



MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

GÜNLÜK ORTADOĐU BÜLTENİ

Domestic Policy in the Middle East Countries

Bölge Ülkelerinde İç Siyaset

The Restructuring Proces 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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18 MARCH 2016

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1. IRAQ,

- **Thamer Sabhan: We Are Linked With Iraq In religion, Arabic Identity And Blood, We Will Not Give It Up**

Saudi ambassador in Iraq Thamer Sabhan said Saudi Arabia has a clear policy toward Iraq and is linked with him in religion, Arabic identity and blood and we will not abandon him. "He said on his page in Twitter that "the Kingdom has clear policy toward Iraq and everyone knows it and it must be strategic."

More Details:

http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?DdPt4eYQtYmOBlgd7fNJVw%253d%253d

- **Security forces advance towards Heet City and Kabisa in western Anbar**

A military source in the leadership of the army's Seventh Division said on Thursday, that the security forces as well as clan fighters advanced into Heet and Kabisa areas in western Anbar. The source said in a statement followed by IraqiNews.com, "Today, security forces from the army's Seventh Division and the Anti-Terrorism Directorate as well as the Federal Police and the Emergency Regiment, [backed by] clan fighters, advanced from Ainul Assad air base in the vicinity of al-Baghdadi towards the city of Heet and the vicinity of Kabisa to liberate them from ISIS," noting that, "The zero hour to liberate the city and the vicinity has not started yet."

More Details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/security-forces-advance-towards-heet-city-kabisa-western-anbar/>

- **Amiri Announce His Reservation on the State Of Law's Statement**

The secretary general of the Badr Organization, Hadi al-Amiri announced his reservation to the statement of the state of law coalition and the language is written. He called in a press release today, "everyone with wisdom and reason and put the public interest at all self-interest in order to get out of the crisis."

More Details:

http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?bYFrj8qCjRjF%252bfr3gij2NQ%253d%253d

- **Abadi meets Pakistani Military Production Minister to discuss military and security cooperation**

Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi met the Pakistani Minister of Military Production to discuss strengthening the military and security cooperation between the two countries, as well as the war against ISIS, while Islamabad affirmed its readiness to support Iraq in all fields. Prime Minister information office said in a statement received by IraqiNews.com, "Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi met in his office on Thursday the Pakistani Minister of Military Production Mr. Rana Tanweer and his occupying delegation."

More Details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/baghdad-politics/abadi-discuss-pakistan-military-security-cooperation-war-isis/>

- **Minister of Transport Meets With Iranian Ambassador**

Transport Minister Baqer al-Zubaidi discussed with the Iranian ambassador to Iraq, Hassan Danaeifar bilateral relations. According to a ministry statement said "al-Zubaidi discussed with the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic in Iraq, Hassan Danaeifar bilateral relations between the two friendly countries and ways of enhancing them to serve the common interests between the two fled."

More Details:

http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?8iPZ%252fR%252b5sMZr4XGBzvVZxg%253d%253d

- **78 ISIS elements killed during operation in Muhammadi area in western Anbar**

Media officials with the Ministry of Defense announced on Thursday the killing of 78 ISIS elements during the liberation operation of the area of al-Muhammadi in western Anbar. The officials said in a statement obtained by IraqiNews.com, "The Anti-Terrorism Directorate killed 21 terrorists in the liberation operation of al-Muhammadi area," adding also that, "57 terrorists had been killed in air strikes by the international coalition aviation," while pointed out that, "Orders were given to the families to stay in their homes after placing white flags over the houses."

More Details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/78-isis-elements-killed-operation-muhammadi-area-western-anbar/>

- **John Kerry: ISIS responsible for genocide**

Secretary of State John Kerry said Thursday that the United States has determined that ISIS' action against the Yazidis and other minority groups in Iraq and Syria constitutes genocide. "My purpose here today is to assert in my judgment, (ISIS) is responsible for genocide against groups in areas

under its control including Yazidis, Christians and Shiite Muslims," he said, during a news conference at the State Department.

More Details:

<http://english.shafaaq.com/politics/17523-john-kerry-isis-responsible-for-genocide.html>

- **ISIS loots civilian houses west of Anbar to finance its members**

Haditha District Police in Anbar province announced on Thursday, that ISIS militants looted and robbed the civilians houses in al-Judafiya area west of Anbar to finance its members in preparation to escape from the western areas of the province. The spokesman of Haditha police's 14th emergency regiment Lieutenant Saud Harb al-Obeidi said in a statement received by IraqiNews.com, "ISIS members looted and robbed the houses of the civilians in al-Judafiya area in al-Baghdadi vicinity (160 km west of Anbar), and transferred the loot to Heet and Qaim to sell it at a public auction."

More Details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/isis-loots-civilian-houses-west-anbar-finance-members/>

- **Iraq's Sadr Spurns Calls To Drop Sit-In over 'Bastion Of Corruption'**

Influential Iraqi Shi'ite Muslim cleric Moqtada al-Sadr rejected calls to cancel a planned sit-in on Friday at the gates of Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone, which he called "a bastion of support for corruption". He published a statement on his website on Thursday in response to politicians who asked him to drop the protest over concern that it could lead to violence near the sensitive district, which houses government offices and embassies. Sadr called for the sit-in last week to press Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi to replace cabinet ministers with technocrats unaffiliated with political parties in order to counter systemic political patronage that has abetted corruption.

More Details:

<http://www.oann.com/iraqs-sadr-spurns-calls-to-drop-sit-in-over-bastion-of-corruption/>

- **Iraq halts exports through pipeline to pressure Kurds – Iraq Oil Report**

Iraq's central government has stopped oil exports through the Kurdish region to pressure the local authorities to resume talks about an oil revenue sharing agreement, the Iraq Oil Report said, citing Iraqi Oil Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi. Iraq's state-run North Oil Company has stopped pumping crude produced at fields it operates in the Kirkuk area through a pipeline to Turkey, three sources told Reuters on March 14.

More Details:

<http://www.euronews.com/newswires/3167904-iraq-halts-exports-through-pipeline-to-pressure-kurds-iraq-oil-report/>

- **Isis executes six 'spies' in Iraq accused of leaking militants' details**

Isis has purportedly executed six men on accusations of spying against the jihadist group, including the alleged leaking of militants' details. In a new trailer for a seemingly forthcoming Isis execution video, images appeared to show the six men being killed by gunshots, beheading and – in one case – a man having his head blown off with explosives tied round his neck.

More Details:

<http://english.shafaq.com/security/17524-isis-executes-six-%E2%80%98spies%E2%80%99-in-iraq-accused-of-leaking-militants%E2%80%99-details.html?>

- **Iraq's Wasit governor calls for cultural activities with Iran**

Governor of Iraqi Wasit province in a meeting with Iran's cultural attaché to Baghdad on Wednesday called for the development of cultural relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran. Referring to the cultural commonalities between the two friendly and neighboring countries, Malik Khalaf al-Darjee said Iran's support of the Iraqi people in recent years indicates the high morale of Iranian authority in backing the oppressed nations.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82005778/?>

- **UN 'very worried' about thousands fleeing Iraq battle**

The United Nations (UN) said on Thursday it was concerned that many of the 35,000 people recently displaced by fighting in Iraq's Anbar province were still very close to the front lines. Thousands of civilians have been fleeing Hit, 145km west of Baghdad, as security forces close in on fighters from the Daesh group hunkered down in the city. "The UN doesn't have full access and we are very worried that some of the families who are escaping are in areas very close to the front lines," the UN's humanitarian co-ordinator in Iraq, Lise Grande, said in a statement.

More Details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/ab47b8b8-cc1e-489e-bb2e-f8e2587acf5e.aspx?>

- **Iraq's Shia power struggle**

Amid fears of a growing government crisis, tensions between Iraq's Shia factions are widening as the country remains mired in violence and multiple political and ethno-sectarian conflicts. The rift has

been amplified by prominent Shia leader Muqtada Al-Sadr mobilising tens of thousands of his followers across Iraq to protest against the lack of initiatives by Shia Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi to fix his dysfunctional government and combat corruption.

More Details:

<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/News/15809/19/Iraq%E2%80%99s-Shia-power-struggle--.aspx?>

- **Iraq says plane went down in Kirkuk**

An Iraqi military aircraft was downed in northeastern Kirkuk and all crew members were killed, Iraqi Joint Operations Command said in a statement Wednesday. ISIS issued its own statement saying it shot down an Iraqi military plane with a 57mm artillery gun in Huwajja, in southeastern Kirkuk province. All five crew members on the plane were killed, ISIS said.

More Details:

<http://edition.cnn.com/2016/03/16/middleeast/iraqi-plane-downed/index.html?>

- **Iraq, Iran: Natural Gas Pipeline will open by the end of March**

Iran will begin exporting natural gas to Iraq by July through a newly constructed pipeline, according to a high-ranking Iranian executive close to the project, Fars News Agency reported March 17. The executive said construction on the pipeline has been completed and that Iranian President Hassan Rouhani would attend the pipeline's unveiling on March 27 or March 28. Iran and Iraq have a long and complicated history.

More Details:

<http://www.naturalgaseurope.com/iraq-iran-natural-gas-pipeline-will-open-by-the-end-of-march-28688?>

2. SYRIA

- **Top U.S. Defense Officials Refute Putin's Syria Claims**

Top U.S. defense officials are launching renewed criticism at Russian President Vladimir Putin, charging that Moscow's military intervention in Syria failed to achieve its stated goals, and that it likely lessened Russia's standing in the region. "Russia said it was coming into Syria to fight ISIL but that's not what it did," Defense Secretary Ash Carter told members of the Senate Armed Services Committee on Thursday, using an acronym for the Islamic State terror group. "Their military has only prolonged the civil war, propped up [Syrian President Bashar al-Assad] and, as of now, we haven't seen whether Russia retained the leverage to find a diplomatic way forward."

More Details:

http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2016/03/18/2016031800466.html?

- **Medical relief ‘single most difficult issue’ for humanitarian access in Syria – UN advisor**

The advisor to the UN envoy on Syria today stressed the need to obtain Government permits to dispatch aid convoys to the remaining six of the 18 besieged locations and stressed that “the issue of medical relief continues to be the single most difficult issue in humanitarian access work,” with medical items and personnel are being taken off the incoming relief vehicles.

More Details:

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=53478#.Vuu07uKLTcs>

- **Putin says Russia can make powerful Syria comeback**

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday promised further support for the legitimate government of Syria. "(The support) is comprehensive: financial assistance, supplies of weapons and armaments, intelligence support, and staff assistance in planning operations," Putin said. He added that the Russian troops stay in Syria would be enough to cope with the tasks set to them.

More Details:

<http://english.cntv.cn/2016/03/18/VIDEP8tD1pWRzAu8eJKcqkky160318.shtml?>

- **Australia's Syria welcome in Canada shadow**

Canada has resettled 1000 Syrian refugees for every one Australia has welcomed to its shores in the past six months. More than 26,000 refugees have been given a new home in Canada since November and another 10,000 are in the pipeline for resettlement this year. Of those already accepted, 14,992 came under a government intake while 8960 were privately sponsored.

More Details:

<http://www.9news.com.au/national/2016/03/18/14/18/australia-s-syria-welcome-in-canada-shadow?>

- **Britain must speak up for Syria's genocide victims**

Why has it taken so long for the United States to acknowledge that there is a genocide happening in the Middle East? Yesterday John Kerry, the US Secretary of State, said that the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (Isil) is ethnically cleansing “Yazidis, Christians and Shia Muslims”. The White House has hitherto avoided sectarian language for fear of pouring fuel on the fire – but the fire is already

out of control. Antoine Audo, Chaldean bishop of Aleppo, said this week that two thirds of Syrian Christians had either been killed or driven away from his country.

More Details:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/telegraph-view/12197265/Britain-must-speak-up-for-Syrias-genocide-victims.html>

- **Qatari Mission Organises Side Event On Syria**

Qatar Permanent Mission to the United Nations Office in Geneva, organised here Thursday an event on Syria entitled: "Syria After Five Years in Pursuit of Democracy and Accountability", Qatar News Agency (QNA) reported. The event was held on the sidelines of the 31st session of the Human Rights Council currently being held in Geneva until March 24.

More Details:

<http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v8/wn/newsworld.php?id=1226305>

- **How to salvage Syria's economy**

After five years of brutal conflict, which started with peaceful protests against decades of dictatorship, the Syrian crisis has reached a turning point. The military intervention of Russia has enabled the regime of President Bashar al-Assad to consolidate its position and dictate terms to its Syrian opponents - and their hesitant Western and Arab backers. The alternatives are either acceptance of a political process designed essentially to legitimise a relaunched Assad regime, or else further death, destruction and depopulation.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2016/03/salvage-syria-economy-160317092133422.html?>

- **Can rebuild Syria mission in no time: Putin**

Russian President, Vladimir Putin on Thursday declared his country's Syria mission a resounding success, but stressed Russia would continue to support the Syrian government and could build up its military presence in the region again within hours if necessary. Speaking in the Kremlin at a medal ceremony for military personnel who served in Syria, Mr. Putin sought to dampen any talk of a rift with Damascus, saying Moscow's partial withdrawal from Syria had been agreed with President Bashar al-Assad.

More Details:

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/can-rebuild-syria-mission-in-no-time-putin/article8370052.ece?>

- **Residents of Liberated City of Adra in Syria Start Returning Home**

The city with population 20,000 was attacked by the Nusra Front, a jihadist group banned in several countries including Russia, in 2013. Since then, its population decreased to 500 people. According to him, the issues of electric supplies to the city, as well as telephone connection and the access to clean drinking water, have been settled.

More Details:

<http://sputniknews.com/middleeast/20160318/1036502385/residents-libirated-adra-syria-start-returning-home.html?>

- **Haddad: Syria has paid for Russian weaponry according to joint contracts**

Syria's Ambassador in Moscow Riyad Haddad said that Syria has paid for the Russian weaponry sent from Russia according to the contracts signed between the two sides. In an interview with the Russian Novosti News Agency, the Syrian Ambassador underlined the strategic Syrian-Russian partnership over the years.

More Details:

<http://sana.sy/en/?p=72269>

3. IRAN

- **Iraq, Iran: Natural Gas Pipeline Will Open by the End of March**

Iran will begin exporting natural gas to Iraq by July through a newly constructed pipeline, according to a high-ranking Iranian executive close to the project, Fars News Agency reported March 17. The executive said construction on the pipeline has been completed and that Iranian President Hassan Rouhani would attend the pipeline's unveiling on March 27 or March 28. Iran and Iraq have a long and complicated history.

More Details:

<http://www.naturalgaseurope.com/iraq-iran-natural-gas-pipeline-will-open-by-the-end-of-march-28688?>

- **GOP at war against 'peace' between US and Iran: Activist**

Republican lawmakers in the US Senate are trying to sabotage a possible rapprochement or relaxation of tensions between the United States and Iran, says Brian Becker, an American political commentator and antiwar activist. Becker, national coordinator of the ANSWER Coalition, a protest umbrella group consisting of many antiwar and civil rights organizations, made the remarks in a phone interview with Press TV on Thursday.

More Details:

<http://www.iran-daily.com/News/138354.html?>

- **Holding Fire Festival throughout Iran symbolizes rejection of Iranian regime in its entirety**

On Tuesday, March 15, Iranian people, especially the youth, widely held the national festivity of Fire Festival in various districts of Tehran and in other cities face to face with the ominous clerical regime. The Fire Festival was held despite the fact that officials from both factions of the ruling clique strongly warned people through all means of communication not to hold this ceremony and made every attempt to turn this festivity that has become a symbol of protest against the medieval rule of mullahs into an apolitical ceremony.

More Details:

<http://www.ncr-iran.org/en/ncri-statements/iran-protests/20027-holding-fire-festival-throughout-iran-symbolizes-rejection-of-iranian-regime-in-its-entirety?>

- **Republican senators propose stricter sanctions on Iran**

A group of US Republican senators on Thursday unveiled legislation that requires the Obama administration to impose stricter sanctions on every sector of Iran's economy that supports the country's ballistic missile program.

More Details:

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/republican-senators-propose-stricter-sanctions-on-iran/?>

- **Washington crimps Europe's Iran trade windfall**

Iran may be open for business following the historic nuclear accord with the West, but for European companies the road to Tehran still leads through Washington. And this has European leaders grumbling that the U.S. Treasury Department is blocking the way for European firms to renew trading ties with Iran.

More Details:

<http://www.politico.eu/article/europe-iran-trade-dividend-washington-influence/>?

- **Iran in talks over making parts for Airbus**

Iran could begin making parts for Airbus aircraft under plans being discussed following January's historic agreement to purchase 118 jetliners from the European manufacturer, according to airliners.net's civil aviation page.

More details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82006455/>?

- **Iran seen escaping U.N. sanctions over missiles due to ambiguous resolution**

Iran will likely escape new United Nations sanctions, though the U.N. Security Council could issue a public reprimand for recent launches of what Western officials described as ballistic missiles capable of carrying a nuclear warhead, diplomats said.

More Details:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-missiles-un-idUSKCN0WJ2XY>

- **WTO members willing to engage with Iran: Chief**

Members of the World Trade Organisation are willing to engage with Iran on its accession to the body, but a lot will depend on Tehran's drive to make proposals during the early stages, the WTO's director general said on Thursday.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82006422/>?

- **Insurers in talks with the US to ease reinsurance for Iran oil shipments**

Major global shipping insurance companies are in talks with the US government seeking exemption from sanctions to be able to adequately cover cargoes of Iranian crude and oil products, senior industry officials said Friday. The multi-billion dollar insurance industry that covers ships and cargoes linked to Iran is proving to be a non-starter because most of the companies that deal with reinsurance are based in the US.

More Details:

<https://www.platts.com/latest-news/shipping/singapore/insurers-in-talks-with-the-us-to-ease-reinsurance-27371361>?

- **Commander: Iran to Further Reinvigorate Naval Power Next Year**

Iranian Navy Commander Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari announced the country's plans to further bolster its naval power in the new Iranian year (starting on March 20). "We are after increasing our military and combat power by training human resources in the New Year," Sayyari said, addressing a ceremony in the Southern city of Khorramshahr on Thursday.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13941227000481>

4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **How Palestinians produce guns out of home appliances**

As the escalation in violence continues unabated, more and more shooting attacks are being carried out. Palestinian terrorists are turning to improvised, home made weapons to carry out attacks against Israeli security forces and civilians. But how are these weapons made? IDF and police located weapons and gun-manufacturing machinery in the village of Sawahira near Jerusalem on Wednesday.

More Details:

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4779604,00.html>

- **Year after election, 46% of Israelis see alternative to PM**

The poll was taken in honor of Thursday's anniversary of the March 17, 2015 general election in which Netanyahu's Likud Party emerged victorious by a wide margin. Forty-six percent Israelis believe there will be a replacement for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the near future, according to a Panels Research poll taken Tuesday and Wednesday for The Jerusalem Post and its Hebrew sister paper, Maariv Sof Hashavua.

More Details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Year-after-election-46-percent-of-Israelis-see-alternative-to-PM-448370>

- **Netanyahu tweets his salary**

The prime minister posted a picture of his pay stub on his Twitter account. While he makes NIS 48,815, he pays almost 45% in income taxes, and takes home NIS 17,645. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu published his pay stub in a rare move earlier this week, showing citizens that he makes NIS 48,815 every month, which, after taxes and other expenses, amounts to a net income of NIS 17,645 (\$4,583).

More Details:

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4779305,00.html>

- **Future of legal battle against BDS meets in Israel**

45 lawyers, scholars, and judges from around the world convene in Israel for an eight-day seminar to meet with top Israeli legal experts and learn ways to fight BDS, employing their legal expertise. An eight-day seminar, bringing 45 lawyers, scholars, and judges from all over the world to aid Israel in its fight against BDS, started earlier this week in Israel.

More Details:

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4779935,00.html>

- **5 indicted in assault on Arab janitor in Jerusalem**

Five Israeli Jews were indicted Thursday for attacking a Jerusalem janitor because he is Arab. The five defendants, four of them minors, were indicted in the Jerusalem District Court, the Haaretz daily reported. According to the indictment, after a night of partying in central Jerusalem earlier this month, the alleged assailants went looking for an Arab to beat up. Arriving at Liberty Bell Park at about 7 a.m., the five spotted the janitor working and began cursing him, saying, "You Arab son of a bitch, your Muhammad is a pig."

More Details:

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/5-indicted-in-assault-on-arab-janitor-in-jerusalem/>

- **Israel Continues Shift towards Africa, Hosts Prominent African Figures**

Israel is hosting a number of prominent and influential figures from Africa this week as it continues promoting an agenda to expand and enhance its relations with the continent. Director General of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr. Dore Gold met this morning, March 14, with a visiting delegation consisting of nine Muslim religious figures from African countries such as the Republic of South Sudan, Zambia, Cameroon, Kenya, Rwanda, and Ethiopia.

More Details:

<http://www.breakingisraelnews.com/63821/israel-continues-shift-towards-africa-hosts-prominent-african-figures-jerusalem/#qeWLIHb6mXhIXk94.97>

- **Jimmy Carter: President Obama can still advance Israeli/Palestinian peace**

Since the time of President Harry Truman, the United States has assisted Israel, including persistent efforts to forge peace agreements with her neighbors. Our government has also vetoed more than

30 U.N. Security Council resolutions that were critical of Israel, including many that were supported unanimously by all other Security Council members, and for several decades our support has included massive economic and military aid, amounting to about \$8 million per day. This financial commitment is now being renewed, unless Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu decides to wait and conclude the deal with the next president.

More Details:

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2016/03/17/israel-palestine-peace-two-state-solution-jimmy-carter-obama-camp-david-column/81808662/>

- **Dennis Ross: Next US administration will want to improve ties with Israel**

Former US envoy to Mideast says whoever takes over the White House will realize “you don't need a problem with Israel when dealing with all the other problems in the region.” Regardless of the problems that existed under the Obama presidency, the next administration’s initial instinct will be to improve ties with Israel, Dennis Ross said this week.

More Details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Politics-And-Diplomacy/Dennis-Ross-Next-US-administration-will-want-to-improve-ties-with-Israel-448356>

- **Israel’s land seizure undermines Palestinian state prospects – EU**

The European Union has joined the chorus of international condemnation of Israel’s latest massive land appropriation in the West Bank, claiming that such a move hinders the process towards a two-state solution and prospects of peace with Palestinians.

More Details:

<https://www.rt.com/news/336043-israel-land-grab-eu/>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Beirut and Mount Lebanon’s trash finally on the move**

The collection of Beirut and Mount Lebanon’s trash will begin Friday when the Cabinet’s proposed solution will take effect, Interior Minister Nouhad Machnouk said Thursday.

More Details:

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2016/Mar-18/342840-beirut-and-mount-lebanons-trash-finally-on-the-move.ashx>

- **King concludes Brussels visit with milestone deals with EU**

His Majesty King Abdullah on Thursday returned home from Brussels, where he reached landmark agreements with the union leaders, including simplified rules of origin, a key goal sought in the partnership with Europe, a Royal Court statement said. The new rules will go into effect in July for a period of 10 years.

More Details:

<http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/king-concludes-brussels-visit-milestone-deals-eu>

- **'Japan aware of regional challenges facing Jordan, ready to offer support'**

Both Jordan and Egypt are moderate Muslim countries, and they have a role in spreading the “ideology” of moderate Islam for the people of Japan to know more about the religion to counter Daesh and similar terrorist groups, a Japanese official said recently.

More Details:

<http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/japan-aware-regional-challenges-facing-jordan-ready-offer-support>

- **Jordan: King Abdallah discusses Syria, Middle East in Brussels**

Federica Mogherini, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, met on Wednesday 16 March 2016 in Brussels with the King of Jordan Abdullah II to reaffirm the EU engagement with Jordan and to discuss the political and security situation in the region. At the meeting, Mogherini highlighted the EU's will to “strengthen and broaden the longstanding EU-Jordan partnership in light of the challenging domestic and regional situation”, the EU Diplomatic Service said in a press release.

More Details:

<http://enpi-info.eu/medportal/news/latest/44242/Jordan:-King-Abdallah-discusses-Syria,-Middle-East-in-Brussels>

- **For Syrian Refugees and Lebanese In Lebanon, The Road To Europe Is The One Less Traveled**

By anybody’s reckoning, Ghayth Tawashi has made a success of himself. The urbane 40-something owns his own construction business and employs two maids to take care of his home and four children in Tripoli, Lebanon’s second-largest city. But that wasn’t enough for Tawashi. He wanted a slice of the European dream, where, he had heard, Syrian refugees fleeing war were given houses, jobs and, most enticingly, citizenship.

More Details:

<http://www.ibtimes.com/syrian-refugees-lebanese-lebanon-road-europe-one-less-traveled-2338519>

- **King returns home following Brussels trip**

His Majesty King Abdullah II on Thursday returned home following a working visit to Brussels, during which he held talks with senior EU officials on ways to bolster ties between Jordan and the union as well as the latest developments at the regional and international arenas.

More Details:

http://petra.gov.jo/Public_News/Nws_NewsDetails.aspx?lang=2&site_id=1&NewsID=243748&CatID=13

- **Border guards receive 101 Syrian refugees**

A total of 101 Syrian refugees from various age groups, entered into the Kingdom through various crossing points during the last 24 hours, a military source said on Thursday. The source said border guards provided the refugees with the necessary aid before transferring them to refugee camps. The Jordanian Royal Medical Services' personnel administered first aid to refugee patients through their medical centers at the borders, the source added.

More Details:

http://petra.gov.jo/Public_News/Nws_NewsDetails.aspx?lang=2&site_id=1&NewsID=243605&CatID=13

- **Report: New Members Join IS from Lebanon**

A group of young men from the Palestinian refugee camp of Ain el-Hilweh have joined the ranks of the extremist Islamic State group, raising the number of new members from Lebanon to 14, al-Akhbar daily reported on Friday. A source close to the IS confirmed to the daily that the group has called these youth to follow security training sessions in order to task them afterward with missions inside Lebanon.

More Details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/204857-report-new-members-join-is-from-lebanon>

- **Ghassan Salameh Eyeing to Head UNESCO**

Lebanon's ex-Culture Minister Ghassan Salameh has announced his bid for the leadership of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization that is based in Paris. He made the announcement during an interview with LBCI TV on Thursday. If chosen, he would replace Bulgaria's

Irina Bokova, whose term expires in 2017 and who has been nominated for the post of U.N. secretary-general.

More Details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/204851-ghassan-salameh-eyeing-to-head-unesco>

- **Death Toll of Pilgrims in Jordan Bus Crash Rises to 16**

The number of Palestinian pilgrims killed when their bus overturned in a remote area of southern Jordan rose overnight from 14 to 16, including nine who had been pinned under the vehicle, officials said Thursday. The bus veered off the road in the accident late Wednesday near Jordan's border with Saudi Arabia, Farid Sharea, a spokesman for Jordan's Civil Defense department, told the Voice of Palestine radio station.

More Details:

<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/774612/death-toll-of-pilgrims-in-jordan-bus-crash-rises-to-16>

6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Kuwait security chief to Obama: we're not free-riders**

Kuwait is not a "free-rider" in US-led campaigns against terrorism and other threats, a senior Kuwaiti security official said on Thursday, rejecting comments by President Barack Obama critical of some US allies. Shaikh Thamer Al Sabah, President of Kuwait's National Security Bureau, was referring to Obama's remarks to The Atlantic magazine last week in which he said some states in the Gulf and Europe were "free-riders" who called for US action without getting involved themselves.

More Details:

<http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/kuwait/kuwait-security-chief-to-obama-we-re-not-free-riders-1.1692655>

- **Oman, Belarus aim to Boost Trade, Tourism Ties**

Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidi, secretary general in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) received in his office on Wednesday, Vladimir Koltovich, Minister of Trade in Belarus. They reviewed the bilateral relations and discussed means of enhancing trade, industrial, tourism and cultural relations.

More Details:

<http://www.muscatdaily.com/Archive/Oman/Oman-Belarus-aim-to-boost-trade-tourism-ties-4ncn?>

- **Qatar, UAE discuss regional development**

His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, here today, received His Highness Shaikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, the Amir of Qatar, WAM reported. Ways to promote bilateral relations in the interest of the two countries and their people were discussed, as well as regional, Arab and international developments.

More Details:

<http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/716885>

- **Qatar slams Israeli seizure of Palestinian lands**

Qatar has condemned the continuing Israeli violations against the Palestinian people and the confiscation of Palestinian lands in the occupied West Bank. In a statement yesterday, the Foreign Ministry said the ongoing settlement measures taken by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territories contradict all international conventions, laws and norms. It stressed that these hostile practices could undermine peace efforts and implementation of the two-state solution.

More Details:

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/news/qatar/374634/qatar-slams-israeli-seizure-of-palestinian-lands?>

- **Emir receives messages from leaders of Kuwait and Bahrain**

HH the Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani received a message from the Emir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmed al-Jaber al-Sabah, pertaining to bilateral relations between Qatar and Kuwait and means of enhancing them along with issues of common concern. The message was handed over by Kuwait's Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohamed Khaled al-Hamad al-Sabah when the Emir received him at the Emiri Diwan yesterday. The meeting was attended by HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa al-Thani.

More Details:

<http://www.gulf-times.com/story/485029/Emir-receives-messages-from-leaders-of-Kuwait-and-?>

- **Kuwait eyes closer partnership with S. Korea on housing projects: minister**

The top Kuwaiti official on housing policy voiced hope Friday for a strong partnership with South Korea, citing its expertise in urban development and smart city construction. Yasser Hassan Abul Sadeq, minister of state for housing affairs, was wrapping up his five-day official visit here. "Through this visit, (we) experienced South Korea's new technologies applied to its smart and eco-friendly cities," he said in an interview with Yonhap News Agency.

More Details:

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/full/2016/03/18/29/1200000000AEN20160318003300320F.html?>

- **UAE, Tajikistan express mutual interest in developing bilateral relations, keenness to drive cooperation towards further growth, development**

The United Arab Emirates and the Republic of Tajikistan today expressed their mutual interest in developing bilateral relations and their keenness to drive their cooperation towards further growth and development, in a way that will realise the aspirations of their leadership and peoples and serve their common interests. The two countries also expressed satisfaction over the level their diplomatic relations since inception where their bilateral and multilateral cooperation has witnessed an ongoing development under an atmosphere of mutual understanding and mutual benefit.

More Details:

<http://www.wam.ae/en/news/emirates/1395293035542.html>

- **Bahrain backs Yemen's unity: Foreign Minister**

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, stated that the important talks held between His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and the President of Yemen, Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi, had stressed the fraternal relations between the two countries. Shaikh Khalid lauded Yemen's supportive positions to the Kingdom of Bahrain, which are highly appreciated by all Bahrainis, who respect and love Yemen and its brotherly people.

More Details:

<http://www.newsofbahrain.com/viewNews.php?ppId=16879&TYPE=Posts&pid=21&MNU=2&SUB=2>

- **Saudi Arabia Says It Will Scale Down Its Yemen Campaign**

Saudi Arabia said Thursday its military coalition will scale down operations in Yemen, an announcement that came as the death toll from an airstrike by the alliance on a market north of the Yemeni capital this week nearly doubled, reaching 119. A U.N. official said 22 children were among those killed on Tuesday in the Hajja province, an area controlled by Yemen's Shiite rebels known as Houthis, the latest in a series of similar airstrikes that have killed hundreds of civilians since the Yemen war began.

More Details:

<http://time.com/4263883/saudi-arabia-yemen-campaign/?>

- **US welcomes Saudi comment on Yemen combat nearing 'end'**

A Saudi announcement that major combat is nearing an end in Yemen was welcomed by Washington Thursday, as the death toll from alliance air strikes on a market rose to 119. The United Nations childrens' agency gave the new toll, nearly three times that previously reported, for the Saudi-led strikes on the market this week in northern Yemen's rebel-held Hajja province.

More Details:

http://www.manilatimes.net/breaking_news/us-welcomes-saudi-comment-on-yemen-combat-nearing-end/

7. EGYPT

- **Egypt plane crash investigation referred to attorney general, indicating foul play**

The Egypt-led committee investigating the crash of a Russian passenger airplane in the Sinai peninsula last October said on Thursday it was referring the case to Egypt's attorney general, the first indication it suspects foul play. After receiving a report on the crash from Russia suggesting suspected criminal activity, the committee decided to refer the case to the attorney general, it said in a statement.

More Details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/egypt-plane-crash-investigation-referred-attorney-general-indicating-foul-play-818446>

- **\$20M in Kuwaiti aid to Egypt for better education for Syrian refugees**

A grant of \$20 million from the Kuwaiti Fund for Arab Economic Development to better education services for Syrian refugees in Egypt was approved by the Cabinet Thursday. The grant will be used in building educational facilities to guarantee that Syrian students will not drop out from schools.

More Details:

<http://thecairopost.youm7.com/news/199675/news/20m-in-kuwaiti-aid-to-egypt-for-better-education-for-syrian-refugees?>

- **Hidden rooms found in search for famed egypt queen's tomb**

Scans of King Tutankhamun's burial chamber have revealed two hidden rooms, Egypt's antiquities minister said Thursday — a discovery that could intensify speculation that the chambers contain the remains of the famed Queen Nefertiti.

More Details:

<http://www.mumbaimirror.com/articleshow/51450469.cms?>

- **Hamas, Egypt count on dialogue to refresh ties**

The dialogue between the Islamic Hamas movement and the Egyptian intelligence officials prepares for opening a new page of ties between the two sides, regardless of who is the winner and who is the loser, according to analysts. The dialogue started in Cairo on Saturday, aiming to fix their ties which were broken in 2013 following the ouster of former Islamist President Mohamed Morsi and Egypt's accusation of Hamas' intervention into its internal affairs.

More Details:

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-03/18/c_135199069.htm?

- **Egypt stocks end week 3.5% higher on investors' euphoria**

Egypt's stock market closed Thursday with gains worth 7.7 billion Egyptian pounds (\$874 million), marking investors' Euphoria over central bank's decision to partially devalue the currency three days ago. The devaluation raised hopes that Egypt could attract more funds from abroad and begin resolving its long-time foreign exchange shortage.

More Details:

<http://amwalalghad.com/en/money-markets/egx/44285-egypt-stocks-end-week-35-higher-on-investors-euphoria.html?>

- **Egypt Buys Mistral; Kitting Out With KA-52 & KA-52K**

Negotiations between Russia and Egypt over communications equipment for the Egyptian Navy's two new Mistral-class helicopter carriers is progressing well. The French made vessels initially intended for Russia had several armament, command-and-control, navigation systems, as well as radio and electronic equipment taken out in accordance with the terms of the cancellation of the sale. The Egyptians now seem to be turning to Russia to help provide these systems, after purchasing navalized Ka-52 helicopters from Moscow. It's believed that Cairo is seeking radio and electronic equipment worth at least \$1 billion USD to equip and operationalize the carriers, amounting to a nice chunk of money for Russia.

More Details:

http://www.defenseindustrydaily.com/russia-to-order-french-mistral-lhds-05749/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+did%2Frss+%28Defense+Industry+Daily%29

- **French wheat exporters to lose out even as Egypt tries to settle fungus dispute**

Even if Egypt can end a policy dispute over wheat imports soon, it will be too little, too late for French exporters struggling to offload stocks after a disappointing marketing year that highlighted the country's reliance on North Africa.

More Details:

<http://www.egyptindependent.com//news/french-wheat-exporters-lose-out-even-egypt-tries-settle-fungus-dispute>

- **Egypt court freezes assets of four rights activists in 2011 illegal funding case**

A judicial committee overseeing a five-year-old investigation into several rights activists accused of receiving illegal funding for their NGOs from foreign sources ordered on Thursday the freezing of assets of four Egyptian human rights activists and their families.

More Details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/193225/Egypt/Politics-/Egypt-court-freezes-assets-of-four-rights-activist.aspx>

- **Egyptian film 'Nawara' opens Luxor International Film Festival**

The Luxor International Film Festival (LIFF) kicked off Thursday with a screening of "Nawara," a film by Egyptian director Hala Khalil, Youm7 reported. The festival is an annual event organized in Egypt's top touristic destination of Luxor. The festival's 5th edition will take place March 17 – 23. It consists mainly of four competitions: Long Narratives, Long Documentaries, Short Films (Narratives and Documentaries) and The International Competition of Freedom Films.

More Details:

<http://thecairopost.youm7.com/news/199704/news/egyptian-film-nawara-opens-luxor-international-film-festival>

- **Cairo Uni. not among top 100 due to 'students' density': head**

Cairo University is unable not rank among the top 100 universities in the world because of "students' density," head of the university Gaber Nassar told youm7 Thursday. "The university is compelled to lose points in the ranking, for example, the ideal university in the ranking has 50,000 students, while at Cairo University we have 300,000 students," Nassar said.

More Details:

<http://thecairopost.youm7.com/news/199692/news/cairo-uni-not-among-top-100-due-to-students-density-head>

8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Russia to supply 40 Mi-28 attack helicopters to Algeria -Interfax**

Russia will deliver 40 Mi-28NE attack helicopters to Algeria in line with a bilateral contract, Interfax news agency said on Friday, quoting a source in Russia's arms exporting bodies. The Mi-28 helicopter, dubbed "Night Hunter" by the Russian military, is said by arms experts to be among the best in the world in its class. It is capable of carrying out missions day and night and in most adverse weather conditions.

More Details:

http://af.reuters.com/article/algeriaNews/idAFL5N16Q0N8?feedType=RSS&feedName=algeriaNews&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+reuters%2FAfricaAlgeriaNews+%28News+%2F+Africa+%2F+Algeria+News%29&rpc=401

- **President of High Islamic Council of Mali hails Algeria's national reconciliation experience**

President of the High Islamic Council of Mali, Mahmoud Mohamed Dicko on Thursday in Algiers hailed the experience of Algeria in terms of national reconciliation, dubbing it a "social project" that can be a source of inspiration for other countries to restore peace and stability.

More Details:

<http://www.aps.dz/en/algeria/11521-president-of-high-islamic-council-of-mali-hails-algeria%E2%80%99s-national-reconciliation-experience?>

- **Algeria's Gas Production Seen Booming After 2018**

The United States Energy Information Administration (EIA) says it expects to see Algeria's gas production to experience a boom from 2018 after years of stagnation thanks to the entry into production of several gas fields in the southwestern part of the country.

More Details:

<http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v8/wn/newsworld.php?id=1226302>

- **Horror still fresh a year after Tunisia museum attack**

Employees at the Bardo Museum are grappling with lasting trauma as tourists remain scarce. An attendant points to the bullet-scarred wall of the large Carthage Room inside Tunisia's Bardo Museum. Another bullet hole marks a nearby glass case, displaying a statue from the second century AD.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/03/horror-fresh-year-tunisia-museum-attack-160314115053039.html?>

- **Tunisia's youth must shun Islamic extremism, set example - France**

France on Thursday called on Tunisia's youth to resist the path of Islamic extremism and set the example for the rest of the region, while Paris vowed to firm up security and economic ties with Tunis as it struggles with rising Islamist militancy.

More Details:

http://af.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idAFKCN0WJ33F?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+reuters%2FAFRICAWorldNews+%28News+%2F+AFRICA+%2F+World+News%29&rpc=401

- **David Cameron's Plan To Use Navy Vessels Near Libyan Coast To Deter Migrants Labelled 'Outrageous'**

David Cameron wants to deploy Royal Navy vessels close to the coast of Libya to deter thousands of migrants from embarking on the perilous sea journey to Europe this summer in a plan that has been labelled "outrageous". The Prime Minister told European Union leaders at a summit in Brussels that he is extending the deployment of HMS Enterprise on anti-trafficking operations in the central Mediterranean at least until the summer.

More Details:

http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/david-cameron-navy-vessels-near-libyan-coast-to-deter-migrants_uk_56bac1ce4b0cc1ede8bd66b

- **Unity Government aims to save Libya, but has to get in first**

The United States, Europe and United Nations have all pinned their hopes for resolving Libya's chaos and blocking the Islamic State group's growth there on a newly announced unity government. The problem is: It's not clear how the government can actually get into the country.

More Details:

http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/M/ML_LIBYA_DISUNITY_GOVERNMENT?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&CTIME=2016-03-18-03-44-20

- **Pentagon Denies Clear Evidence Its Libya Strike Killed Serbian Diplomats**

Evidence mounts that two Serbian diplomats, held as hostages, were among the collateral damage of a US airstrike in Libya against Daesh. On February 19, US President Barack Obama ordered an airstrike on a Daesh training camp near Sabratha, Libya. The primary target of the strike, which involved both jets and drones, was Nouredine Chouchane, the alleged "senior facilitator" for Daesh in Libya who had been implicated in two deadly attacks in his native Tunisia last year.

More Details:

<http://sputniknews.com/military/20160318/1036492233/pentagon-denies-clear-evidence-its-libya-strike-killed-serbs.html#ixzz46ALhC5TZ>

- **Morocco Orders 84 UN Peacekeepers Out of Western Sahara**

Morocco has ordered 84 U.N. peacekeepers out of Western Sahara after Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called Moroccan authority over the territory an "occupation." Morocco, which considers the area as part of Morocco itself, accused Ban of giving up his "neutrality" on the matter. The Foreign Ministry gave the U.N. mission three days to withdraw its members, calling its decision "irreversible."

More Details:

<http://www.voanews.com/content/morocco-asks-un-to-remove-84-staffers-from-west-sahara-mission-source-says/3241878.html?>

- **Morocco to resume contact with EU amid disputes**

Morocco's government has announced its intention to resume contacts with the European Union amid disputes between the country and the international community over Western Sahara, the Associated Press reports.

More Details:

[http://www.panarmenian.net/eng/news/208360/?](http://www.panarmenian.net/eng/news/208360/)

9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **NATO confirms no casualties as helicopter makes hard landing in Helmand**

A helicopter belonging to the NATO-led Resolute Support (RS) mission made a hard landing in southern Helmand province of Afghanistan today. The alliance the confirmed the incident and said there were no casualties as the helicopter was recovered from the incident area.

More Details:

<http://www.khaama.com/nato-confirms-no-casualties-as-helicopter-makes-hard-landing-in-helmand-0376?>

- **Afghan rights activist, entrepreneurs included in Young Global Leaders list**

A prominent women's rights activist and ex-member of the parliament Farkhunda Zahra Naderi has been included along with two prominent entrepreneurs among the 2016 class of the Young Global Leaders by World Economic Forum. World Economic Forum is a Geneva-based non-profit foundation which selects the most enterprising, innovative, socially minded, and exceptional leaders under the age of 40, each year.

More Details:

<http://www.khaama.com/afghan-rights-activist-entrepreneurs-included-in-young-global-leaders-list-0375?>

- **U.S. MILITARY DISCIPLINES TROOPS OVER KUNDUZ HOSPITAL BOMBING**

U.S. military personnel involved in the bombing of a hospital in Afghanistan in 2015 that killed 42 people have been disciplined but none face criminal charges. A U.S. Air Force gunship attacked the Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) facility in Kunduz, northern Afghanistan, on October 3 as Taliban insurgents overrun the city. President Barack Obama apologized for the incident but MSF called for an international investigation into the incident, which has still not taken place.

More Details:

<http://europe.newsweek.com/kunduz-hospital-attack-msf-438243?rm=eu>

- **Afghanistan: We are the ones who remain**

For over 30 years, the people of Afghanistan have lived in a state of near-constant violence. With almost one million displaced within their own country and countless others on the move, no segment of society is left untouched.

More Details:

<https://www.icrc.org/en/document/afghanistan-violence-displacement?>

- **Afghanistan: "Humanitarian concerns are growing, yet international attention is dwindling" says ICRC president**

"There are more displaced people, more war-wounded and more disabled people. Humanitarian concerns are growing, yet international attention is dwindling. It seems that the more the Afghan people suffer, the less attention there is on them," said the president of the ICRC.

More Details:

<https://www.icrc.org/en/document/afghanistan-humanitarian-concerns-are-growing-yet-international-attention-dwindling-says?>

- **India-Afghanistan Friendship Dam irrigation sluice gate successfully tested**

The irrigation sluice gate of the major Salma Dam, Afghanistan-India Friendship Dam, was successfully tested as the construction work of the dam is close to completion. The Indian authorities called the successful test of the irrigation sluice gate as 'another milestone' achieved in India-Afghanistan Friendship Dam. The project is scheduled to be completed by June, 2016. by M/s. WAPCOS, a central public sector unit under the Ministry of Water Resources, which is executing the construction work.

More Details:

<http://www.khaama.com/india-afghanistan-friendship-dam-irrigation-sluice-gate-successfully-tested-0374?>

- **'Lack of substance' preventing Putin's visit to Pakistan, says Russian ambassador**

Moscow believes that there are still not enough reasons to justify Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to Islamabad. "The problem is that usually the purpose of the visit is not participation in ceremonies. The visit should have some substance," Russian Ambassador Alexey Dedov said at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), where he was delivering a lecture on Pak-Russia relations.

More Details:

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1246419/lack-of-substance-preventing-putins-visit-to-pakistan-says-russian-ambassador>

- **Militants planning attacks during Nowruz in Kabul, US embassy alert says**

The US Embassy in Kabul has issued alerts to its citizens in the country regarding possible attacks planned by insurgents to target Nowruz celebrations in Kabul. "The U.S. Embassy in Kabul has

received reports that due to Nawruz, the Afghan New Year (20-21 March) insurgents are planning disruptive activities aimed to target celebrations in Kabul City, Kabul Province, Afghanistan,” the alert by the embassy said.

More Details:

<http://www.khaama.com/militants-planning-attacks-during-nowruz-in-kabul-us-embassy-alert-says-0372>

- **Prince Harry opens about serving in Afghanistan in emotional interview**

Prince Harry has said he was "broken" when a security breach forced him to quickly leave his military deployment in Afghanistan in 2008. He told Good Morning America on Thursday he felt he was abandoning men serving with him when security officials rushed him back to Britain after news of his frontline deployment was published.

More Details:

<http://www.channel24.co.za/News/International/watch-prince-harry-opens-about-serving-in-afghanistan-in-emotional-interview-20160318?>

- **ICRC to expand activities in Afghanistan: visiting president**

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) will step up its relief operations in Afghanistan to address the needs of war-affected communities in the Asian country, visiting ICRC President said on Friday. "There are more displaced people, more war-wounded and more disabled people. Humanitarian concerns are growing, yet international attention is dwindling. It seems that the more the Afghan people suffer, the less attention there is on them," Peter Maurer told reporters at a press briefing on the last day of his five-day visit Friday.

More Details:

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-03/18/c_135201598.htm?

10. TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **PKK-affiliated TAK claims responsibility for Ankara bombing**

TAK, which is affiliated with the PKK terrorist group, has claimed responsibility for a suicide bomb attack that killed at least 37 people in Ankara in a statement released on its website on Thursday. TAK has been responsible for multiple terrorist attacks in Turkey, which have targeted tourist locations, military sites and government buildings, resulting in deaths and injuries.

More Details:

<http://www.trtworld.com/turkey/pkk-affiliated-tak-claims-responsibility-for-ankara-bombing-69514>

- **Free trade bosts Turkish exports to Palestine three fold**

Turkey's exports to Palestine rose nine-fold over the last decade thanks to a free trade agreement, a senior representative of a Turkish business organization said on Thursday. "Our exports [to Palestine], which totaled \$9.4 million in 2005, have since increased nine-fold to reach \$82.2 million in 2015," Mustafa Cikrikcioglu, deputy chair of the Turkish Exporters Assembly (TIM), said in a speech at the Turkey-Palestinian Business Forum held by the Turkish Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEIK) in Istanbul.

More Details:

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/turkey/170610/free-trade-bosts-turkish-exports-to-palestine-three-fold>

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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