no other choice since we cannot return to our village."

More Details

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crises-iraq-mosul-vendors-idUSKBN17Z1LB>

- **Islamic State booby-trapping expert, three aides, killed in western Mosul**

Islamic State booby-trapping expert was killed along with three of his aides due to a blast inside a workshop in Tal Afar town, west of Mosul, a local source in Nineveh said.

More Details

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/islamic-state-booby-trapping-expert-three-aides-killed-western-mosul/>

- **Iraq Forces Advance on ISIS' Mosul Enclave from Northwest**

Iraq's armed forces opened a new front against ISIS in the city of Mosul on Thursday, advancing on the jihadists' enclave from the northwest, a military commander and officers said.

More Details

<http://english.aawsat.com/asharq-al-awsat-english/news-middle-east/iraq-forces-advance-isis-mosul-enclave-northwest>

2. SYRIA

- **Syrian Opposition Suspends Participation in Astana Peace Talks**

The Syrian opposition said on Wednesday it had suspended its participation in peace talks being held in Kazakhstan and demanded an end to government bombing of areas under its control.

More Details:

<http://english.aawsat.com/asharq-al-awsat-english/news-middle-east/syrian-opposition-suspends-participation-astana-peace-talks>

- **Terrorists target al-Zara power plant and other areas in Hama, Homs, and Damascus Countryside with shells**

Terrorists from Jabhat al-Nusra targeted al-Zara power plant in the southern countryside of Hama province with a number of mortar shells, causing material damage to it.

More Details:

<http://sana.sy/en/?p=105403>

- **Turkey, Russia push for safe-zones in Syria**

The presidents of Russia and Turkey are pushing for the creation of safe-zones in war-torn Syria as talks were expected to resume on Thursday in Kazakhstan between the government and opposition.

More Details;

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/05/russia-turkey-push-safe-zones-syria-170504053138097.html>

- **Blast near Turkish border as Syria cease-fire talks resume**

A large explosion shook a rebel-held Syrian town along the border with Turkey on Wednesday, killing at least five people and wounding others, as Russia-led talks between the Syrian government and rebels focused on a cease-fire resumed in Kazakhstan.

More Details:

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/03/05/2017/Blast-near-Turkish-border-as-Syria-cess-fire-talks-resume>

- **Syria: Roadside Explosion Kills 4 Civil Defence workers in Daraa**

Four civil defense workers died when a bomb exploded in Syria's southwestern city of Daraa, a local civil defense official said Tuesday.

More Details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/syria-roadside-explosion-kills-4-civil-defence-workers-daraa-969972>

- **Syria sanctions bill sparks renewed debate over Assad and Christians**

A key House panel easily voted to slap new sanctions May 3 on Syria, but not before an acrimonious debate over President Bashar al-Assad's role in defending the region's beleaguered Christians.

More Details:

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/05/syria-sanctions-bill-congress-debate-assad-christians.html>

- **Aoun Draws to Burden of Refugees, Demands Syria Political Solution**

President Michel Aoun pointed out to the negative implications as the result of refugees influx into Lebanon, media reports said on Wednesday.

More Details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/229434-aoun-draws-to-burden-of-refugees-demands-syria-political-solution>

- **Daughter of Dawit Isaak hopes for peace in Syria**

Bethlehem Isaak, daughter of Dawit Isaak, the recipient of the Guillermo Cano Freedom Press Award, has expressed the hope that the protracted conflict in Syria will end soon. "In the spirit of human rights and freedom of speech, I hope the conflict in Syria and other conflicts in the world will end

soon,” she said representing her father while receiving an award at World Press Freedom Day celebrations in Jakarta on Wednesday evening.

More Details:

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2017/05/04/daughter-of-dawit-isaak-hopes-for-peace-in-syria.html>

- **Damascus supports proposal of Russia to create security zones in Syria - mass media**

Damascus supports the proposal stated by Russian leader Vladimir Putin to create de-escalation zones in Syria, report Russian mass media sources with a reference to the Syrian state agency SANA. According to the MFA of Syria, they are ready to take any measures "to save lives of people in Syria and stop the bloodshed".

More Details:

<http://www.kaztag.kz/en/news/detail.php?ID=538456>

3. IRAN

- **Rescue workers recover 21 bodies following Iran mine blast**

Rescue workers recovered 21 bodies from a coal mine in northern Iran after an explosion caused a tunnel to collapse on Wednesday, news agencies reported.

More Details:

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2017/05/04/Agencies-21-bodies-recovered-from-Iran-mine-after-blast.html>

- **Pakistani Speaker Underlines Anti-Terrorism Cooperation with Iran**

Pakistani National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq in a meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif expressed regret over the recent cross-border attack that killed 9 Iranian soldiers, and stressed his country's preparedness to cooperate with Tehran in preventing such incidents and fighting against terrorism.

More Details;

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13960213001535>

- **Iran: Saudi rejection of Tehran ties show kingdom's destructive policies**

Iran says the Saudi deputy crown prince's remarks against the Islamic Republic are proof that the kingdom follows "confrontational and destructive policies" in the region and towards Tehran. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi was reacting on Wednesday to comments made by Mohammed bin Salman, who rejected the possibility of normalization of ties with Iran.

More Details:

<http://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2017/05/03/520495/iran-saudi-qassemi-reaction>

- **Iran, Russia discuss Syria's latest developments in Astana**

Deputy Foreign Minister for Arab-African Affairs Hossein Jaber Ansari met on Wednesday with Russia's special envoy on Syria, Alexander Lavrentiev in Astana.

More Details:

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/125190/Iran-Russia-discuss-Syria-s-latest-developments-in-Astana>

- **Exemplary Iranian craftspeople honored**

A number of exemplary Iranian craftspeople were honored in a ceremony, which was hosted by the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization in Tehran on Tuesday.

More Details:

<http://www.tehrantimes.com/news/413125/Exemplary-Iranian-craftspeople-honored>

- **Iran expresses readiness to renovate taxi fleet in Senegal**

Director General for African Affairs of Foreign Ministry Mehdi Aqa-Jaafari in meeting with Minister of Industry and Mine of Senegal Aly Ngouille Ndiaye on Wednesday expressed Iran's readiness to renovate Senegal taxi fleet.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82515749/>

- **Iran calls on international community to force Israel to join NPT**

A senior Iranian Foreign Ministry official says the international community must mount pressure on Israel to join the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) unconditionally and put its nuclear activities under the surveillance of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

More Details;

<http://www.iran-daily.com/News/192081.html>

- **Rouhani rivals mass-purchase social channels in presidential campaign**

Rivals of President Hassan Rouhani in the May 19 presidential election have mass-purchased channels on the social app Telegram to campaign against him.

More Details:

<http://en.trend.az/iran/politics/2749637.html>

- **Foreign Tourists Prefer Rural Houses to 5-Star Hotels in Iran's Kerman**

Figures show that there has been a significant increase in the number of foreign tourists visiting the southeastern Iranian province of Kerman over the past few years, a large number of whom have been highly interested in staying at local guest houses.

More Details:

<http://ifpnews.com/exclusive/05/foreign-tourists-prefer-rural-houses-5-star-hotels-irans-kerman/>

- **Spokesman Decries Saudi Prince's Anti-Iran Comments**

Iran's Foreign Ministry denounced recent hostile comments by Saudi Arabia's deputy crown prince against Tehran as a sign of flawed understanding of the regional situation, lack of political wisdom, and a "strategic mistake" in pursuing the policy of spreading terrorism.

More Details:

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2017/05/04/1397427/spokesman-decries-saudi-prince-s-anti-iran-comments>

4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **White House: Trump told Abbas to 'resolve' issue of PA terrorist payments**

US President Donald Trump on Wednesday told Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas to stop incitement, crack down on terrorism, and "resolve" the PA's policy of providing social welfare payments to the families of terrorists jailed for attacking or killing Israelis.

More Details:

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/white-house-trump-told-abbas-to-resolve-issue-of-pa-terrorist-cash-payments/>

- **Trump tells Abbas 'very good chance' of Mid-East peace deal**

US President Donald Trump has said there is "a very good chance" of a Middle East peace deal, during talks with Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas.

More Details:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39791715>

- **Palestine: Abbas sets off with plan to pull plug on Hamas cash**

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas flew to Washington to meet Donald Trump yesterday, insisting that he will end payment to Israel for electricity supplied to Hamas-controlled Gaza.

More Details:

<http://www.morningstaronline.co.uk/a-db92-Palestine-Abbas-sets-off-with-plan-to-pull-plug-on-Hamas-cash>

- **After Trump meet, Israeli right says Abbas doesn't truly want peace**

Following Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas's meeting with US President Donald Trump at the White House on Wednesday, a number of right-wing Israeli lawmakers accused the PA leader of having no genuine interest in peace.

More Details:

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/after-white-house-meet-right-wing-mks-say-abbas-not-really-for-peace/>

- **Israeli-Jordanian-Palestinian venture seeks help on Gaza resource crisis**

Trilateral co-directors of EcoPeace Middle East send letter to Norway urging for participation of third-party mediator on water and electricity issues.

More Details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Israeli-Jordanian-Palestinian-venture-seeks-help-on-Gaza-resources-489642>

- **Security forces seize implements used for the to create weaponry**

Security forces have seized implements used for the creation of weaponry in Khirbat Rakaa near Yatta, Hebron.

More Details:

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4957297,00.html>

- **Stabbing attack Thwarted at tomb of Patriarchs**

An assailant attempted to stab Border Police soldiers near the holy site of the Tomb of Patriarchs in the Old City of Hebron. The attack was thwarted.

More Details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Stabbing-attack-thwarted-at-Tomb-of-Patriarchs-489717>

- **Jerusalem mayor: UNESCO denial of Israeli sovereignty 'absurd and political'**

Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat on Wednesday – supported by a cross-section of residents and visitors – uniformly condemned UNESCO's most recent resolution attempting to sever Jewish ties to the capital of Israel. Noting that he led members of the organization's delegation on a private tour of the City of David just weeks earlier to prove the indisputable connection between Judaism and Jerusalem, Barkat said he was "outraged" by the vote

More Details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Jlem-Mayor-UNESCOs-denial-of-Israeli-sovereignty-absurd-and-political-489696>

- **Report: Israel transferred body of terrorist to PA**

Israel has handed the body of a terrorist who stabbed two Border Police officers at the Lions' Gate last March over to the Palestinian Authority, according to the PA's Maan news agency.

More Details:

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/Flash.aspx/386832>

- **9 wanted terror suspects arrested**

The Israel Defense Forces arrested nine people, Wednesday evening in the Palestinian Authority-assigned areas of Judea and Samaria, who were wanted on suspicion of involvement in terror and violent disorders directed at Israelis.

More Details:

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/Flash.aspx/386830>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Lebanon's army targets ISIL fighters near Syrian border**

Lebanon's military has intensified its crackdown on ISIL fighters in a remote area close to the Syria border.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/video/news/2017/05/lebanons-army-targets-isil-fighters-syrian-border-170504052749207.html>

- **Kaag and Lassen Welcome Lebanon's Mine Action Efforts**

United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon Sigrid Kaag and European Union Ambassador to Lebanon Christina Lassen visited the Regional Mine Action Center (RMAC) in Nabatieh on May 3, a UN statement said.

More Details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/229475-kaag-and-lassen-welcome-lebanon-s-mine-action-efforts>

- **Hezbollah sides with resistance seeking of Palestine: Sheikh Naim Qassem**

Hezbollah Resistance Movement's second-in-command, Sheikh Naim Qassem, said the Lebanese group stays apart from any so-called resistance movement that makes arrangements for compromise with the Israeli regime.

More Details:

http://en.abna24.com/news/middle-east/hezbollah-sides-with-resistance-seeking-of-palestine-sheikh-naim-qassem_827609.html

- **Lebanese Army Arrests Fugitives; Charges Suspected Terrorists**

The Lebanese army arrested several fugitives during raids in the northeast of the country, while a military judge charged 10 people, Syrian and national, for alleged membership in the Islamic State terrorist group.

More Details:

<http://www.plenglish.com/index.php?o=rn&id=12442&SEO=lebanese-army-arrests-fugitives-and-charge-suspected-terrorists>

- **Lebanon's ex-PM Salim Hoss joins Palestinian prisoners' hunger strike**

Lebanon's former Prime Minister Salim al-Hoss declared a hunger strike on Tuesday, in solidarity with the Palestinian prisoners who entered their third week of a mass hunger strike, Lebanese media reported.

More Details:

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/5/3/lebanons-ex-pm-salim-hoss-joins-palestinian-prisoners-hunger-strike>

- **Is North Korea Diversion For A US-Jordan Invasion Of Syria? – OpEd**

Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad said that his country has information that Jordan is planning to send its troops into southern Syria in cooperation with the United States....'Jordan is not an independent country. Whatever the United States wants, it will happen,' said Assad."

More Details:

<http://www.eurasiareview.com/04052017-is-north-korea-diversion-for-a-us-jordan-invasion-of-syria-oped/>

- **Showcasing New Trade and Business Opportunities for Jordan and the EU**

Today, the EU and Jordan further strengthened their close partnership through a joint high-level meeting promoting enhanced trade, business and investment opportunities available in Jordan.

More Details:

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-1171_en.htm

- **Plan launched to stimulate economic growth over 5 years**

His Majesty King Abdullah on Wednesday chaired a meeting of the Economic Policies Council to launch a plan to stimulate economic growth during the next five years, a Royal Court statement said. Later in the day, the Cabinet approved the plan during its evening session, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

More Details:

<http://jordantimes.com/news/local/plan-launched-stimulate-economic-growth-over-5-years>

- **Queen Rania visits Fab Lab, Offline Show in Irbid**

Her Majesty Queen Rania on Wednesday visited Fab Lab Irbid and the latest Offline Show held at the Jordan University for Science and Technology, located 80km north of Amman.

More Details:

<http://jordantimes.com/news/local/queen-rania-visits-fab-lab-offline-show-irbid>

- **Two-day global conference on refugee-related issues kicks off**

A conference on refugees kicked-off on Wednesday to examine the impact of forced displacement on refugees and host communities. Organised by Yarmouk University's Refugees, Displaced Persons and Forced Migration Studies Centre, the second "Refugees in the Middle East and Human Security — the Commitments of the International Community and the Role of Host Communities" conference provides a venue for scholars and experts from around the world to discuss Jordan's role in hosting the displaced.

More Details:

<http://jordantimes.com/news/local/two-day-global-conference-refugee-related-issues-kicks>

6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Kuwaiti, Turkish leaders to lay foundation stone of new airport terminal**

The foundation stone for the new Kuwait International Airport terminal will be laid on 9 May, reported Al Rai. The Amir of Kuwait Shaikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan will be present at the ceremony to give the go-ahead for the project.

More Details:

<http://www.gdnonline.com/Details/203197/Kuwaiti,-Turkish-leaders-to-lay-foundation-stone-of-new-airport-terminal>

- **Arabtec sees profit after 9 quarters of losses**

Arabtec Holding, the Dubai-listed construction company, reported on Thursday Dh17.6 million in net profit for the first quarter of 2017, marking a jump from the Dh46 million in losses recorded in the same quarter last year. The results mark the first quarter of profitability after nine consecutive quarters of loss-making as the company attempts to restructure and turn around performance.

More Details:

<http://gulfnews.com/business/sectors/construction/arabtec-sees-profit-after-9-quarters-of-losses-1.2021777>

- **Why Saudi Arabia's MSCI bid matters and what it has done to get it**

Saudi Arabia wants foreign money, and it's been overhauling one of the world's most conservative financial markets to get it. Thursday marks the second anniversary of the kingdom's decision to allow money managers outside the Gulf to trade Saudi shares directly. Since that announcement, authorities have relaxed the guidelines even more, yet total foreign ownership has languished at about five per cent, and the equity market's capitalization has fallen by about \$140 billion in two years to \$439 billion.

More Details:

<http://www.livemint.com/Money/chB2Ac4SggUjRxyWNmgbyK/Why-Saudi-Arabias-MSCI-bid-matters-and-what-it-has-done-to.html>

- **Crown prince attends 'Tufan 7' exercise, graduation ceremony of Border Guard cadets**

The "Tufan 7" exercise and the graduation ceremony of 6,021 Border Guard graduates were held on Wednesday under the patronage of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Naif, deputy prime minister and minister of interior, at the Mohammed bin Naif Academy for Maritime Sciences and Security in Jeddah. Taking part in the exercise, which simulated action taken to deter terrorist attacks against vital sites and important islands, were marine and land border units, newly introduced and managed based on a new operational concept, as well as several security planes from the Interior Ministry.

More Details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1094271/saudi-arabia>

- **Qatar, Poland to start new phase in relations**

Qatar and Poland are set to start a new phase of bilateral co-operation with the official visit of HH the Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani to Poland on Thursday, during which the Emir will hold talks with Polish President Andrzej Sebastian Duda and a number of senior officials. The visit will witness the signing of a number of agreements and memorandums of understanding in various fields between the two countries.

More Details:

<http://www.gulf-times.com/story/546693/Qatar-Poland-to-start-new-phase-in-relations>

- **Qatar cabinet approves draft law on income tax and VAT**

The Cabinet in its meeting today approved a draft law on income tax and its draft executive regulation. The Cabinet also approved a draft law on Value-Added Tax (VAT) and its draft executive regulations.

More Details:

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/03/05/2017/Qatar-cabinet-approves-draft-law-on-income-tax-and-VAT>

- **The new oil? The global battle for sand is getting ugly**

Dubai is a fairytale world. Back in 1995 a jeep brought me to a region where you do not want to run out of fuel: Rub' al Khali or the Empty Quarter. Think of Lawrence of Arabia and a thirsty death. This is the largest continuous sand desert in the world, a sandpit as big as France. Today, Dubai has a mile-long artificial peninsula in the form of a palm tree that is packed with hotels and expensive villas. When the global recession hit Dubai in 2009, the world stood still. Well, at least the work on Dubai's artificial island project called "The World" stopped. By that time, it had already moved a massive 321 million tonnes of sand, but the islands were left empty.

More Details:

<https://scroll.in/article/836336/the-new-oil-the-global-battle-for-sand-is-getting-ugly>

- **EmiratesGBC's 2017 MENA Green Building Awards is carbon-neutral**

Emirates Green Building Council (EmiratesGBC), an independent forum aimed at conserving the environment by strengthening and promoting green building practices, has announced that its 2017 MENA Green Building Awards ceremony, to be held on May 17 at Roda Al Murooj Hotel, Dubai, will be carbon-neutral. Leading by example, EmiratesGBC's initiative to make the event carbon-neutral will include calculating the emissions from power consumption, heat energy and refrigeration, among other infrastructure; the journeys of participants to the event; catering and lodging for the participants, and event-specific materials and waste.

More Details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/business/pr/emiratesgbc%E2%80%99s-2017-mena-green-building-awards-carbon-neutral-970462>

- **King receives a message from Cuba's president**

Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman received a message from President Raul Castro of Cuba. The message was delivered to the King by Cuban Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy and Planning Ricardo Cabrisas Ruiz at Al-Salam Palace in Jeddah on Wednesday.

More Details:

<http://saudigazette.com.sa/saudi-arabia/king-receives-message-cubas-president/>

- **The brother of the Saudi Arabian king dies**

Prince Mishaal bin Abdulaziz Al Saud passed away today, the Saudi Royal Court said in a statement, that was picked up by the state Saudi Press Agency, SPA. The 93-year-old Prince was the brother of the king. He will be laid to rest following funeral prayers after Isha (night prayers) on Thursday at the Grand Mosque in Makkah, the statement said.

More Details:

<http://www.arabianbusiness.com/the-brother-of-saudi-arabian-king-dies--672939.html>

7. EGYPT

- **Sisi discusses Arab efforts to resolve regional crises with Abu Dhabi crown prince**

Egypt's President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi discussed on Wednesday with Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan the importance of intensifying Arab and international efforts to achieve political resolutions to the region's various civil conflicts, Egyptian presidency spokesman Alaa Youssef said in a statement. El-Sisi, who arrived in the UAE on Wednesday for a two-day visit, discussed with Bin Zayed, who is also the deputy chief of the UAE armed forces, the latest updates in the Yemeni, Syrian and Libyan civil conflicts.

More Details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/268063/Egypt/Politics-/Sisi-discusses-Arab-efforts-to-resolve-regional-cr.aspx>

- **Al-Sisi heads to UAE for bilateral and political talks**

President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi headed to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Wednesday for a two-day visit for political and bilateral talks with Emirati leaders, according to state-run media outlet EGY News. According to the presidency spokesperson, Alaa Youssef, the president's visit to the UAE comes within the framework of close brotherly relations between the two countries and their interest to continue coordination on ways to deal with the challenges the Arab world faces, while promoting joint action to protect Arab national security.

More Details:

<http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2017/05/03/al-sisi-heads-uae-bilateral-political-talks/>

- **'Egypt Will Achieve Gas Self-Sufficiency by 2018, Surplus by 2020,' Says Minister**

The petroleum sector has achieved numerous developments during the current period in natural gas production. Egypt's total production of gas reached 5 billion cubic feet per day, following a number

of new discoveries. Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Wealth Tarek El Molla explains the developments in an interview with Daily News Egypt.

More Details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/business/egypt-will-achieve-gas-self-sufficiency-by-2018-surplus-by-2020-970214>

- **Egypt's Al Sissi begins UAE visit**

Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Abu Dhabi Crown Prince and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, on Wednesday received Egyptian President Abdul Fattah Al Sissi, who arrived to the UAE on a two-day visit. Upon his arrival at the Presidential Airport, Al Sissi was accorded an official reception, and the national anthems of the UAE and Egypt were played and a 21-gun salute was fired in honour of the guest.

More Details:

<http://gulfnews.com/news/uae/government/egypt-s-al-sissi-begins-uae-visit-1.2021694>

- **Egypt cabinet sets proposed fee for one-year residency to foreigners at \$100,000**

Egypt's cabinet approved on Wednesday an amendment to a draft legislation on promoting residency for foreigners to be presented to parliament, setting the price of one-year residency at \$100,000, up from a previously proposed \$50,000. In an official statement, the cabinet said the proposed legislation represents an incentive for foreigners to buy residential property in Egypt in light of an increase in the value of real estate.

More Details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/268067/Egypt/Politics-/Egypt-cabinet-sets-proposed-fee-for-oneyear-reside.aspx>

- **Nael Hassan's Imprisonment Renewed for 15 Days**

ANHRI's lawyers, among other lawyers, attended the imprisonment renewal hearing and pleaded the case to refute the grounds behind Nael's pretrial detention, and to invalidate the arrest warrant issued against him by the Prosecution, in addition to the malicious and trumped-up charges leveled against him. Nevertheless, the Prosecution refused the lawyers' request to release the Alexandrian blogger.

More Details:

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201705031040.html>

- **Mohamed bin Zayed, President el-Sisi discuss strengthening UAE-Egypt relations**

His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, today discussed ways of bolstering bilateral relations as well as regional and international issues of mutual concern. Welcoming el-Sisi's two-day visit that began today, His Highness Sheikh Mohamed noted that it reflects existing vital co-operation and relation between the two countries and the interest of their leaders in continuing contacts and co-ordination to serve the interests of both countries as well as other Arab countries.

More Details:

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302612044>

- **Sudan will apply 'principle of reciprocity' if more Sudanese citizens deported from Egypt**

Sudanese Foreign Minister Ibrahim Ghandour has said his government "will apply the principle of reciprocity" on Cairo, in the case that any Sudanese citizen is deported from Egypt. Addressing the parliament on Monday, the Sudan Tribune quoted Ghandour as saying: "We agreed with the Egyptian foreign minister on a number of issues during his recent visit to Sudan; however, the deportation of the journalists almost brought us back to square one."

More Details:

<http://www.egyptindependent.com//news/sudan-will-apply-%E2%80%98principle-reciprocity-if-more-sudanese-citizens-deported-egypt>

- **Egypt's Endowments Ministry to publish books to counter extremism**

Egypt's Minister of Religious Endowments Mukhtar Gomaa said that the ministry will publish and distribute three books on a large scale to counter "extremist" thoughts. The books will be available in mosques across Egypt during the holy month of Ramadan.

More Details:

<http://www.egypttoday.com/Article/1/4623/Egypt%E2%80%99s-Endowments-Ministry-to-publish-books-to-counter-extremism>

8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Four soldiers and three civilians die in latest Benghazi violence**

More death and destruction came to Benghazi today when three civilians were killed in a rocket attack and four sappers perished when a mine exploded while they were tackling it.

More details:

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/05/03/four-soldiers-and-three-civilians-die-in-latest-benghazi-violence/>

- **Tunisian and European MPs agree in Brussels on need to define Tunisia's priorities**

The restitution of the Tunisian assets looted and deposited in Europe, the promotion of the Tunisian agricultural product and other issues inherent to terrorism and illegal immigration were on the agenda Wednesday of the meeting of the presidents of the blocs and groups of Tunisian and European parliamentarians, at the seat of the European Parliament in Brussels.

More details:

<https://www.tap.info.tn/en/Portal-Politics/8983307-tunisian-and>

- **Algerians head to the polls amid expected low turnout**

Despite fierce government campaign, Algerians are more worried about rising costs of living than by election outcome.

More details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/05/algeria-voter-turnout-expected-legislative-poll-170503064333032.html>

- **Tunisia Jewish representative 'Israeli govt disrupting Jewish pilgrimage'**

The representative of the Jewish community in Tunisia's Djerba, Perez Traboulsi, said in an interview with local media that all security precautions have been taken and are put in place to secure a safe pilgrimage.

More details:

<https://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2017/05/03/Israelis-warned-not-to-visit-Tunisia-for-Jewish-festival-.html>

- **Sarraj and Haftar end talks ‘positively’**

Talks between the East Libyan military commander, Khalifa Haftar, and the head of the country’s UN-backed government, Fayez al-Sarraj, are reported to have ended positively, according to sources.

More details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170503-sarraj-and-haftar-end-talks-positively/>

- **Morocco: Scrap Prison Terms for Nonviolent Speech**

Morocco’s recent overhaul of its speech laws leaves intact the country’s famous red lines on critical speech, as well as other provisions that could land people in prison solely for peaceful expression, Human Rights Watch said in a report released today.

More details:

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/05/04/morocco-scrap-prison-terms-nonviolent-speech>

- **US Forces Join 10-Day ‘African Lion’ Military Exercise in Morocco**

The US Department of Defense announced that some 2,800 US forces participated in ten days of military drills with Moroccan, Tunisian and Spanish troops.

More details:

<https://sputniknews.com/military/201705031053218742-usa-join-african-lion-military-exercise/>

- **US boosts Libya presence with base in Sahara, files show**

The US has established a military base in the southernmost reaches of Libya, documents reveal, as Washington cements its presence in Libya and beyond amid claims by Donald Trump it has "no role" in the country.

More details:

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/us-base-libya-africom-1120684962>

- **Can Tunisia’s Government Make Necessary Reforms in The Face of Popular Demonstrations?**

Last summer, Tunisia’s parliament ousted former Prime Minister Habib Essid, a vote of no-confidence, as President Beji Caid Essebsi announced his intent to form a new unity government. He appointed Youssef Chahed, a little known young technocrat, to replace Essid. Chahed was presented as a fresh-faced, “courageous alternative” who would be better situated to push through tough economic reforms and win the approval of Tunisia’s dissatisfied youth.

More details:

<http://tdailynews.net/story-z8955150>

- **Strike while the iron is hot: India and Morocco must forge a strategic partnership now**

In what should be treated as another wake up call for India, a report by Chinese press agency Xinhua has stated that for China the North African nation of Morocco is not only “a natural bridge and an appropriate platform for the intensification of investment and trade relations between China and Africa, but also a preferential access to the markets of 55 countries (1.2 billion consumers), with which Morocco has concluded free trade agreements (including the EU, the US and Arab countries)”.

More details:

<http://blogs.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/talkingturkey/strike-while-the-iron-is-hot-india-and-morocco-must-forge-a-strategic-partnership-now/>

9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **US pushes for legitimate peace process in Afghanistan**

US Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson has said Washington would seek its interest in Afghanistan by pushing for a legitimate peace process and keeping the terrorist networks confined.

More details:

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2017/05/04/%E2%80%98us-pushes-legitimate-peace-process-afghanistan%E2%80%99>

- **Head of Afghanistan's Hizb-e-Islami to return to Kabul from exile**

Gulbudin Hekmatyar, leader of Afghanistan's Hizb-e-Islami, or Islamic Party, is due to return to Kabul on Thursday, ending decades of exile and fighting against the government, said a statement released by the presidential palace.

More details:

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-05/04/c_136256621.htm

- **Afghan President Ashraf Ghani declined invitations for Pakistan visit: deputy spokesman**

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani has declined invitations extended by top civil and military officials to visit Pakistan, BBC Urdu reported on Wednesday.

More details:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1331020/afghan-president-ashraf-ghani-declined-invitations-for-pakistan-visit-deputy-spokesman>

- **Wilkerson: “We’re Staying in Afghanistan for the Next 50 Years”**

Colin Powell’s former chief of staff Lawrence Wilkerson describes the lunacy of what passes for US strategy in Afghanistan. Note there are some sour notes. For instance, Wilkerson depicts Larry Summers as directly connected to Goldman Sachs. Summers was a protege of former Goldman co-Chairman, later Treasury Secretary Bob Rubin, but Summers never did a stint at Goldman (he did have a handsome sinecure from hedge fund DE Shaw).

More details:

<http://www.nakedcapitalism.com/2017/05/wilkerson-staying-afghanistan-next-50-years.html>

- **2 suicide bombers and a child killed in Kandahar clash**

Two suicide bombers and a child were killed during a brief clash between the assailants and the security forces in southern Kandahar province. According to the local government officials, the incident took place late on Wednesday evening in the central Kandahar city.

More details:

<http://www.khaama.com/2-suicide-bombers-and-a-child-killed-in-kandahar-clash-02713>

- **Pentagon: terrorists threatening to control 40% of Afghanistan**

A just-released Pentagon report suggests Afghanistan is spiraling toward civil war with the number of terrorist attacks, casualties and displacements of Afghans hitting record highs, thanks in no small part to former President Obama’s precipitous withdrawal of US combat troops starting in 2014.

More details:

<http://www.frontpagemag.com/fpm/266593/pentagon-terrorists-threatening-control-40-paul-sperry>

- **Pakistan Promises to Tighten Control of Border with Iran**

Pakistan’s Army has undertaken to bolster its control over the areas bordering Iran, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said after a visit to Islamabad.

More details:

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2017/05/04/1397498/pakistan-promises-to-tighten-control-of-border-with-iran>

- **Pakistani PM to enhance Pakistan-Sri Lanka cooperation**

Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif yesterday called for further enhancing cooperation between Pakistan and Sri Lanka in various fields and working jointly for achieving regional peace and stability, The News reported.

More details:

<http://www.dailynews.lk/2017/05/04/local/115016/pakistani-pm-enhance-pakistan-sri-lanka-cooperation>

- **Experts demanded of the Pakistan International community to urge upon India to resolve Kashmir dispute**

Former Ambassador Ali Sarwar Naqvi has demanded of the international community to urge upon India to help resolve all outstanding issues including Kashmir dispute through dialogue with Pakistan.

More details:

<http://www.app.com.pk/experts-demanded-of-the-pakistan-international-community-to-urge-upon-india-to-resolve-kashmir-dispute/>

- **China is repeating the West's mistakes in Pakistan**

It's far from certain that China's CPEC investments will produce a more stable and prosperous Pakistan

More details:

<http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/4HdiMVeSEXe1XxcGfSJWml/China-is-repeating-the-Wests-mistakes-in-Pakistan.html>

10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Turkey 'took precautions before' Iraq, Syria airstrikes**

Turkish military has clarified it shared all necessary information with civilian and military representatives before carrying out airstrikes in northern Iraq's Sinjar Mountain region and northern Syria on April 25. In a statement released Wednesday, Turkish General Staff said all necessary precautions had been taken and maximum care was ensured to avoid casualties among official personnel and civilians in the airstrikes.

More Details:

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/turkey/188941/turkish-election-board-files-complaint-against-critics>

- **NA body on defence production visits Turkey to promote ties**

A delegation of the Standing Committee on Defence Production of the National Assembly of Pakistan, currently visiting Turkey, has held wide-ranging meetings with Turkey's parliamentary leadership. Led by the Chairman of Standing Committee on Defence Production, Khawaja Sohail Mansoor, the delegation includes Members National Assembly, Muhammad Khan Daha, Syed Muhammad Ashiq Hussain Shah, Muhammad Moeen Wattoo, Amra Khan, Mir Shabbir Ali Bijarani, Muhammad Tallal Chaudhry, and Sajid Hussain Turi.

More Details:

<http://www.app.com.pk/na-body-on-defence-production-visits-turkey-to-promote-ties/>

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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