



MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

GÜNLÜK ORTADOĐU BÜLTENİ

Domestic Policy in the Middle East Countries

Bölge Ülkelerinde İç Siyaset

The Restructuring Procees of Iraq

Irak'ın Yeniden Yapılanma Süreci

Energy Security

Enerji Güvenliđi

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Peace Process

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Ethnic and Secterian Groups

Etnik ve Mezhepsel Gruplar

Non State Actors

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Relations with the West

Batı'yla İliőkiler

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08 MARCH 2017

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1. IRAQ

- **72,000 displaced Iraqis attempt to return to recaptured areas of Mosul**

At least 72,000 displaced people have returned to newly-recaptured parts of Mosul, Iraq's Ministry of Displacement and Migration said Monday.

More details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/iraq-72000-displaced-iraqis-attempt-return-recaptured-areas-mosul-946956>

- **After advance deep into Mosul, daring raid turns into IS ambush**

Hours after Mosul's municipal complex was declared liberated by the country's top military commanders and US-led coalition officials, the wounded began pouring into a small frontline clinic just a few hundred meters away.

More details:

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/after-advance-deep-into-mosul-daring-raid-turns-into-is-ambush/>

- **Iran Lost 2,100 Fighters in Syria, Iraq**

The last count of the human losses that Iran suffered in Syria and Iraq until today is around 2,100 casualties, according to an Iranian official.

More details:

<http://english.aawsat.com/2017/03/article55368881/iran-lost-2100-fighters-syria-iraq>

- **Trump removed Iraq from travel ban in recognition of fight against Isis**

Iraq has been taken off of the list of countries from which travelers are banned from entering the US and State Department representative Mark Toner confirmed a factor in the decision was assistance from Iraq in fighting the Islamic State terrorist group.

More details:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/iraq-muslim-travel-ban-removal-trump-a7617106.html>

- **Iraqi troops find Assyrian treasures in network of Isis tunnels**

Two great winged bulls carved from stone and dating from the Assyrian empire have been found intact under the ground of Mosul. But as fighting rages to evict the Isis from the main city in northern Iraq, it will be a race against time to save the archaeological treasures uncovered in the tunnels.

More details:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/08/mosul-iraqi-troops-find-assyrian-treasures-in-network-of-isis-tunnels>

- **Trump's first victory in deportation feud is Iraq**

Iraq earned its way out of President Trump's "extreme vetting" doghouse in large part because it agreed to play ball on another of the president's big goals: getting countries to take back their illegal immigrant criminals.

More details:

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/mar/7/iraq-removed-from-travel-ban-list-ater-agreeing-to/>

- **Troops retake Mosul govt HQ**

Iraqi forces on Tuesday recaptured the main government building in Mosul, the central bank branch and the museum where three years ago the militants filmed themselves destroying priceless statues.

More details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1064991/middle-east>

- **US troops train Iraqi forces in key war skills**

Iraqi soldiers maneuver sections of floating bridge on a muddy, man-made lake as American trainers instruct them in skills that have played a key role in the war against militants.

More details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1064906/middle-east>

- **Iraq PM set to meet with US president this month: White House**

Iraq's Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi is set to visit the United States and meet with President Donald Trump in Washington this month, the White House says.

More details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/03/08/513449/Haider-alAbadi-visits-Donald-Trump-in-Washington>

- **IS Photographer of Wilayat Diyala killed northeast of Baqubah**

Head of the Security Committee in Diyala Provincial Council Sadik al-Husseini announced on Tuesday, that the so-called Islamic State's photographer of Wilayat Diyala died, after being wounded in clashes with Iraqi army. Husseini said in a press statement, "The photographer of Wilayat Diyala in the Islamic State group died of his wounds, after being injured in clashes with army forces in the vicinity of Sheikhi village, northeast of Baqubah."

More Details:

<http://www.iraqnews.com/iraq-war/photographer-wilayat-diyala-killed-northeast-baqubah/>

- **Counter-Terrorism force says 60% of western Mosul recaptured**

Iraqi government forces recaptured 60 percent of the western side of Mosul since operations to clear the region from the Islamic State began in February, according to the commander of the army's Counter-Terrorism Force.

More details:

<http://www.iraqnews.com/iraq-war/counter-terrorism-force-says-60-western-mosul-recaptured/>

- **Funding Facility for Stabilization: 350 projects, \$300m**

The Annual Report 2016 presents progress with implementation of the Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS) between 01 January and 31 December 2016. During 2016, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) implemented a high impact, pragmatic approach to stabilization that improves citizen-government ties and revitalizes public trust in the Iraqi Government.

More details:

<http://www.iraqdailyjournal.com/story-z14911584>

- **Daesh foreign militants trying to flee Mosul, Iraqi forces to prevail, US general says**

A US general in the international coalition in Iraq says that the Daesh terror group forces defending western Mosul are disorganised and some foreign militants are trying to leave the city.

More details:

<http://jordantimes.com/news/region/daesh-foreign-militants-trying-flee-mosul-iraqi-forces-prevail-us-general-says>

- **Grassroots, green shoots**

An annual event shows what the Iraqi people want most of all: peace. Young people in Baghdad organise a major street carnival to set positive images against the daily news of violence and war. The event has also given rise to regular participation in civil society.

More details:

<http://en.qantara.de/content/baghdad-city-of-peace-carnival-grassroots-green-shoots>

- **Kurds ask for stronger Canadian diplomatic presence in northern Iraq**

Canada is being asked to upgrade its diplomatic footprint in northern Iraq, as the Kurdish government presses for closer economic and political ties to accompany Canada's sizable military presence.

More details:

<http://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/kurds-ask-for-stronger-canadian-diplomatic-presence-in-northern-iraq-1.3314790>

- **Iraqi PM Abadi meets President Barzani in Erbil**

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi on Tuesday visited Erbil to discuss bilateral relations with the Kurdistan Region President. The Iraqi PM arrived at the Erbil International Airport in the capital of the Kurdistan Region and was welcomed by Masoud Barzani, the Kurdistan Region President, and other government officials.

More details:

<http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/2cc42bc3-9da0-46f5-876f-ec2a427ccab2/Iraqi-PM-Abadi-meets-President-Barzani-in-Erbil->

- **Abadi and Barzani urge political unity across all parties in Iraq**

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi visited Erbil Tuesday afternoon where he met with Kurdish President Masoud Barzani to discuss strengthening ties between the two governments.

More details:

<http://www.rudaw.net/english/kurdistan/070320173>

2. SYRIA

- **Deputy Foreign Minister of the Philippines visits Aleppo city**

Aleppo Governor Hussein Diab discussed on Tuesday with Deputy Foreign Minister of the Philippines Jesus I. Yabes and the accompanying delegation means to activate relations.

More Details:

<http://sana.sy/en/?p=101559>

- **West real obstacle to political settlement in Syria**

Syrian deputy FM Faisal Mekdad while hailing Iran and Russia for military support against terrorism, said the real obstacle to Syria's political settlement has always been western countries for backing terrorists.

More Details:

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/122957/West-real-obstacle-to-political-settlement-in-Syria>

- **Syrian Army Restores Control over Jazal Oil Field in Homs**

Army units, in cooperation with supporting forces, reportedly launched a successful operation to control Jazal oil field in Homs, central Syria, while driving out ISIS organization from Tadmur, in Palmyra, killing a number of its mercenaries.

More Details:

<http://www.plenglish.com/index.php?o=rn&id=10186&SEO=syrian-army-restores-control-over-jazal-oil-field-in-homs>

- **Syria paying price for not bowing to US, allies: Pundit**

The United States along with its Western and regional allies have imposed a devastating war on Syria, because the Damascus government and the Syrian people have tried to maintain their independence, says Edward Corrigan, a human rights attorney from Ontario.

More Details:

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/03/07/513392/Syria-Children-US-Daesh-Corrigan>

- **Syria war: IS 'loses key' Aleppo water station to army forces**

Syrian government forces have retaken a key water pumping station in Aleppo, a monitoring group said. Residents have been without mains water for nearly two months since the so-called Islamic State group cut it off.

More Details:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39199023>

- **Syria's Palmyra re-taken but remains in ruins**

Syria's Palmyra, a UNESCO Heritage site, was re-taken from ISIL by Syrian Army forces last week. But the ancient city remains in ruins after ISIL destruction. The city has changed hands several times since first being invaded by ISIL in 2015, and has experienced widespread destruction of the ancient monuments.

More Details:

http://www.euronews.com/2017/03/07/syria-s-palmyra-re-taken-but-remains-in-ruins?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+euronews%2Fen%2Fnews+%28euronews+-+news+-+en%29

- **Delivers Over 8 Tonnes of Aid to Syrian Civilians in 24 Hours**

The Russian center for Syrian reconciliation has delivered over eight tonnes of humanitarian aid to over 2,800 Syrian civilians in the past 24 hours, the Russian Defense Ministry said Wednesday.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201703081051362073-russia-deliver-syrian-air-aid/>

- **EU to host Syria aid conference in April**

The European Union announced Tuesday that it will host an aid conference on April 5 to address the impact of the crisis in war-battered Syria.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/europe/eu-to-host-syria-aid-conference-in-april/766040>

- **Arab league holds back restoration of Syrian membership**

Syria's return to the Arab League after six years of membership suspension is untimely and it needs more deliberation and development, the Arab League (AL) chief told reporters in a press conference on Tuesday.

More Details:

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/08/c_136110262.htm

3. IRAN

- **Claims of Iran arms in Yemen ‘completely baseless’**

In a meeting with a Swiss foreign ministry official in Tehran, Iranian Parliament's General Director for International Affairs categorically rejected claims that Tehran ships arms to Yemen.

More Details:

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/124080/Claims-of-Iran-arms-in-Yemen-completely-baseless>

- **Zarif says banking ties with Indonesia growing**

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Tuesday that Iran-Indonesia cooperation is growing in various areas, especially in banking sphere.

More Details:

<http://www.tehrantimes.com/news/411740/Zarif-says-banking-ties-with-Indonesia-growing>

- **Iranian MPs in Bosnia**

A parliamentary delegation headed by the Chairman of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee Alaeddin Boroujerdi left Tehran for Sarajevo on Tuesday.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82455923/>

- **Iran welcomes Slovakian firms' investments**

Iran's First Vice President Is'haq Jahangiri said on Tuesday that Tehran welcomes investment of Slovakian companies in Iran.

More Details:

<http://www.iran-daily.com/News/188914.html>

- **Iranian-European bank to be established in EU soon**

By Emil Ilgar – Trend: An Iranian-European joint bank would be established in EU in early spring, Ahmad Haji Mohammadi, the head of international department of Sarmayeh (Investment) bank told Mehr.

More Details:

<http://en.trend.az/iran/business/2729361.html>

- **Iranian MP Calls for Revision of Laws to Reduce Number of Prisoners**

An Iranian MP has criticised the country's laws that authorise judges to easily issue arrest warrants at will and under any conditions, calling for the restriction of such a privilege which has led to a significant increase in the number of detainees.

More Details:

<http://ifpnews.com/exclusive/2017/03/iranian-mp-calls-revision-laws-reduce-number-prisoners/>

- **VP: Work on Joint Oil, Gas Fields, Iran's Top Priority**

Iran's First Vice-President Eshaq Jahangiri referred to development of the oil and gas fields that Iran shares with the neighbors as a top priority in the 'Resistance Economy' agenda.

More Details:

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2017/03/08/1349104/vp-work-on-joint-oil-gas-fields-iran-s-top-priority>

- **U.N. Special Rapporteur States Little Improvement in the Human Rights Situation in Iran**

Ms. Asma Jahangir was appointed as Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran by The Human Rights Council of the U.N., during its 33rd Session. After completion of her study, she said she regrets that her study does not reveal any notable improvement in the situation of human rights in the country.

More Details:

<http://www.ncr-iran.org/en/news/human-rights/22310-u-n-special-rapporteur-states-little-improvement-in-the-human-rights-situation-in-iran>

- **France to Give Loans to Companies Investing in Iran**

Finance Minister Michel Sapin announced that Paris is working on plans to issue direct loans to companies that want to invest in Iran.

More Details:

<http://ifpnews.com/news/business/money-finances/2017/03/france-give-loans-companies-investing-iran/>

- **Eurasian Economic Union agrees to form free-trade zone with Iran**

The prime ministers of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) have signed a directive ordering preparations for a temporary agreement on forming a free-trade zone with Iran.

More Details:

<http://iran-daily.com/News/188936.html>

4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **Israeli forces set up checkpoints around Bethlehem**

Israeli forces erected several military checkpoints at the entrances of the occupied West Bank district of Bethlehem on Tuesday evening. Israeli forces closed the Container checkpoint in northeastern Bethlehem, stopping Palestinian vehicles leaving the district and searched vehicles and passengers, causing heavy traffic to develop.

More Details

<http://www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?ID=775848>

- **Army launches new effort to end combat soldiers' reliance on families, donors for gear**

In the late 1940's, Jewish women across the United States knitted black hats and scarves to donate to the soldiers of the fledgling Israel Defense Forces.

More Details

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/army-launches-new-effort-to-end-combat-soldiers-reliance-on-families-donors-for-gear/>

- **US envoy makes bid for reviving Israeli-Palestinian talks**

US Ambassador Nikki Haley discussed reviving Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations during her first meeting with the Palestinian envoy to the United Nations on Tuesday. Haley tweeted after her talks with Ambassador Riyad Mansour that the Palestinians should "meet with Israel in direct negotiations rather than looking to the UN to deliver results that can only be achieved through the two parties."

More Details

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/3/8/us-envoy-makes-bid-for-reviving-israeli-palestinian-talks>

- **No rushing the peace process**

This palm-fringed oasis in the Jordan Valley has been continuously inhabited for 10,000 years. That justifies it billing itself as the "oldest city in the world." Officers of the Palestinian National Security Force (NSF) headquartered here will proudly tell you that it's now among the safest places in the Arab Middle East, and that their paramilitary organization is an important reason why. They're also grateful for the training, arms, ammunition, equipment and even buildings being provided by American taxpayers.

More Details

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/mar/7/israel-palestine-peace-process-cannot-be-rushed/>

- **Palestinians Mourn the Death of 'Intellectual-Activist' Executed by Israel**

Palestinians are mourning the death of a young Palestinian political activist and intellectual who was executed by Israeli forces in the early hours of Monday March 6, 2017 this week at his hiding place in Ramallah, Occupied West Bank.

More Details

<https://globalvoices.org/2017/03/08/palestinians-mourn-the-death-of-intellectual-activist-executed-by-israel/>

- **B'tselem: Israel does not Compensate Palestinians for Collateral Damage**

For more than 20 years, Israel has evaded compensating Palestinians for damages incurred as a result of IDF actions, according to a B'Tselem report released on Wednesday. Israel has "taken measures to guarantee a nearly blanket exemption from its obligation under international law to pay compensation to Palestinians harmed by its security forces," the report said.

More Details

<http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/BTselem-Israel-does-not-compensate-Palestinians-for-collateral-damage-483551>

- **Transatlantic Security Cooperation in the Middle East**

The Middle East presents a wide array of challenges that raise fundamental questions about how the transatlantic community should calibrate its approach to promote stability in a volatile region.¹ These include: the rise of the Islamic State (ISIL), which was fueled in part by the brutal Syrian civil war and the limitations of the state authority in Iraq; the migration and humanitarian crises resulting from the wars in Syria, and to a lesser extent, Libya; the aftershocks of the 2011 Arab uprisings that have brought on an authoritarian restoration to Egypt, a fragile democracy in Tunisia, and a civil war in Libya; balancing the enforcement of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Iran while contesting Iran's continued support for terrorist groups in the region and the Houthi rebels in Yemen; and the continued stalemate in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

More Details

<https://www.cnas.org/publications/reports/transatlantic-security-cooperation-in-the-middle-east>

- **Israel denies redress to thousands of Palestinians**

Israel has given itself almost complete immunity from paying compensation in cases where its soldiers have killed, injured or disabled Palestinian civilians, an Israeli human rights group has warned. In a report released on Wednesday, entitled Getting Off Scot-Free, B'Tselem said that Israel had violated its obligations under international law by denying many thousands of Palestinians redress in Israeli civil courts.

More Details

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/03/israel-denies-redress-thousands-palestinians-170307112623995.html>

- **Israel effectively bars compensation to Palestinians: Claims for damages down 95%**

Over the past twenty years, Israel has taken measures to guarantee a nearly blanket exemption from its obligation under international law to pay compensation to Palestinians harmed by its security forces.

More Details

http://www.btselem.org/press_releases/201703_getting_off_scot_free

- **What's New in the West Bank?**

Palestinians consider Jewish settlements in the West Bank a breach of international law on how nations should treat territories captured in war.

More Details

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-03-08/trump-aims-to-build-a-mideast-peace-amid-a-blaze-of-settlements>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **World Bank to increase funds to Lebanon**

The World Bank has decided to increase funds to Lebanon and reduce interest rates, the organization's Vice President Hafez Ghanem said Tuesday. Ghanem's remarks were made during a meeting with President Michel Aoun at Baabda Palace. The meeting was also attended by Change and Reform bloc MP Ibrahim Kanaan, who also heads the parliamentary Finance and Budget Committee.

More Details

<http://www.albawaba.com/business/world-bank-increase-funds-lebanon-947174>

- **Hariri discusses infrastructure investments with World Bank Vice President**

Prime Minister, Saad Hariri, received on Tuesday night at the Grand Serail the World Bank's Vice President for the Middle East and North Africa, Hafez Ghanem, heading a delegation.

More Details

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/76282/Hariri-discusses-infrastructure-investments-with-World-Bank-Vice-President>

- **Aoun Resolves Controversy over His Stances on Electoral Law**

President Michel Aoun is expected to issue a statement to resolve the controversy over refraining from signing a decree inviting the electorate bodies to begin preparations for the looming parliamentary polls, and the interpretations that spread about his "preference for vacuum at the parliament," al-Akhbar daily reported on Wednesday.

More Details

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/226611-report-aoun-resolves-controversy-over-stances-on-electoral-law>

- **'Lebanese women's time has begun' — we hope so**

In an official ceremony, Lebanon launched last week the structure of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, whose aim is to improve the condition of Lebanese women. Prime Minister Saad Hariri said it aims to correct the imbalance against women, adding: "Lebanese women's time has begun."

More Details

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1064716>

- **Mashnouq Sees 'No Possibility' to Agree on Electoral Law, Expects 'Brief' Extension**

Interior Minister Nouhad al-Mashnouq announced Tuesday that he sees "no possibility" to agree on a new electoral law before the expiry of the deadlines, noting that any extension of the parliament's term will be "brief" and for technical reasons.

More Details

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/226605-mashnouq-sees-no-possibility-to-agree-on-electoral-law-expects-brief-extension>

- **Turkey-Jordan vow to continue joint counterterrorism efforts**

As Turkey and Jordan agreed to further enhance cooperation in every possible field, speaking during a joint press conference held yesterday at the Çankaya Palace with Jordan's Prime Minister Hani Al-Mulki, Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım vowed to continue joint efforts with Jordan in combating terror.

More Details

<https://www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2017/03/08/turkey-jordan-vow-to-continue-joint-counterterrorism-efforts>

- **Turkish PM thanks Jordan for solidarity against FETO**

Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım Tuesday expressed Ankara's appreciation for the way Jordan supported Turkey following the deadly July 2016 coup attempt which martyred 249 people and injured thousands.

More Details

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/turkish-pm-thanks-jordan-for-solidarity-against-feto/765995>

- **'Tackling poverty, unemployment key to fight extremism'**

Ending marginalisation of various groups of people in conflict-ridden regions of the Middle East and addressing issues like poverty and unemployment are key to fight extremism, a top Jordanian official said here today.

More Details

<http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-tackling-poverty-unemployment-key-to-fight-extremism-2345517>

- **Jordan real estate market stable after government measures**

When faced with stalling growth on the back of oversupply, Jordan's government came into the rescue of the country's real estate market by introducing tax incentives. As developers also took measures to alleviate the oversupply the market witnessed in 2016, prices have remained stable throughout the year and over the quarter, according to the latest report from consultancy Asteco.

More Details

<http://ameinfo.com/construction-real-estate/residential/jordan-real-estate-market-stable-government-measures/>

6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Saudi King the target for Yemeni suspects**

Four Yemenis who were nabbed by Malaysian police last month were planning to harm the Saudi Arabian King and his entourage who visited Malaysia last week, police chief Khalid Abu Bakar said yesterday.

More Details:

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/saudi-king-the-target-for-yemeni-suspects>

- **Policeman shot dead in eastern Saudi Arabia**

A Saudi policeman was shot dead by an unknown culprit on Tuesday in Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, Sabq local online news reported.

More Details:

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/08/c_136110221.htm

- **Foreign Minister meets Russian ambassador to Yemen**

Foreign Minister Hisham Sharaf met on Tuesday in Sana'a with the Acting Russian Embassy to Yemen.

More Details:

<http://www.sabanews.net/en/news458264.htm>

- **U.S. Strike Kills Former Guantanamo Detainee in Yemen as raids on Al-Qaeda Continue under Trump**

The Pentagon said Monday that the military killed a former Guantanamo Bay detainee in a Yemen strike on March 2 targeting Al-Qaeda's most dangerous faction.

More Details:

<http://europe.newsweek.com/us-strike-kills-former-guantanamo-detainee-yemen-raids-564599?rm=eu>

- **Qatar confirms combating terrorism requires preventive measures**

The State of Qatar has confirmed that facing terrorism needs to follow a comprehensive and integrated approach based on security, political, economic and social vision and to take preventive measures to limit the conditions conducive to spread this phenomenon.

More Details:

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302601356>

- **Qatar slams allegations over role in Libya**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed strong condemnation and rejection of allegations about Qatar's involvement in the internal conflicts between the Libyan parties.

More Details:

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/07/03/2017/Qatar-slams-allegations-over-role-in-Libya>

- **Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi visits interactive exhibition on sidelines of Mohamed bin Zayed Majlis for Future Generations**

His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, visited an interactive exhibition held alongside the Mohammed bin Zayed Majlis for Future Generations on Tuesday, following its launch at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre, ADNEC.

More Details:

<http://www.emirates247.com/news/emirates/crown-prince-of-abu-dhabi-visits-interactive-exhibition-on-sidelines-of-mohamed-bin-zayed-majlis-for-future-generations-2017-03-08-1.649321>

- **UAE Expects 4% Growth in 2017**

Eng. Sultan bin Saeed Al Mansouri, UAE's minister of Economy, has expected that the national economy will achieve a growth rate of between 3.5 to 4 percent in 2017, amid an accelerated activity in vital economic sectors and growth of investment attractiveness, which will lead to many achievements in national economic indicators.

More Details:

<http://english.aawsat.com/2017/03/article55368891/uae-expects-4-growth-2017>

- **Bahrain non-oil growth hits 4.7% in 3rd quarter of 2016**

Real growth in the non-oil sector of Bahrain's economy reached an annual rate of 4.7% in the third quarter of 2016. This marked a clear acceleration from the 3.6% pace seen during Q2, according to the latest figures published in the Economic Development Board's Bahrain Economic Quarterly. Overall, during the first three quarters of 2016 the Bahraini economy expanded by a real 3.6% over the corresponding period in 2015. This compares to headline growth of 2.9% during 2015 as a whole.

More Details:

<http://saudigazette.com.sa/business/bahrain-non-oil-growth-hits-4-7-3rd-quarter-2016/>

- **Oman investors explore business opportunities in Indonesia**

Following Saudi Arabia, as many as 33 business people from Oman are visiting Indonesia to explore investment opportunities in Southeast Asia's biggest economy.

More Details:

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2017/03/08/oman-investors-explore-business-opportunities-in-indonesia.html>

7. EGYPT

- **German Chancellor visits Cairo amid severe human rights violations by Egyptian Junta**

The German Chancellor Angela Merkel visits Cairo amid reports of severe human rights violations by the Egyptian Junta led by Field Marshal Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi who overthrew President Mohammad Morsi, the first democratically President of Egypt in 2013.

More Details

<http://www.milligazette.com/news/15442-german-chancellor-visits-cairo-amid-severe-human-rights-violations-by-egyptian-junta>

- **Egyptians protest over fears of bread subsidy cuts**

March 7 Hundreds of Egyptians protested around the country on Tuesday, blocking roads and surrounding government offices, after a change to the way bread rations are managed raised fears that the government was cutting food subsidies by the back door. Bread subsidies are an explosive issue in Egypt, where more than 70 million people receive state rations.

More Details

<http://www.reuters.com/article/egypt-protests-bread-idUSL5N1GK6FP?rpc=401&>

- **LNA said to have 5,000 troops at Brega while Hafter pays Cairo flying visit**

The Libyan National Army is said to have massed 5,000 troops with tanks and artillery in the Brega area in preparation for a second counterattack on the Ras Lanuf and Sidra export terminals lost to Benghazi Defence Brigades-led forces on Friday and Saturday.

More Details

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/03/07/lna-said-to-have-5000-troops-at-brega-while-hafter-pays-cairo-flying-visit/>

- **Joint biz council to hold Bahraini-Egyptian Expo**

Board member of the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) and Bahraini-Egyptian Joint Business Council will be holding a Bahraini-Egyptian Expo on 16-18 May 2017 in the Kingdom.

More Details

<http://www.newsofbahrain.com/viewNews.php?ppId=31101&TYPE=Posts&pid=21&MNU=2&SUB=50>

- **Egypt's Coptic Christians: A perennial minority**

Recent militant attacks on Coptic Christians in the restive Sinai Peninsula have brought Egypt's sizeable minority under the spotlight. Scores of Christian families have fled the desert peninsula in recent days to nearby provinces in the wake of attacks in which six Copts were killed.

More Details

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/infographic-egypt-s-coptic-christians-a-perennial-minority/766150>

- **Egypt eyes tourists' return, Saudi aims to soften austerity**

Investments in airport security and a cheaper Egyptian pound could result in the return of tourists to Egypt, the country's tourism minister said. Here are seven business stories you need to know today.

More Details

<http://ameinfo.com/money/other-money/daily-brief-egypt-eyes-tourists-return-saudi-aims-to-soften-austerity/>

- **Riots break out across Egypt as government cuts bread rations**

Hundreds of Egyptians protested across the country on Tuesday in response to a change in the distribution of bread rations that many are reliant on. Protesters blocked roads and surrounded government buildings amid fears that the government was cutting food rations by stealth, as some were left without their ration.

More Details

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/riots-break-out-across-egypt-government-cuts-bread-rations-947214>

- **Egyptian court jails broadcast content pirate**

The Middle East pay-TV operator has welcomed the ruling of the Economic Court of Alexandria, who found the defendant guilty of two charges of setting up an illegal broadcast network and breaking intellectual property laws. He was fined EP100,000.

More Details

<http://www.rapidtvnews.com/2017030846437/egyptian-court-jails-broadcast-content-pirate.html#axzz4aiplaWMT>

- **World Bank: ongoing works on four Egyptian waste management, energy schemes**

The World Bank is currently working on four initiatives for agricultural waste management and solar energy in two Upper Egyptian cities; Qenna and Sohag, an official in the bank said Tuesday.

More Details

<http://en.amwalalghad.com/business/banks/55493-world-bank-ongoing-works-on-four-egyptian-waste-management-energy-schemes.html>

8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Algeria to work for Arab League reform, peaceful resolution of crises**

Algeria will work, during its term as chair of the Arab Foreign Ministers Council, for the reform of the Arab League and the peaceful settlement of Arab crises, through inclusive dialogue, the relaunch of political process and national reconciliation, said Tuesday in Cairo Minister of Maghreb Affairs, African Union and Arab League Abdelkader Messahel.

More details:

<http://en.aps.dz/algeria/17193-algeria-to-work-for-arab-league-reform,-peaceful-resolution-of-crises>

- **Tensions between Algeria and Morocco at Arab League**

Algeria rejected calls for Morocco's return to the African Union to be hailed in the Arab League on Sunday, a diplomatic source said.

More details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170307-tensions-between-algeria-and-morocco-at-arab-league/>

- **Ambassadors appeal for calm after bloody Libya clashes**

Western ambassadors have called for calm in Libya following bloody clashes between rival factions over lucrative oil terminals.

More details:

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/3/8/ambassadors-appeal-for-calm-after-bloody-libya-clashes>

- **Libyan parliament slams terror attacks on oil ports**

Libyan eastern-based parliament spokesman said on Tuesday that parliament held a session on Tuesday to discuss the current clashes between the army and militias.

More details:

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/08/c_136110471.htm

- **Libya's UN-Backed Forces Take Control of Key Oil Ports, TV Says**

Libya's United Nations-backed forces took control of two of the nation's biggest oil ports on Tuesday, after clashes between rival armed groups led to a halt in shipments.

More details:

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-03-07/libya-s-un-backed-forces-take-control-of-key-oil-ports-al-nabaa>

- **Ecowas Pitch: Morocco can be India's key to cracking West Africa**

In yet another significant development, the North African nation of Morocco has applied to join the Economic Community of West African States or Ecowas.

More details:

<http://blogs.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/talkingturkey/ecowas-pitch-morocco-can-be-indias-key-to-cracking-west-africa/>

- **Tunisia PM hails Ben Guerdane battle as 'turning point'**

The battle against jihadists in Ben Guerdane a year ago was a "turning point" for Tunisia, Prime Minister Youssef Chahed said on Tuesday during a visit to commemorate the anniversary.

More details:

<http://www.france24.com/en/20170307-tunisia-pm-hails-ben-guerdane-battle-turning-point>

- **US State Dep. Releases its Annual Report on Human Rights in Morocco**

The US State Department's annual Human Rights Report has been released. The results for Morocco primarily reflect areas needing improvement but also acknowledge some of the positive steps the government has taken in key areas.

More details:

<https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2017/03/210298/us-state-dep-releases-its-annual-report-on-human-rights-in-morocco/>

- **LNA said to have 5,000 troops at Brega while Hafter pays Cairo flying visit**

The Libyan National Army is said to have massed 5,000 troops with tanks and artillery in the Brega area in preparation for a second counterattack on the Ras Lanuf and Sidra export terminals lost to Benghazi Defence Brigades-led forces on Friday and Saturday.

More details:

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/03/07/lna-said-to-have-5000-troops-at-brega-while-hafter-pays-cairo-flying-visit/>

- **Spanish Foreign minister on working visit to Algeria from Wednesday**

Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Alfonso Dastis Quecedo will pay a working visit to Algeria on Wednesday and Thursday, said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in a statement on Tuesday.

More details:

<http://en.aps.dz/algeria/17188-spanish-foreign-minister-on-working-visit-to-algeria-from-wednesday>

- **Ambassador urges Scottish firms to look at oil and gas opportunities in Algeria**

Mention Algeria in oil and gas circles these days and the deadly terrorist attack on the In Amenas gas plant more than four years ago is likely to spring to mind.

More details:

<https://www.energyvoice.com/oilandgas/africa/133298/ambassador-urges-scottish-firms-look-oil-gas-opportunities-algeria/>

9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **Govt arranges free transportation for passengers returning from Pakistan**

The Afghan government has arranged free transportation for the passengers who were stranded on the other side of the Durand Line amid a deadlock between Islamabad and Kabul following a series of deadly terrorist attacks.

More details:

<http://www.khaama.com/govt-arranges-free-transportation-for-passengers-returning-from-pakistan-02354>

- **Pak opposition nails Sharif regime on 'unwise' border closure with Afghanistan**

A debate in Pakistan's parliament turned acrimonious on Tuesday, when the opposition accused the Nawaz Sharif-led PML-N federal government of being unwise and illogical in sealing the border with Afghanistan, and demanded a for revisiting the country's foreign policy and appointment of a foreign minister.

More details:

<http://www.aninews.in/newsdetail-NA/MzAzMjA1/pak-opposition-nails-sharif-regime-on-039-unwise-039-border-closure-with-afghanistan.html>

- **At least two killed in attack on Kabul military hospital**

A military hospital in the Afghan capital of Kabul has come under attack, with at least two people killed and 25 others injured, according to government officials.

More details:

<http://us.cnn.com/2017/03/08/asia/kabul-military-hospital-attack/index.html>

- **Indian sentenced to 15 years in US prison for plotting attack on Indo-Pak border**

An Indian citizen residing in northern Nevada was sentenced to 15 years in prison in the United States after pleading guilty to plotting terror attacks near the India-Pakistan border.

More details:

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1349355/indian-sentenced-15-years-us-prison-plotting-attack-indo-pak-border/>

- **25th anniversary of Ukraine-Pakistan diplomatic relations on March 16**

The Ukrainian Ambassador, Volodymyr Lakomov has said that the task for Pakistan and Ukraine is to create more favorable conditions for building up mutually beneficial business cooperation for the time being.

More details:

<http://www.app.com.pk/25th-anniversary-of-ukraine-pakistan-diplomatic-relations-on-march-16/>

- **Qatar seeks Pakistan Army assistance over FIFA World Cup 2022 security**

Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani has expressed his desire to learn from Pakistan Army's experience in security domain and sought their assistance during forthcoming Football World Cup in 2022 in Qatar including provision of manpower.

More details:

<http://www.newindianexpress.com/world/2017/mar/08/qatar-seeks-pakistan-army-assistance-over-fifa-world-cup-2022-security-1579053.html>

- **Constitution of Pakistan supports equal status of women, says PM Nawaz Sharif**

Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif has stated that the Government of Pakistan was working to ensure broad-based inclusion of women rights in every sphere and at all levels.

More details:

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/03/08/constitution-of-pakistan-supports-equal-status-of-women-says-pm-nawaz-sharif/>

- **Nawaz Sharif punctuated importance of bilateral ties between Pakistan-Kuwait**

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Tuesday punctuated the importance of bilateral ties between Pakistan and Kuwait, said a press release on Tuesday at the Bayan palace.

More details:

<http://paktribune.com/news/Nawaz-Sharif-punctuated-importance-of-bilateral-ties-between-Pakistan-Kuwait-278396.html>

- **Afghanistan reform progress promising, as IMF commends**

Reports said that Afghanistan, after being judged by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to have made satisfactory progress on its reforms plan, is set to receive a further amount of up to €6m from the UN special agency.

More details:

<http://thekabultimes.gov.af/index.php/editorial/13288-afghanistan-reform-progress-promising-as-imf-commends.html>

- **Afghan Taliban Delegation Visits China at Beijing's Behest**

A five-member Afghan Taliban delegation reportedly visited China last month at the behest of Beijing, which has been participating in efforts to bring the terrorist group to the negotiating table with the Afghan government.

More details:

<http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2017/03/07/afghan-taliban-delegation-visits-china-beijings-behest/>

10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Turkey, Russia, US military chiefs hold talks in Antalya city**

Turkish, Russian and US military chiefs held talks on Tuesday in the southern Turkish city of Antalya to discuss regional issues including Iraq and Syria, the Turkish Army said.

More Details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1064896/middle-east>

- **Jordan seeks deeper ties with Turkey: PM**

In an exclusive interview with Anadolu Agency before holding talks with Turkish officials in Ankara on Tuesday, Jordanian Prime Minister Hani al-Mulki said the agenda of talks would be topped by bilateral relations, regional developments and the fight against terrorism.

More Details

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/jordan-seeks-deeper-ties-with-turkey-pm/765967>

- **Turkey helped save tens of thousands in Syria: UN**

The Turkish government has helped save tens of thousands of lives in Syria, Kevin Kennedy, the UN's regional humanitarian coordinator for the Syria crisis, said on Monday. Kennedy said several national and international nongovernmental organizations and the United Nations had delivered humanitarian assistance to war-torn Syrians.

More Details:

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/turkey/185894/turkey-helped-save-tens-of-thousands-in-syria-un>

- **Turkish jets destroy PKK targets in northern Iraq**

Turkish jets destroyed scores of caves and shelters used by PKK terrorists in northern Iraq early on Wednesday, the military said. The Turkish General Staff said in a statement that the air operation took place in northern Iraq's Zap and Avasin-Basyan regions at midnight and 1.30 a.m. (2100-2230GMT).

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/turkey/turkish-jets-destroy-pkk-targets-in-northern-iraq-766347>

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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