



# 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**

**Economy News**

**Ekonomi Haberleri**

**Peace Process**

**Barış Süreci**

**Ethnic and Secterian Groups**

**Etnik ve Mezhepsel Gruplar**

**Non State Actors**

**Devlet-dış Aktörler**

**Relations with the West**

**Batı'yla İlişkiler**

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**13 FEBRUARY 2017**

**NO: 2316**

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>1. IRAQ.....</b>   | <b>4</b>  |
| • Heavy Fighting near Tal Afar; 62 Killed in Iraq .....   | 4         |
| • Operations command: IS leader Baghdadi's injury in airstrike uncertain.....                     | 4         |
| • Trudy Rubin: Iraqis who helped U.S. now wait under immigration ban .....                        | 4         |
| • Bahrainis fighting in Iraq.....   | 5         |
| • Iraqi President Hails Tehran's Timely Support .....   | 5         |
| • Life under So-called Islamic State: Last Minute Police Round-Ups .....                          | 5         |
| • Baghdad tense after deadly clashes.....   | 5         |
| • Iraqi Kurdistan's KDP seeking new presidency term for Barzani: sources .....                    | 6         |
| • Al-Sadr threatens retaliation for followers' killing in Baghdad clashes.....                    | 6         |
| • Trump Moves Spark Iraqi Anger, Calls Against Future Alliance .....                              | 6         |
| • Fireballs and booby traps: on the front lines with the oil workers battling Islamic State ..... | 7         |
| • Sadr Warns from 'Dark End' in Iraq.....   | 7         |
| • Inter-Shiite tension mounts in Baghdad after clashes .....                                      | 7         |
| • Iraq's oil industry aspirations mired in fiction.....   | 7         |
| • Iraq's Sadrists protest to change election panel .....  | 8         |
| • A Severely Injured Iraqi toddler has been in the US for three months-without his parent.....    | 8         |
| • British Defense Secretary visits northern Iraq .....  | 8         |
| • World View: Supporters of al-Sadr and al-Maliki Turn Again to Violence in Baghdad .....         | 8         |
| <b>2. SYRIA.....</b>  | <b>9</b>  |
| • Syrian opposition reached agreement on single delegation creation in Geneva .....               | 9         |
| • Civilians injured as Hezbollah strikes Damascus .....   | 9         |
| • Nasrallah: Iran, Hezbollah support any form of ceasefire in Syria .....                         | 9         |
| • Erdogan says Turkish army close to taking IS-held town .....                                    | 10        |
| • Russian Defense Ministry says IS militants carrying explosives to Palmyra.....                  | 10        |
| • 'We can all come together and be friends;' friendship party for Syrian refugees .....           | 10        |
| • Relief, water and social projects in Sweida discussed with UN bodies.....                       | 10        |
| • Hezbollah supports every effort of reconciliation in Syria .....                                | 11        |
| • London Believes Assad Gov't Poses Security Threat for Both UK, Russia .....                     | 11        |
| <b>3. IRAN.....</b>   | <b>11</b> |
| • Tense times for the Iran nuclear deal .....   | 11        |
| • Many Iranians disillusioned over May presidential vote .....                                    | 11        |
| • Heidarian: Iran policy may positively impact human rights .....                                 | 12        |
| • Iran: The Rouhani Affiliated Faction Called for Major Overhaul Within the Ruling Power.....     | 12        |
| • Sweden seeks closer economic cooperation with Iran .....  | 12        |
| • Iran can become next major Bitcoin market by stopping to use US Dollar .....                    | 12        |
| • Iran's FM Hails Election of Steinmeier as German President.....                                 | 13        |
| • A new security order for Persian Gulf .....   | 13        |
| • Iran Navy aims to boost Bab el-Mandeb security: Admiral Sayyari .....                           | 13        |
| <b>4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE.....</b>   | <b>13</b> |

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| • Netanyahu: 'To think there are no limitations with Trump would be wrong' .....                 | 13        |
| • Likud Bashes Bennett over Pressure on PM.....  | 14        |
| • Israel delivers stop-work orders to Palestinians in northern Jordan Valley.....                | 14        |
| • Israeli soldiers detain three Palestinians in West Bank.....                                   | 14        |
| • Netanyahu to Tell Trump He Supports a Palestinian State .....                                  | 14        |
| • Israeli parliament 'harder than ever' for Arab MPs .....                                       | 15        |
| • Report: Israel Increases Prison Sentence for Tortured Palestinian Detainee .....               | 15        |
| • Two Israelis Injured in Palestinian Stone Throwing Attack .....                                | 15        |
| • Palestinians take to the streets to call for boycott of Israeli goods .....                    | 15        |
| • Netanyahu opposed UN post for former Palestinian prime minister Salam Fayyad .....             | 16        |
| <b>5. JORDAN and LEBANON.....</b>  | <b>16</b> |
| • EU provides 115 mln euros in support to Jordan .....   | 16        |
| • Gov't responds to national human rights centre report .....                                    | 16        |
| • Jordan takes part in World Government Summit in Dubai .....                                    | 16        |
| • Aoun bound for Egypt, Jordan.....  | 17        |
| • Leader of terrorist group Hezbollah: World will benefit by having 'idiot' Donald Trump in WH17 |           |
| • Lebanese IS Fighter First to be Stripped of Australian Citizenship.....                        | 17        |
| • Hezbollah leader supports Syria ceasefire and political talks .....                            | 17        |
| • Bassil from Byblos: Equity is Lebanon's special feature .....                                  | 18        |
| • Hezbollah urges Lebanon plan for Syria refugee return .....                                    | 18        |
| • LAU hosts Canadian Ambassador to Lebanon over informative press, human rights .....            | 18        |
| <b>6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA.....</b>   | <b>18</b> |
| • Bahrain-Turkey friendship hailed .....   | 18        |
| • Oman takes part in World Government Summit 2017 in Dubai .....                                 | 18        |
| • Qatar & Sweden set to expand areas of bilateral cooperation.....                               | 19        |
| • Arab coalition declares Yemen's Hodeidah a military zone .....                                 | 19        |
| • UN Secretary General: Islamophobia leads to terrorism .....                                    | 19        |
| • UAE bound Etihad flight diverted due to 'security threat' .....                                | 19        |
| • Yemenis mark six-year anniversary of uprising.....   | 20        |
| • Lessons and Propaganda from the Botched Raid on Yemen .....                                    | 20        |
| • Dr Al Sada is 'Oil Diplomacy Man' of 2016 .....  | 20        |
| <b>7. EGYPT.....</b>   | <b>20</b> |
| • Egypt to pay foreign companies ASAP - Minister .....   | 20        |
| • Egypt parliament's ethics committee recommends MP El-Sadat be stripped of membership           | 21        |
| • Three British trade missions visit Egypt to explore investment opportunities .....             | 21        |
| • President Aoun to CBC Egypt: Hezbollah weapons are complementary to army's action .....        | 21        |
| • Top court commissioners prepare report on Red Sea islands rulings.....                         | 21        |
| • Prosecutor General refers former State Council official to criminal trial over bribery charges | 22        |
| • Egypt cabinet reshuffle delayed to Tuesday: Parliamentary sources .....                        | 22        |
| • Leak reveals Egypt 'requested Israeli permission' for islands deal .....                       | 22        |
| • One of UK's 'biggest trade delegations' arrives in Egypt for investment, trade cooperation...  | 22        |
| • Egypt's defence minister discusses combatting terrorism with US Congress delegation.....       | 23        |
| <b>8. NORTH AFRICA.....</b>  | <b>23</b> |
| • Inauguration of Congo's new chancery in Algeria.....   | 23        |



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|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| • Mali seeks to further strengthen security cooperation with Algeria .....      | 23        |
| • Venezuelan National Arrested in Marrakech Airport Over Drug Trafficking ..... | 23        |
| • MAD 25 Million for Restoration of Casablanca's Sacré-Cœur Cathedral .....     | 24        |
| • Tunisian authorities detain six for 'recruiting terrorists abroad' .....      | 24        |
| • Abu-Ghazaleh Receives Outgoing Tunisian Ambassador to Jordan .....            | 24        |
| • Libya planned to build a 'mini-Dubai' with the help of Sheikh Mohammed .....  | 24        |
| • Libya unity government slams creation of rival 'national guard' .....         | 24        |
| • Tripoli Appeals Court to rule on Italy-Presidential Council MoU .....         | 25        |
| <b>9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN .....</b>  | <b>25</b> |
| • So called Governor of Taliban Warns the Leader of the Group .....             | 25        |
| • ANDSF gear up to thwart attacks, MoD .....                                    | 25        |
| • Taliban shadow district chief killed with his fighters in Paktika .....       | 25        |
| • Driver gunned down by Balkh governor's guards .....                           | 26        |
| • President Ghani's Condolence Message .....                                    | 26        |
| • Cultural Attaches in European Countries Discussed .....                       | 26        |
| • PM says govt focusing on development in Sindh .....                           | 26        |
| • Country isolated due to flawed policies: experts .....                        | 26        |
| • Are we stuck in suffocating embraces? .....                                   | 27        |
| • Top law schools teams compete in US-funded contest .....                      | 27        |
| <b>10. TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST .....</b>                                     | <b>27</b> |
| • Turkey, Bahrain to work for regional stability: Erdogan .....                 | 27        |
| • Erdogan: Turkey, FSA close to capturing Syria's Al-Bab .....                  | 27        |

## 1. IRAQ

- **Heavy Fighting near Tal Afar; 62 Killed in Iraq**

Gunfire erupted during protests at the elections commission office in Basra, but no casualties were reported. At least 62 were killed and 13 more were wounded: At least seven suicide bombers were killed during an attack on security forces in Ain al-Hisan, near Tal Afar. The militants were trying to wrest control of a highway from militia forces but failed. The road would have reconnected Mosul with Raqqa, Syria. There are reports of other casualties in the area. In Mosul; militants targeted three funerals, killing eight civilians.

More Details:

<http://original.antiwar.com/updates/2017/02/12/heavy-fighting-near-tal-afar-62-killed-in-iraq/>

- **Operations command: IS leader Baghdadi's injury in airstrike uncertain**

The Iraqi command leading the war against Islamic State has said recent reports about the injury of the group's supreme leader in an airstrike could not be confirmed. The Joint Operations Command said recent reports that Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi was seriously wounded in an airstrike in the province of Anbar could not be ascertained yet, adding that the command would make sure to announce it officially once confirmed.

More Details:

<http://www.iraqnews.com/iraq-war/operations-command-leader-baghdadis-injury-airstrike-uncertain/>

- **Trudy Rubin: Iraqis who helped U.S. now wait under immigration ban**

As the courts ponder President Donald Trump's ill-advised immigration ban, nothing better illustrates its cruelty and carelessness than its impact on Iraqis who risked their lives to help Americans. By now you probably know that Trump's claim that a mere 109 visa holders were affected was nonsense. At least 60,000 U.S. visas were canceled, causing chaos for foreign students, academics, high-tech workers, doctors who serve rural America, family members of U.S. citizens and tourists.

More Details:

[http://pilotonline.com/opinion/columnist/guest/trudy-rubin-iraqis-who-helped-u-s-now-wait-under/article\\_fc9ce595-5086-5091-a3d3-9c65b294eeac.html](http://pilotonline.com/opinion/columnist/guest/trudy-rubin-iraqis-who-helped-u-s-now-wait-under/article_fc9ce595-5086-5091-a3d3-9c65b294eeac.html)

- **Bahrainis fighting in Iraq**

Wanted terrorists in Bahrain are fighting in Iraq with government-supported militias, DT News has learnt. The majority of the 150 foreign fighters in the Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMF) are Bahrainis, recent reports have confirmed. According to Iraq Network Press plus (INP) news website, the Bahraini fighters are fugitives and wanted by the Bahraini Government for terrorism related cases.

More Details:

<http://www.newsofbahrain.com/viewNews.php?ppId=30392&TYPE=Posts&pid=21&MNU=2&SUB=3>

- **Iraqi President Hails Tehran's Timely Support**

Iraqi President Fuad Masum hailed Iran for extending effective support to the Arab country in its fight against terrorism. In an interview with Tasnim News Agency in Baghdad published on Sunday, Masum expressed his views on a range of issues, including ties with Iran and the future of Iraqi armed forces after the ultimate victory over the self-styled Islamic State terrorist group, which invaded Iraq in summer 2014.

More Details:

<https://financialtribune.com/articles/national/59447/iraqi-president-hails-tehrans-timely-support>

- **Life under So-called Islamic State: Last Minute Police Round-Ups**

As militants of the so-called Islamic State face off with Iraqi forces battling for Mosul, former local police officers in areas controlled by IS are rounded up and many are killed. VOA talks to one police officer who survived the last weeks of terror before Iraqi forces took his neighborhood, believing that the same cruelty is currently being inflicted upon residents of western Mosul. Fowas Khayradeen tells his story near his home on the streets of Mosul in Arabic, edited for clarity.

More Details:

<http://www.voanews.com/a/life-under-so-called-islamic-state-last-minute-police-round-ups/3720338.html>

- **Baghdad tense after deadly clashes**

Tension between Iraq's leaders mounted on Sunday as the toll from protests in central Baghdad on Saturday increased to six killed, five demonstrators loyal to the fiery cleric Moqtada Al Sadr and one policeman. At least 174 other protesters were injured in clashes that pitted police and Sadr's followers who had gathered to demand an overhaul of a commission that supervises elections, ahead of a provincial poll due in September.

More Details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/5c971440-aaed-447c-a7ef-c99a5258da33.aspx>

- **Iraqi Kurdistan's KDP seeking new presidency term for Barzani: sources**

The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) is seeking a new presidency term for Massoud Barzani – whose two-year presidential term extension expired at midnight on August 20, 2015 – reliable sources have told NRT. Barzani first won office in June 2005. The Kurdish region's presidency is technically limited to two four-year terms. Barzani's second term as president ended in July 2013 but was extended by two years in a deal between his KDP, and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, or PUK – the two main Kurdish political parties.

More Details:

<http://ekurd.net/kdp-seeking-presidency-barzani-2017-02-12>

- **Al-Sadr threatens retaliation for followers' killing in Baghdad clashes**

Tension between Iraq's Shiite leaders mounted on Sunday as the toll from protests in central Baghdad on Saturday increased to six killed, five demonstrators loyal to the fiery cleric Moqtada Al-Sadr and one policeman. At least 174 other protesters were injured in clashes that pitted police and Al-Sadr's followers who had gathered to demand an overhaul of a commission that supervises elections, ahead of a provincial poll due in September.

More Details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1053411/middle-east>

- **Trump Moves Spark Iraqi Anger, Calls Against Future Alliance**

Reverberations from President Donald Trump's travel ban and other stances are threatening to undermine future U.S.-Iraqi security cooperation, rattling a key alliance that over the past two years has slowly beaten back the Islamic State group. Iraq's prime minister, Haider al-Abadi, has sought to contain any backlash from public anger sparked by Trump's executive order banning Iraqis from traveling to the U.S. Also breeding resentment and suspicion are Trump's repeated statements that the Americans should have taken Iraq's oil and his hard line against Iran, a close ally of al-Abadi's government.

More Details:

[http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/M/ML\\_IRAQ\\_US?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT](http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/M/ML_IRAQ_US?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT)

- **Fireballs and booby traps: on the front lines with the oil workers battling Islamic State**

The flames exploded into the sky like a volcanic eruption, blanketing a swath of the Iraqi countryside in a noxious haze of black smoke. The inferno reached more than 300 feet high on a recent afternoon when the wind shifted direction, bending the billowing wall of fire toward the men from Iraq's North Oil Co. on the ground below. Within seconds, a fast-moving cloud of hot gas and thick smoke washed over the work site, blotting out the sun and sending workers and engineers scurrying for safety.

More Details:

<https://www.stripes.com/news/middle-east/fireballs-and-booby-traps-on-the-front-lines-with-the-oil-workers-battling-islamic-state-1.453738>

- **Sadr Warns from 'Dark End' in Iraq**

Head of the Sadrist Movement, Muqtada al-Sadr warned on Sunday from a "dark end" in Iraq, after at least eight people were killed and hundreds were injured when confrontations erupted between his supporters and security forces during a protest held in Baghdad's central Tahrir Square to demand an overhaul of a commission that supervises elections ahead of a provincial poll due in September.

More Details:

<http://english.aawsat.com/2017/02/article55367322/sadr-warns-dark-end-iraq>

- **Inter-Shiite tension mounts in Baghdad after clashes**

Tension between Iraq's Shiite leaders mounted on Sunday as the toll from protests in central Baghdad on Saturday increased to six killed, five demonstrators loyal to the fiery cleric Moqtada Al Sadr and one policeman. At least 174 other protesters were injured in clashes that pitted police and Sadr's followers who had gathered to demand an overhaul of a commission that supervises elections, ahead of a provincial poll due in September.

More Details:

<http://jordantimes.com/news/region/inter-shiite-tension-mounts-baghdad-after-clashes>

- **Iraq's oil industry aspirations mired in fiction**

Of late there is even talk of Iranian funding to get some projects off the ground. For a long time I deliberately refrained from commenting on the oil and gas scene in Iraq. Sadly, I feel the professional comments of many Iraqi industry experts have gone awry and never taken positively by the government.

More Details:

<http://gulfnews.com/business/analysis/iraq-s-oil-industry-aspirations-mired-in-fiction-1.1976917>

- **Iraq's Sadrists protest to change election panel**

Thousands of supporters of firebrand Shia cleric Muqtada al-Sadr staged fresh protests in the Iraqi capital Baghdad on Saturday to demand the dissolution of the country's electoral commission. Protesters gathered in central Baghdad, demanding the establishment of a new electoral commission "untainted by political affiliations".

More Details:

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/12/02/2017/Iraq%E2%80%99s-Sadrists-protest-to-change-election-panel>

- **A Severely Injured Iraqi toddler has been in the US for three months-without his parent**

Dilbireen Muhsin is a two years old Iraqi Yazidi by whose family fled a genocide perpetrated by the Islamic State and he is been seperated from his parents for more than three monts. The toddler, severely injured in an explision in a refugee camp,has been living in Michigar had agreed to take care of him while his parents were in iraq,unable to come to the US. Sometimes, Dilbireen thinks Adlay Kejjan, his caretaker, is his mother.

More Details:

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/world/americas/89350611/.html>

- **British Defense Secretary visits northern Iraq**

British Defense Secretary Michael Fallon reiterated his country's support to Peshmerga forces, in an official visit to the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) in northern Iraq on Sunday, Iraqi prime ministry said. Fallon met KRG President Massoud Barzani and his Prime Minister Nechervan Barzani separately in Salah ad-Din city of Erbil, capital of KRG administration.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/europe/british-defense-secretary-visits-northern-iraq/748920>

- **World View: Supporters of al-Sadr and al-Maliki Turn Again to Violence in Baghdad**

Security forces stand guard as supporters of Iraqi cleric Muqtada al-Sadr protest on Saturday. The protests turned violent later. (AFP) Seven people were killed on Saturday during protests that turned violent after thousands of people flooding into central Baghdad to protest Iraq government corruption. Several hours later, at least seven Katyusha rockets were launched from northern Baghdad, landing in the heavily protected Green Zone.

Powerful Shia cleric Moqtada al-Sadr – whom some of you may remember as playing a highly contentious role in the Iraq war ten years ago, challenging US forces with his Mahdi militias – called the protests. He's very closely linked to the clerics in Iran.

More Details:

<http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2017/02/12/12-feb-17-world-view-iraq-supporters-al-sadr-al-maliki-turn-violence-baghdad/>

## 2. SYRIA

- **Syrian opposition reached agreement on single delegation creation in Geneva**

High committee for negotiations of Syrian opposition has agreed to create a single delegation of anti-Governmental forces at the inter-Syrian negotiations in Geneva, reports RBK. "The decision has been taken by negotiations result in Er-Riyad. The negotiating group will include 21 people. The participants of the delegation will represent various Syrian and civil forces," said the communique of the committee.

More Details

<http://www.kaztag.kz/en/news/detail.php?ID=523239>

- **Civilians injured as Hezbollah strikes Damascus**

Tens of civilians were wounded after shelling by Hezbollah hit several areas in the northwest regions around Damascus on Sunday, local sources told The New Arab. Most of the injured were children, a local opposition source reported, as the shelling targeted Zabadani city as well as the towns of Madaya and Baqin in the Rif Dimashq province.

More Details

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/civilians-injured-hezbollah-strikes-damascus-936864>

- **Nasrallah: Iran, Hezbollah support any form of ceasefire in Syria**

He made the remarks while addressing a ceremony, via video conference broadcast live by the Al-Manar, to commemorate one of Hezbollah late officials, Sheikh Hussein Obeid, in Baalbek city in northeastern Lebanon.

More Details

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82428110/>

- **Erdogan says Turkish army close to taking IS-held town**

Turkish troops backed by Syrian rebel fighters have entered the centre of the Islamic State group bastion of Al-Bab and will soon capture it, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Sunday. The town in Syria's Aleppo province is the last stronghold of the militant group in the region, and has also been targeted by Syrian government forces.

More Details

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1325159/erdogan-says-turkish-army-close-taking-held-town/>

- **Russian Defense Ministry says IS militants carrying explosives to Palmyra**

The Islamic State terror group (IS, outlawed in Russia) militants plan to deliver explosives to Syria's Palmyra in order to inflict maximum damage on architectural landmarks before leaving the city, the Russian Defense Ministry said in a statement on Monday.

More Details

<http://tass.com/world/930503>

- **'We can all come together and be friends;' friendship party for Syrian refugees**

These are trying times for Syrian refugees. They've been uprooted from their homes and country, moved to refugee camps in Jordan and Turkey and are now resettling in the United States. There are 130 Syrian refugees now living in Omaha. Sunday, for the first time, they all were in the same place at the same time in the basement of St. Wenceslaus Church near 153rd and Pacific. "The plight of refugees is a piece to which almost all sacred scripture points and encourages people to be open and welcoming in recognizing the plight of refugees," said Rev. Brian Maas, Bishop for ECLA Nebraska Synod.

More Details

<http://www.ketv.com/article/we-can-all-come-together-and-be-friends-friendship-party-for-syrian-refugees/8735703>

- **Relief, water and social projects in Sweida discussed with UN bodies**

Governor of Sweida Amer Ibrahim al-Ashi met won Sunday a number of representatives of the UN offices working in the humanitarian field in Syria's southern region. The main discussion was focused on the projects being carried out by the UN organizations in the fields of relief, health, water drinking, education and social and psychological support.

More Details

<http://sana.sy/en/?p=100071>

- **Hezbollah supports every effort of reconciliation in Syria**

In a speech during a memorial ceremony in Baalbek, Nasrallah refuted allegations, lies, and slanders leveled at Hezbollah by terrorism-sponsoring states and by deceptive and Takfiri TV channels that are carrying out a campaign of false allegations about Hezbollah's position on the ceasefire in Syria.

More Details

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/123517/Hezbollah-supports-every-effort-of-reconciliation-in-Syria>

- **London Believes Assad Gov't Poses Security Threat for Both UK, Russia**

A number of Western and Middle Eastern countries want Assad to leave while Russia thinks that the future of Syria is with its people. Bayley stressed that despite certain agreements on Syria between the UN Security Council members, including the UK and Russia, "the challenge is that everything in this conflict comes back to the issue of Assad."

More Details

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201702131050613162-uk-russia-syria-assad/>

### 3. IRAN

- **Tense times for the Iran nuclear deal**

This week US President Donald Trump is due to meet Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. On the agenda will be Iran and, more specifically, the nuclear deal reached between Iran and five other major powers in July 2015 that both men oppose.

More Details

<https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/tense-times-iran-nuclear-deal>

- **Many Iranians disillusioned over May presidential vote**

US President Donald Trump's bellicose rhetoric toward Iran now appears likely to help keep President Hassan Rouhani in office for another term, but will make it harder for the Iranian leader's team of moderates to govern.

More Details

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1053331>

- **Heidarian: Iran policy may positively impact human rights**

As an Iranian American I am grateful that the Obama administration helped relocate 3,000 of my friends and colleagues, members of the principal Iranian opposition movement, the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK), out of Camp Liberty, Iraq. But I am very critical of its utter weakness in dealing with the Islamic Republic.

More Details

<http://www.jsonline.com/story/opinion/contributors/2017/02/12/heidarian-iran-policy-may-positively-impact-human-rights/97826770/>

- **Iran: The Rouhani Affiliated Faction Called for Major Overhaul Within the Ruling Power**

The so called reformist faction warned about the dangers of the transformed political situation on the international level, and called on Khamenei (supreme leader of the regime) to accept major overhaul in the Islamic Republic.

More Details

<http://www.ncr-iran.org/en/news/iran-world/22152-iran-the-rouhani-affiliated-faction-called-for-major-surgeries-within-the-ruling-power>

- **Sweden seeks closer economic cooperation with Iran**

Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven on Sunday wrapped up a two-day visit to Iran with a pledge to bolster economic ties between the two countries.

More Details

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/sweden-seeks-closer-economic-cooperation-with-iran/>

- **Iran can become next major Bitcoin market by stopping to use US Dollar**

Following the recent problems occurred after US President Donald Trump has taken office and the CBI's fresh policy to stop using US dollar, Iran can become the next major Bitcoin market, the British website 'Coin Telegraph' reported. After Donald Trump assumed power in the White House and the new US administration started leveling threats against the Islamic Republic, speculations are high that Washington's new approach is going to bode for economic consequences for Iran.

More Details

<http://realiran.org/iran-can-become-next-major-bitcoin-market-by-stopping-to-use-us-dollar/>

- **Iran's FM Hails Election of Steinmeier as German President**

In a message to Mr. Steinmeier on Sunday, the top Iranian diplomat pointed to the history of close cooperation and consultations with the German politician during his post at the Foreign Ministry, and expressed the hope that his presidency would constructively serve the German nation.

More Details

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2017/02/13/1326931/iran-s-fm-hails-election-of-steinmeier-as-german-president>

- **A new security order for Persian Gulf**

Iranian "influence fuels instability in the region," she told the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)'s 37th Leaders' Summit, adding, "I am clear-eyed about the threat that Iran poses to the Gulf and the wider Middle East." She committed the UK to "working with you to counter that threat" and "push back against Iran's aggressive regional actions, whether in Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen, Syria or in the Gulf itself."

More Details

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/123459/A-new-security-order-for-Persian-Gulf>

- **Iran Navy aims to boost Bab el-Mandeb security: Admiral Sayyari**

"Today the most important issue on the agenda of [Iran's] Navy is to provide security in the Gulf of Aden, the Red Sea and the Bab el-Mandeb," Sayyari said on Sunday. He added that Iranian naval forces have so far escorted 3,850 Iranian commercial and tanker ships as well as 25 foreign vessels in the Bab el-Mandeb and the Gulf of Aden regions where pirates are active. The Iranian naval fleets are currently present in the Gulf of Aden, Sayyari said, adding that the Alvand destroyer and the Bushehr logistic vessel were dispatched to the high seas on October 6 for a nearly five-month mission.

More Details:

<http://www.payvand.com/news/17/feb/1057.html>

## 4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **Netanyahu: 'To think there are no limitations with Trump would be wrong'**

The prime minister clarifies to Bennett and Shaked, who urged him to renounce the idea of a two-state solution or a Palestinian state in his meeting at the White House, that his single motivation is Israel's national interests; 'We must act with responsibility and rationality,' the PM says of the upcoming meeting.

More Details:

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4921275,00.html>

- **Likud Bashes Bennett over Pressure on PM**

Transportation Minister Israel Katz harshly rebuked Beit Yehudi leader Nafatli Bennett for pressuring Netanyahu prior to the premier's meeting with US President Donald Trump.

More Details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Politics-And-Diplomacy/Likud-bashes-Bennett-over-pressure-on-PM-481289>

- **Israel delivers stop-work orders to Palestinians in northern Jordan Valley**

Israeli authorities issued stop-work orders for 16 Palestinian-owned structures in the northern Jordan Valley village of Khirbet Humsa al-Fuqa in the occupied West Bank on Sunday morning, according to a local official.

More Details:

<http://www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?id=775422>

- **Israeli soldiers detain three Palestinians in West Bank**

Israeli forces Sunday detained three Palestinians, including a minor, during military raids into Hebron and Bethlehem, according to a local activist.

More Details:

<http://english.wafa.ps/page.aspx?id=wD8wQpa52366401813awD8wQp>

- **Netanyahu to Tell Trump He Supports a Palestinian State**

PM Netanyahu, who departs for Washington today, tells ministers that the new US president won't give Israel free rein. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will not retract his support for the creation of a Palestinian state when he meets with US President Donald Trump in Washington on Wednesday, Netanyahu made clear in Sunday's security cabinet meeting.

More Details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Politics-And-Diplomacy/Netanyahu-to-tell-Trump-he-supports-a-Palestinian-state-481360>

- **Israeli parliament 'harder than ever' for Arab MPs**

It has never been easy being a lawmaker who identifies as Palestinian in the Israeli parliament, but today it is harder than ever, Arab Israeli MPs say. In recent months they have seen their colleagues discuss banning the early morning Muslim call to prayer and vote to legalise the seizure of hundreds of acres of Palestinian land in the West Bank by Jewish settlers.

More Details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/fa2d4471-093a-4446-a60b-f3fdf8eb8c4a.aspx>

- **Report: Israel Increases Prison Sentence for Tortured Palestinian Detainee**

The Israeli Supreme Court has added two years to the prison sentence of a Palestinian detained during Israel's 2014 ground invasion of the Gaza Strip, the Gaza-based al-Mezan Center for Human Rights said in a report issued on Sunday, detailing the prisoner's torture at the hands of Israeli prison authorities.

More Details:

<http://imemc.org/article/report-israeli-increases-prison-sentence-for-tortured-palestinian-detainee/>

- **Two Israelis Injured in Palestinian Stone Throwing Attack**

The Times of Israel reports: Two Israelis were lightly hurt Saturday when Palestinians hurled stones at their vehicles on the road near the Palestinian West Bank village of Husan, close to the Etzion Bloc settlements. One of the injured was treated by a medical team at the scene, and the other was evacuated to a nearby hospital, Israel Radio reported.

More Details:

<http://www.breitbart.com/jerusalem/2017/02/12/two-israelis-injured-palestinian-stone-throwing-attack/>

- **Palestinians take to the streets to call for boycott of Israeli goods**

Hundreds of Palestinians took to the streets of Ramallah at around midday on Saturday in a march calling on Palestinians to ramp up their efforts in boycotting Israeli goods.

More Details:

<http://www.palestinemonitor.org/details.php?id=64nof0a15022y9hpbglsoq>

- **Netanyahu opposed UN post for former Palestinian prime minister Salam Fayyad**

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu opposed the appointment of former Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Salam Fayyad to a United Nations position without a similar Israeli appointment.

More Details:

<http://www.jta.org/2017/02/12/news-opinion/united-states/netanyahu-opposed-un-post-for-former-palestinian-prime-minister-salam-fayyad>

## 5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **EU provides 115 mln euros in support to Jordan**

The European Union on Sunday said in a statement it will support Jordan on political and environmental reforms with 115 million euros. The statement said that the deal consists of two cooperation programs totaling 115 million euros (about 122 million U.S. dollars) to support Jordan in its political and environmental reforms.

More Details:

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-02/12/c\\_136051041.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-02/12/c_136051041.htm)

- **Gov't responds to national human rights centre report**

The government on Sunday responded, through an “explanatory report”, to the National Centre for Human Rights’ (NCHR) 2015 report on the status of human rights in Jordan. In its report, released in late 2016, the NCHR said that although practical steps were taken to address the government’s procrastination in implementing the NCHR’s recommendations, “this did not lead to a quantitative change in relation to the human rights status in Jordan in 2015”.

More Details:

<http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/gov%E2%80%99t-responds-national-human-rights-centre-report>

- **Jordan takes part in World Government Summit in Dubai**

The fifth edition of the World Government Summit focused on promoting happiness and well-being kicked off Sunday in Dubai with Jordan's participation.

More Details:

<http://en.ammonnews.net/article.aspx?articleNO=34129#.WKFgDdSLSmU>

- **Aoun bound for Egypt, Jordan**

President of the Republic, General Michel Aoun, left Beirut on Monday morning heading to Egypt, where he will be meeting with Egyptian President, Abdul Fattah Sisi, in Cairo.

More Details:

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/75252/Aoun-bound-for-Egypt-Jordan>

- **Leader of terrorist group Hezbollah: World will benefit by having ‘idiot’ Donald Trump in WH**

The leader of Lebanon’s militant Hezbollah group, which is recognized by the United States as a terrorist group, says the world will benefit from having an “idiot” in the White House.

More Details:

<http://www.theblaze.com/news/2017/02/12/leader-of-terrorist-group-hezbollah-world-will-benefit-by-having-idiot-donald-trump-in-wh/>

- **Lebanese IS Fighter First to be Stripped of Australian Citizenship**

An Islamic State fighter carrying the Lebanese nationality has become the first Australian to be stripped of his citizenship under anti-terrorism laws, authorities and reports said. Khaled Sharrouf -- who made headlines in 2014 when he posted an image on Twitter of his young son holding a severed head -- had his citizenship revoked earlier this year, The Australian newspaper has reported.

More Details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/225334-lebanese-is-fighter-first-to-be-stripped-of-australian-citizenship>

- **Hezbollah leader supports Syria ceasefire and political talks**

The Lebanese Hezbollah movement strongly supports the Syrian ceasefire agreed on in Kazakhstan and any truce that could lead to a political solution, its leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said on Sunday.

More Details:

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/hezbollah-leader-urges-refugees-return-safe-syria-1325394487>

- **Bassil from Byblos: Equity is Lebanon's special feature**

Foreign and Expatriates Minister, Gibran Bassil, said on Sunday during a visit to Byblos (Jbeil) that what makes Lebanon special is not only its diversity but the equity of representation and rule it provides its people.

More Details:

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/75244/Bassil-from-Byblos-Equity-is-Lebanon-39-special-feature>

- **Hezbollah urges Lebanon plan for Syria refugee return**

The head of Lebanon's powerful Hezbollah movement on Sunday urged the government to coordinate with Damascus to help refugees to return now that "large areas" of Syria are "safe".

More Details:

<http://www.france24.com/en/20170212-hezbollah-urges-lebanon-plan-syria-refugee-return>

- **LAU hosts Canadian Ambassador to Lebanon over informative press, human rights**

The Lebanese American University (LAU) hosted Canadian Ambassador to Lebanon, Michelle Cameron, in a workshop titled "Informative Press and Human Rights".

More Details:

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/75233/LAU-hosts-Canadian-Ambassador-to-Lebanon-over-informative-press-human-rights>

## 6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Bahrain-Turkey friendship hailed**

Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa underscored the crucial importance of strengthening bilateral relations, mustering all efforts and expanding cooperation between all countries, particularly Turkey, a pivotal state which plays an influential role in the region.

More details:

<http://www.newsofbahrain.com/viewNews.php?ppId=30400&TYPE=Posts&pid=21&MNU=2&SUB=1>

- **Oman takes part in World Government Summit 2017 in Dubai**

Oman took part on Sunday in the opening of the World Government Summit 2017. The Sultanate's delegation to the summit was led by Sheikh Khalid bin Omar Al Marhoon, Minister of Civil Service.

More details:

<http://timesofoman.com/article/102664/Oman/Government/Oman-takes-part-in-World-Government-Summit-2017-in-Dubai>

- **Qatar & Sweden set to expand areas of bilateral cooperation**

Qatar and Sweden are working closely to further deepen and strengthen bilateral relations by exploring new areas of cooperation to enhance trade and investment, said Sweden's Ambassador (pictured) to Qatar.

More details:

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/12/02/2017/Qatar-Sweden-set-to-expand-areas-of-bilateral-cooperation>

- **Arab coalition declares Yemen's Hodeidah a military zone**

A Saudi-led coalition has declared Yemen's Hodeidah city a military zone, urging civilians in the Houthi-held Red Sea port to stay in their homes, days after the United Nations warned that air strikes could trap civilians and hamper aid efforts.

More details:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-security-port-idUSKBN15S0JO?rpc=401&>

- **UN Secretary General: Islamophobia leads to terrorism**

On a visit to Saudi Arabia Sunday, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told reporters that "Islamophobia" is fueling terrorism.

More details:

<http://www.theblaze.com/news/2017/02/12/un-secretary-general-islamophobia-leads-to-terrorism/>

- **UAE bound Etihad flight diverted due to 'security threat'**

An Etihad flight enroute to the UAE from Ireland was diverted to the Al Minihad Air Base in Dubai following a security threat, said a report.

More details:

[http://www.tradearabia.com/news/TTN\\_320616.html](http://www.tradearabia.com/news/TTN_320616.html)

- **Yemenis mark six-year anniversary of uprising**

Yemenis have marked the sixth anniversary of the start of an uprising that ended three decades of rule by President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

More details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/02/yemenis-mark-year-anniversary-uprising-170211211116759.html>

- **Lessons and Propaganda from the Botched Raid on Yemen**

The Trump administration's first "kinetic" military action, last weekend's raid on Yemen that killed a Navy SEAL as well as fifteen women and children, was an operational failure.

More details:

[http://original.antiwar.com/william\\_astore/2017/02/12/lessons-and-propaganda-from-the-botched-raid-on-yemen/](http://original.antiwar.com/william_astore/2017/02/12/lessons-and-propaganda-from-the-botched-raid-on-yemen/)

- **Dr Al Sada is 'Oil Diplomacy Man' of 2016**

Minister of Energy & Industry, HE Dr. Mohammed Bin Saleh Al Sada will be presented with the 'International Oil Diplomacy Man of the Year 2016' Award at the Energy Institute's International Petroleum (IP) Week scheduled to be held on February 22 in London.

More details:

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/12/02/2017/Dr-Al-Sada-is-Oil-Diplomacy-Man-of-2016>

## 7. EGYPT

- **Egypt to pay foreign companies ASAP - Minister**

The Egyptian minister of finance, Amr Al-Garhy, said on Sunday that the country is committed to paying all of its obligations to foreign partners, noting that the government is currently working on repayment as soon as possible.

More details:

<http://english.mubasher.info/news/3056066/Egypt-to-pay-foreign-companies-ASAP-Minister>

- **Egypt parliament's ethics committee recommends MP El-Sadat be stripped of membership**

Sources affiliated with the Egyptian parliament's ethics committee told reporters Sunday that high-profile MP Anwar El-Sadat, head of the liberal Reform and Development Party and former chairman of the human rights committee, is expected to be stripped of his parliamentary membership.

More details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/258067/-.aspx>

- **Three British trade missions visit Egypt to explore investment opportunities**

UK Prime Minister's Trade Envoy Sir Jeffrey Donaldson and over 40 delegates from British companies arrived to Egypt this week "to assess new trade and investment opportunities and identify potential Egyptian partners."

More details:

<http://en.aswatmasriya.com/news/details/18458>

- **President Aoun to CBC Egypt: Hezbollah weapons are complementary to army's action**

President of the Republic, Michel Aoun, said in an interview with CBC Egypt that Hezbollah's weaponries were complementary to the army's action, and do not oppose it.

More details:

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/75245/President-Aoun-to-CBC-Egypt-Hezbollah-weapons-are-complementary-to-army-39-action>

- **Top court commissioners prepare report on Red Sea islands rulings**

The commissioners of the Supreme Constitutional Court are currently preparing a report on the government case against the nullification of the maritime border agreement between Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

More details:

<http://www.egyptindependent.com//news/top-court-commissioners-prepare-report-red-sea-islands-rulings>

- **Prosecutor General refers former State Council official to criminal trial over bribery charges**

Prosecutor General Nabil Sadek ordered on Sunday the referral of the former State Council official in charge of purchasing, Gamal Ibrahim Al-Laban, and two others to the Criminal Court following accusations of receiving bribes, a state-run media outlet asserted.

More details:

<http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2017/02/12/615323/>

- **Egypt cabinet reshuffle delayed to Tuesday: Parliamentary sources**

An anticipated cabinet reshuffle has been postponed to Tuesday due to a visit to Egypt by Lebanon's President Michel Aoun on Monday, parliamentary sources said.

More details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/258057/-.aspx>

- **Leak reveals Egypt 'requested Israeli permission' for islands deal**

A leaked phone call between Egypt's foreign minister and a senior Israeli official has revealed Egypt had to gain Israeli approval for a controversial transfer of two Red Sea islands to Saudi Arabia.

More details:

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/2/12/leak-reveals-egypt-requested-israeli-permission-for-islands-deal>

- **One of UK's 'biggest trade delegations' arrives in Egypt for investment, trade cooperation**

Trade envoy Jeffrey Donaldson and over 40 delegates from British companies arrived in Egypt on Sunday as part of one of the UK's "biggest trade delegations" to visit the North African country to assess new trade and investment opportunities and identify potential Egyptian partners, the UK embassy announced.

More details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/258073/-.aspx>

- **Egypt's defence minister discusses combatting terrorism with US Congress delegation**

Egyptian Defence Minister Sedky Sobhy has met with a US Congress delegation currently visiting the country and discussed a number of points of strategic interest, including combatting terrorism, an army spokesman statement issued Sunday read.

More details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/258035/-.aspx>

## 8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Inauguration of Congo's new chancery in Algeria**

The new chancery of the Republic of Congo in Algeria has been inaugurated Sunday in Algiers, by Congolese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Congolese nationals abroad Claude Gakosso, in the presence of State Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Ramtane Lamamra.

More Details:

<http://en.aps.dz/algeria/16638-inauguration-of-congo%E2%80%99s-new-chancery-in-algeria>

- **Mali seeks to further strengthen security cooperation with Algeria**

Mali wants to further strengthen its security cooperation with Algeria, said Sunday in Algiers Malian Minister of Security and Civil Protection Salif Traore.

More Details:

<http://en.aps.dz/algeria/16642-mali-seeks-to-further-strengthen-security-cooperation-with-algeria/>

- **Venezuelan National Arrested in Marrakech Airport Over Drug Trafficking**

Police at the Marrakech-Menara airport arrested, on Sunday, a Venezuelan national for attempt of drug trafficking, the national police (DGSN) announced.

More Details:

<https://www.morocoworldnews.com/2017/02/208026/venezuelan-national-arrested-marrakech-airport-drug-trafficking/>

- **MAD 25 Million for Restoration of Casablanca's Sacré-Cœur Cathedral**

Morocco's Ministry of Interior has allocated MAD 25 million for the restoration of the Sacré-Cœur Cathedral in Casablanca.

More Details:

<https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2017/02/208022/morocco-mad-25-million-restoration-casablancas-sacre-coeur-cathedral/>

- **Tunisian authorities detain six for 'recruiting terrorists abroad'**

Tunisian security forces have broken up a six-member "terrorist cell" who had been recruiting people to fight with extremist groups abroad, the interior ministry said on Saturday.

More Details:

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/2/12/tunisian-authorities-detain-six-for-recruiting-terrorists-abroad>

- **Abu-Ghazaleh Receives Outgoing Tunisian Ambassador to Jordan**

Talal Abu-Ghazaleh received in his office HE Ms. Afifah Mallah, the outgoing Tunisian Ambassador who had concluded her mission to the Kingdom.

More Details:

<http://www.ag-ip-news.com/news.aspx?id=42173&lang=en>

- **Libya planned to build a 'mini-Dubai' with the help of Sheikh Mohammed**

HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai has revealed how officials in the emirate came to creating a new Dubai in Libya.

More Details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/business/libya-planned-build-mini-dubai-help-sheikh-mohammed-936942>

- **Libya unity government slams creation of rival 'national guard'**

The Government of National Accord said it considered the creation of the "Libyan National Guard" to be "an attempt to form a parallel body to the Presidential Guard" formed.

More Details:

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/2/12/libya-unity-government-slams-creation-of-rival-national-guard>

- **Tripoli Appeals Court to rule on Italy-Presidential Council MoU**

A number of Libyan citizens lodged an appeal at the Judiciary Division of the Tripoli Appeals Court against the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the UN-proposed government's Presidential Council's Head Fayez Al-Sirraj and the Italian Prime Minister, Paolo Gentiloni.

More Details:

<https://www.libyaobserver.ly/news/tripoli-appeals-court-rule-italy-presidential-council-mou>

## 9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **So called Governor of Taliban Warns the Leader of the Group**

The so-called governor of Taliban for Helmand province criticizing the recent decision of the group leader for bringing changes in administrative structure of Taliban called him lack of authority.

More Details:

<http://www.bakhtarnews.com.af/eng/security/item/27503-so-called-governor-of-taliban-warns-the-leader-of-the-group.html>

- **ANDSF gear up to thwart attacks, MoD**

According to The Kabul Times, Gen. Radmanish, the deputy spokesperson to the ministry of defense (MoD) said, 'the Afghan security forces will continue fighting armed insurgents and they intend to suppress them across the country.'

More Details:

<http://thekabultimes.gov.af/index.php/opinions/politics/13070-andsf-gear-up-to-thwart-attacks-mod.html>

- **Taliban shadow district chief killed with his fighters in Paktika**

A senior Taliban leader was killed with his fighters during an airstrike in southeastern Paktika province of Afghanistan.

More Details:

<http://www.khaama.com/taliban-shadow-district-chief-killed-with-his-fighters-in-paktika-02870>

- **Driver gunned down by Balkh governor's guards**

The governor's security guards have shot dead a driver in northern Balkh province, an official said on Monday. The incident occurred on Sunday night when car sped to the residence of Governor Atta Muhammad Noor and rammed into the barrier.

More Details:

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2017/02/13/driver-gunned-down-balkh-governor%E2%80%99s-guards>

- **President Ghani's Condolence Message**

President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Mohammad Ashraf Ghani in a message expressed his deep condolence for the death of the country's well-known writers and journalist, Bareq Shaffeyee, his office said the other day.

More Details:

<http://www.bakhtarnews.com.af/eng/politics/item/27492-president-ghani%E2%80%99s-condolence-message.html>

- **Cultural Attaches in European Countries Discussed**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) deputy minister of administration Dr. Nasir Ahmad Andisha met Zardasht Shams, deputy minister of administration, finance and tourism of the Ministry of Information and Culture (MoIC) here yesterday, the MoFA said in a statement.

More Details:

<http://www.bakhtarnews.com.af/eng/culture/item/27493-cultural-attaches-in-european-countries-discussed.html>

- **PM says govt focusing on development in Sindh**

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Monday said that his government was making it a priority to focus on the development of Sindh especially the rural areas.

More Details:

<http://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/13-Feb-17/pm-says-govt-focusing-on-development-in-sindh>

- **Country isolated due to flawed policies: experts**

Two leading former Pakistani diplomats had an interesting interaction during a session on foreign policy and economy at the Karachi Literary Festival, disagreeing on a host of issues, including the

nuclear policy and role of the security establishment, but agreed, along with the third panellist, that the country today stood isolated because of flawed policies.

More Details:

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1314481/country-isolated-due-to-flawed-policies-experts>

- **Are we stuck in suffocating embraces?**

The time has come to question the Pakistan-American alliance and the temptation to hang on to it, believes former diplomat Zafar Hilaly.

More Details:

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1324778/stuck-suffocating-embraces/>

- **Top law schools teams compete in US-funded contest**

Ten teams from top law schools throughout Pakistan competed in the US-funded Jessup law moot court competition-Pakistan held here, the US embassy said in a statement on Sunday.

More Details:

<http://nation.com.pk/islamabad/13-Feb-2017/top-law-schools-teams-compete-in-us-funded-contest>

## 10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Turkey, Bahrain to work for regional stability: Erdogan**

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said late Sunday that his country would work in cooperation with Bahrain for the "stability, peace, and future of the region." His remarks came in Bahrain's capital Manama -- the first leg of his four-day, three-nation Gulf tour. Erdogan was honored by King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa with the medal of Sheikh Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa.

More Details:

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/turkey/184679/70-suspects-nabbed-in-istanbul-terror-operations>

- **Erdogan: Turkey, FSA close to capturing Syria's Al-Bab**

Turkish troops and Free Syrian Army fighters have "besieged" the Daesh-held town of Al-Bab in northern Syria and are now "on the verge of capturing it," President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Sunday. "Our forces along with the Free Syrian Army [fighters] have reached the [town] center. And the Daesh forces are now in the process of leaving Al-Bab," he told a press conference at Ataturk

International Airport ahead of his departure for Bahrain, the first leg of his four-day, three-nation Gulf tour.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/politics/erdogan-turkey-fsa-close-to-capturing-syria-s-al-bab/748823>

*\*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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