



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

Barıő Süreci

Ethnic and Secterian Groups

Etnik ve Mezhepsel Gruplar

Non State Actors

Devlet-dıő Aktörler

Relations with the West

Batı'yla İliőkiler

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20 MARCH 2017

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1. IRAQ

- **Iraqi forces penetrate alleys of the Old City of Mosul**

The outskirts of the Old City on the western side of Mosul are witnessing violent clashes between Iraqi forces and armed militants, Al Arabiya News Channel reported. The commander of operations, Abdul Amir Yarallah, said Iraqi forces are operating in a difficult area within the right side of the Old City.

More Details:

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2017/03/20/Iraqi-forces-penetrate-alleys-of-the-Old-City-of-Mosul.html>

- **Two civilians killed, injured in explosion in western Baghdad**

One civilian was killed and another wounded in explosion of a charge blast in western Baghdad, a security source said on Monday.

More Details:

<http://www.thebaghdadpost.com/en/story/8376/Two-civilians-killed-injured-in-explosion-in-western-Baghdad>

- **Iraq buys fighters with Israeli radars**

Israeli military sources revealed on Sunday that Iraq had bought fighter jets with radars made in Israel, Safa News Agency reported.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170320-iraq-buys-fighters-with-israeli-radars/>

- **UK police confirm criminal investigation into Iraq human rights lawyer**

A criminal investigation into a disgraced lawyer who brought false claims against Iraq war veterans has a number of "lines of inquiry", the National Crime Agency (NCA) has said. A file on Phil Shiner, who was struck off last month for dishonestly pursuing torture and murder claims against British troops, has been passed to the agency by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA).

More Details:

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/mar/18/phil-shiner-uk-police-confirm-criminal-investigation-into-iraq-human-rights-lawyer>

- **Six Foreign IS Members Killed in Airstrikes West of Mosul**

Six foreign members of the Islamic State (IS) were killed in airstrikes in western Mosul as the Iraqi forces continue to liberate more areas in the city, the Iraqi military intelligence service said on Sunday. According to the statement made by the Iraqi military intelligence service, one airstrike on Shaarin marketplace in western Mosul killed six foreign members of the Islamic State, including Abdul-Karim(Abu Samir) al-Rusi, a Russian leading the group's so-called Rarek ibn Ziyad battalion and Saleh (Abu Mahyaf) al-Ahmad, who is of Syrian-French origin.

More Details:

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/iraq/337609>

- **Abadi, Trump Set to Discuss Islamic State Battle**

U.S. President Donald Trump will host Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi for talks that are likely to include the ongoing offensive to recapture the key northern city of Mosul from Islamic State militants.

More Details:

<http://www.voanews.com/a/abadi-trump-to-discuss-islamic-state-battle/3773391.html>

- **Battle for Mosul: Who controls what**

In June 2014, Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as ISIS) forces captured Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city. Over two years later, it is ISIL's last stronghold in the country. According to the United Nations, the battle for Mosul has the potential to become one of the largest humanitarian disasters in history.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/interactive/2016/10/battle-mosul-controls-map-161023134534524.html>

- **KRG attending coalition conference against Islamic State**

On Wednesday, Washington will host a major gathering of the international coalition against the Islamic State (IS). It "will be the first meeting of the entire coalition – all 68 members – since 2014," when the war against IS began, Mark Toner, the State Department's Acting Spokesperson, explained. It will also be the first such meeting that a representative of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) will attend. Dr. Fuad Hussein, Chief of Staff to KRG President Massoud Barzani, will represent Erbil at Wednesday's conference.

More Details:

<http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/Analysis/075b9277-a214-4db4-87d6-7e2455aff838/KRG-attending-coalition-conference-against-Islamic-State>

- **Tens in hiding under rubble as western Mosul battles heighten**

Tens of civilians are sheltering under debris of houses at a district in western Mosul as battles between Iraqi forces and Islamic State militants.

More Details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/tens-hiding-rubble-western-mosul-battles-heighten/>

- **Sectarian militias have no place in Iraq, says Muqtada al-Sadr**

Muqtada al-Sadr, once dubbed "the radical firebrand cleric" in every Western media article that mentioned him, presents himself today, at the age of 43, as a promoter of sectarian tolerance and Iraqi national reconciliation. In his first interview with a foreign journalist for three years, the man who created a Shia militia which fought the Americans and the British for several years of their occupation, told that he wants all militias, including his own, to be disbanded.

More Details:

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/muqtada-al-sadr-iraq-1637609574>

- **Six ISIL Leaders Killed in Airstrikes on Mosul's Right Bank**

Commander of Iraqi Army's Rapid Intervention Forces Maj. Gen. Thamer Muhammed Ismail announced Monday that six ISIL leaders were killed in airstrikes on the right bank of Mosul.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13951230000499>

- **Iraqi PM: No coalition, Iranian forces present in war on Daesh**

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi has brushed off claims that tens of thousand international coalition and Iranian forces are involved in war against Daesh.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82469613/>

- **UK-trained fighters will 'absolutely' beat Islamic State, says senior officer**

Iraqi and Kurdish fighters being trained by UK forces will "absolutely" beat Islamic State, a high ranking British Army officer has said.

More Details:

<http://home.bt.com/news/uk-news/uk-trained-fighters-will-absolutely-beat-islamic-state-says-senior-officer-11364166261776>

- **Conflict over Kirkuk oil returns**

As the Kurdish political dispute rises up, a military force from the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) seized the Kirkuk oil field and stopped the oil flows in order to push Baghdad to arrange a new oil agreement in the favor of the PUK.

More Details:

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/03/kirkuk-patriotic-union-of-kurdistan-erbil-sulaimaniya.html>

- **IS force young men to fight in defence of Mosul**

Islamic State militants are forcing young men in western Mosul to fight for them in defence of the remaining pockets of their former stronghold against an Iraqi government assault, fleeing residents and Iraqi officers said on Monday.

More Details:

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-iraq-mosul-idUKKBN16R15Y?rpc=401&>

- **Mosul residents try to resume 'normal life' after ISIL**

The bustling street of the Al Naby Younis market in East Mosul proves that the residents who lived for three years under strict radical Islamic rule are now trying to return to some normality.

More Details:

<http://www.euronews.com/2017/03/19/mosul-residents-try-to-resume-normal-life-after-isil>

- **Iraqi Turkmen urge 'immediate' PKK exit from Sinjar**

Turkmen political parties and groups in the Iraqi Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) declared Sunday that they want the terrorist PKK out of Sinjar "immediately."

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/iraqi-turkmen-urge-immediate-pkk-exit-from-sinjar/775139>

- **KRCS distributed more than 3,000 food parcels in Mosul**

Kuwait Red Crescent Society distributed on Monday 3,000 food parcels on disputed Iraqis from Mosul and Hamam Al-Alil refugee camps in southern Mosul.

More Details:

<http://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=2597128&Language=en>

- **PKK Steps up Pressure on Yezidi Peshmerga Families**

Kurdistan Staff' Social gathering (PKK) has stepped up strain on the Yezidi households whose members are working for Kurdistan Regional Authorities (KRG), stated an area official.

More Details:

<http://erbilcompanies.com/pkk-steps-up-pressure-on-yezidi-peshmerga-families.html>

2. SYRIA

- **Clashes in Syria's Damascus after surprise rebel attack**

Heavy clashes rocked eastern districts of the Syrian capital on Sunday after rebel fighters launched a surprise assault on government forces, a monitor and state television said. Steady shelling and sniper fire could be heard across Damascus on Sunday as rebel factions allied with former al-Qaeda affiliate Jabhat Fateh al-Sham launched an attack on government positions in the city's east.

More details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/03/clashes-syria-damascus-surprise-rebel-attack-170319123712942.html>

- **Russian MoD Delivers Humanitarian Aid to Over 3,000 Syrians in Past 24 Hours**

Over 3,000 civilians in the Syrian provinces of Aleppo and Latakia received humanitarian aid in the past 24 hours, the Russian Defense Ministry said Monday.

More details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201703201051754952-russia-aid-3000-syrians/>

- **Israel will continue to defend its citizens, says UN envoy in response to Syria threats**

Israeli ambassador to the UN, Danny Danon, hit back at the Syrian envoy to the world body on Monday, calling him hypocritical for describing Israel's airstrike Friday on a Hezbollah weapons convoy in Syrian territory a "terrorist operation" while boasting of Syria's retaliatory missile attacks as a game-changer.

More details:

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-will-continue-to-defend-its-citizens-says-un-envoy-in-response-to-syria-threats/>

- **Israel threatens to destroy Syria's air defence systems 'without the slightest hesitation'**

Syria fired three missiles at Israeli warplanes as they struck several targets in the most serious military exchange between the two hostile neighbours.

More details:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-syria-destroy-air-defence-systems-minster-avigdor-lieberman-idf-jets-a7637676.html>

- **As Syrian conflict enters its seventh year, Assad's future is the sticking point**

Six years ago, 15 teenagers from the southern Syrian city of Deraa graffitied a wall with anti-government slogans, including the phrase synonymous with the popular uprisings taking place across the Arab world: "The people want the overthrow of the regime."

More details:

<http://theconversation.com/as-syrian-conflict-enters-its-seventh-year-assads-future-is-the-sticking-point-74588>

- **Health Minister meets Italian delegation**

Health Minister Nizar Yazigi affirmed on Sunday the importance of lifting the unilateral conceive economic sanctions imposed on Syrian people, particularly the health sector.

More details:

<http://sana.sy/en/?p=102504>

- **Rebels launch surprise assault**

Heavy clashes rocked eastern districts of the Syrian capital on Sunday as rebels and extremists tried to fight their way into the city centre in a surprise assault on government forces.

More details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/01003c34-d0c7-4115-a359-73653639aa54.aspx>

- **Total of 1,359 Settlements Have Joined Syrian Ceasefire**

The total number of inhabited areas, the leaders of which had signed reconciliation agreements in Syria has reached 1,359, according to the Russian Defense Ministry.

More details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201703191051748382-syria-ceasefire-russia-military/>

- **Politician: S. Arabia Supports Sabotage Acts to Block Political Settlement of Crisis in Syria**

A senior Syrian politician underlined that Saudi Arabia supports those sides which oppose the political settlement of the crisis in Syria, and added that the recent suicide attacks in Damascus are one of the alternatives used by supporters of terrorism.

More details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13951229000287>

- **Iran calls on UN Security Council to register its statement on Syria as official document**

Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations (UN) Gholamali Khoshroo called on the United Nations (UN) Security Council to register Tehran's statement on peaceful solution to Syria as the Council's official document.

More details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82469266/>

3. IRAN

- **Iran spares no effort to safeguard ceasefire in Syria: Envoy**

The Iranian ambassador and permanent representative to the United Nations says the Islamic Republic together with Russia and Turkey will spare no efforts to safeguard a ceasefire in Syria agreed last December.

More details:

<http://iran-daily.com/News/189628.html>

- **Envoy: Iran welcomes holding talks with PGCC member-states**

Iranian Ambassador to Kuwait Alireza Enayati underlined that his country welcomes holding joint talks with the member-states of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC).

More details:

<http://iran-daily.com/News/189628.html>

- **Western views degrade women's true status: Ayatollah Khamenei**

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei met with a group of religious eulogizers and cantors on Sunday, which marked the auspicious birth anniversary of Hadhrat Fatemeh Zahra (PBUH), the daughter of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH).

More details:

<http://www.tehrantimes.com/news/412078/Western-views-degrade-women-s-true-status-Ayatollah-Khamenei>

- **Iran pilgrims to join this year's Hajj: Saudi Arabia**

Iran's pilgrims did not attend the Hajj in 2016 after the two countries failed to agree on security and logistics.

More details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/03/iran-pilgrims-join-year-hajj-saudi-arabia-170317124931718.html>

- **President Felicitates Iranian Nation on Nowruz, Stresses More Development in New Year**

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani felicitated the Iranian nation on the advent of Nowruz, the start of the New Persian Year, and underlined the necessity for the country to further develop and increase production and economic growth. In a televised address to the Iranian nation on Monday, President Rouhani expressed the hope that the new year would be the year of progress and development, as well as employment for the youth.

More Details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13951230000575>

- **Israel Already Preparing for End of UN Ban on Iran Missile Activity**

The deal allows Iran to expand the number of centrifuges it can use to enrich uranium, as well as the number of facilities it can use to host enrichment, in nine years.

More details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Israel-already-preparing-for-end-of-UN-ban-on-iran-missile-activity-484634>

- **Tsunami kills 1 in southern Iran, 5 go missing**

A tsunami hit the port city of Dayyer in Bushehr Province, southern Iran, killing one and leaving five missing. The high waves that hit the coastline surprised New Year tourists, killing a 51-year-old man, IRIB news agency reported March 21.

More details:

<http://en.trend.az/iran/society/2733861.html>

- **Navy Commander in Malaysia to attend LIMA'17**

Commander of Iran's Navy Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari has landed in Malaysia to take part at 2017 Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition (LIMA).

More details:

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/124329/Navy-Commander-in-Malaysia-to-attend-LIMA-17>

- **Iran's support for terrorism baseless accusation**

Bahram Ghasemi, while rejecting recent allegations by US Department of State against Iran, deemed Iran's support for terrorism charges as politically-loaded and unfounded.

More details:

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/124320/Iran-s-support-for-terrorism-baseless-accusation>

- **Crackdown on 'Telegram' app in Iran ahead of May elections**

Just two months ahead of the next presidential election in Iran, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (the hardline aligned wing of the army) has carried out a mass arrest of journalists and page administrators of the messaging app 'Telegram'.

More details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/loop/crackdown-telegram-app-iran-ahead-may-elections-951960>

4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **Israeli army detains 14 Palestinians in West Bank raids**

Israeli forces detained at least 14 Palestinians in predawn raids Sunday in multiple areas across the occupied West Bank. Locals in Hebron said Israeli forces also detained Mamun al-Natsha in the Tel Rumeida neighborhood on Saturday evening, with the Israeli army claiming he was carrying a screwdriver and planning a stabbing attack.

More details:

<http://www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?id=776010>

- **Ghattas replacement to be sworn in to Knesset**

Basel Ghattas resigns from Knesset after signing a plea deal admitting to smuggling cellphones and SIM cards to Palestinian security prisoners; Jamaa Azbarga (Balad) will replace him on the Joint List.

More details:

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4937383,00.html>

- **Hamas blames Israel for Gaza escalation**

: Palestinian group Hamas on Saturday blamed Israel for recent escalation in the Gaza Strip. Israeli tanks fired at Hamas targets in Beit Lahia town in the northern Gaza Strip following a rocket fire into southern Israel.

More details:

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/19/03/2017/Hamas-blames-Israel-for-Gaza-escalation>

- **Ashrawi on UN Decision to Remove Report on Israeli Apartheid**

Palestine Liberation Organization executive committee member Dr. Hanan Ashrawi denounced, in a statement released Saturday, the decision by the United Nations to remove the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) report from its website, which concluded that “Israel is guilty of policies and practices that constitute the crime of apartheid as legally defined in instruments of international law.”

More details:

<http://imemc.org/article/ashrawi-on-un-decision-to-remove-report-on-israeli-apartheid/>

- **UNHRC Debates Boycotting Israeli Settlements**

Out of the 41 resolutions before the UNHRC, 12 deal with human rights situations in individual countries. Five of those resolutions are focused on Israeli actions.

More details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/WATCH-LIVE-UNHRC-debates-boycotting-Israeli-settlements-484660>

- **94% of Palestinians: God is with us**

A survey shows that one third of Palestinians believe that the occupation will continue for at least another 50 years, 64% believe that Mahmoud Abbas should resign and 51% oppose the two-state solution, but despite the pessimism, the majority believe that God is standing with them. 37% believe that armed resistance is most effective means of achieving an independent state.

More details:

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4935484,00.html>

- **Abbas honors official who authored 'apartheid' report**

Palestinian Authority (PA) chairman Mahmoud Abbas on Sunday awarded the PA's highest honor to former UN official Rima Khalaf, who authored a UN report that accused Israel of establishing an "apartheid regime."

More details:

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/226959>

- **Netanyahu's rift with finance minister fuels talk of early Israeli election**

A dispute between Benjamin Netanyahu and his finance minister over broadcast regulation sparked speculation on Sunday the Israeli prime minister could seek an election two years ahead of schedule.

More details:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-politics-idUSKBN16Q0FX>

- **Palestinian who killed US teen Ezra Schwartz gets 4 life sentences**

Hebron terrorist in 2015 gunned down the Massachusetts yeshiva student along with an Israeli teacher and Palestinian bystander

More details:

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/palestinian-who-killed-us-teen-ezra-schwartz-gets-4-life-sentences/>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Lebanon's Jumblatt affirms son as political heir**

Lebanon's main Druze leader, Walid Jumblatt, on Sunday publicly confirmed his son Taymour as his political heir, extending the tradition of dynastic politics that plays a big part in the country's sectarian government.

More details:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-politics-jumblatt-idUSKBN16Q0NA>

- **Lebanese TV Reporter Urges Israel to take out Hezbollah Leader Nasrallah**

Maria Maalouf, a controversial and outspoken Lebanese television reporter, tweeted that Israel should rid the world of Hassan Nasrallah and urged the country to execute an aerial attack targeting Hezbollah's leader.

More details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Lebanese-TV-reporter-urges-Israel-to-take-out-Hezbollah-leader-Nasrallah-484605>

- **Thousands protest proposed tax hikes in Beirut**

Thousands of people jammed a downtown square chanting “enough is enough” and “no ability to take on more taxes” to protest against proposed tax hikes to cover salary increases for public servants and teachers.

More details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1071001/middle-east#photo/1>

- **'If Lebanese rockets strike Israel, it's a declaration of war'**

Education Minister Bennett speaks with Arutz Sheva about security on the northern border, education, and the IDF.

More details:

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/226971>

- **Israel Army Vows to Strike Hizbullah Arms Convoys, Warns Lebanese Govt.**

Israel will continue to “prevent the transfer of advanced weapons to Hizbullah” and “in the next war there will be a clear address: the Lebanese government,” Israeli army chief Gadi Eisenkot said on Sunday.

More details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/227192-israel-army-vows-to-strike-hizbullah-arms-convoys-warns-lebanese-govt>

- **Jordan public debt reaches JOD26bln in 2016**

Jordan's total public debt at the end of 2016 amounted to JOD26.092 billion or 94.8 per cent of projected 2016 GDP of JOD27.520 billion, compared to 93.4 per cent of GDP at the end of 2015.

More details:

<http://en.ammonnews.net/article.aspx?articleno=34514#.WM-d-tSLRko>

- **Tech entrepreneurs ‘future of Jordan’ — King Abdullah**

Their Majesties King Abdullah and Queen Rania on Sunday met with a group of Jordanian technology entrepreneurs and were introduced to their projects and experiments at Al Husseinia Palace, according to a Royal Court statement.

More details:

<http://jordantimes.com/news/local/tech-entrepreneurs-future-jordan%E2%80%99-%E2%80%94-king-abdullah>

- **Korea signs MOU with Jordan to help provide water shortage solution**

South Korea and Jordan signed a memorandum of understanding to expand cooperation in water management in the Middle Eastern country that is made up of 90 percent arid desert, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport said Sunday.

More details:

<http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20170319000158>

- **Syrian refugees trapped in Jordan's Rukban camp**

About 75,000 Syrian refugees sheltering at a camp in Jordan are virtually cut off from help. The Jordanian army stopped most humanitarian assistance from getting into the Rukban refugee camp last June.

More details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/video/news/2017/03/syrian-refugees-trapped-jordans-rukban-camp-170319073354216.html>

- **New economic model needed**

Although Jordan is facing various security challenges, its major issue is the economy. It is not a new problem, the economy has always been a major concern for Jordan, but it has evolved over time, and today there is a need for a new economic model for the country. World politics are changing. In Jordan, it is no longer possible to rely on the same policy of dependence on aid and donations.

More details:

<http://dailytimes.com.pk/business/20-Mar-17/new-economic-model-needed>

6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Saudi Arabia committed to be example of protection of human rights: King**

Makkah: King Salman stressed the Kingdom's keenness to be an example of protection of human rights, freedom, welfare and comprehensive development for community, in an address delivered on behalf of the king by Adviser to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and Makkah Gov.

More Details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1071086/saudi-arabia>

- **\$489m Saudi fund for Bahrain**

The Saudi government will grant \$489 million to finance four major projects in the Kingdom of Bahrain. An agreement to this effect was signed by Bahrain government and Saudi Fund for Development yesterday.

More Details:

<http://www.newsofbahrain.com/viewNews.php?ppId=31453&TYPE=Posts&pid=21&MNU=2&SUB=>

- **Yemeni army captures last militia stronghold**

Yemen's Army, with backing of the Arab coalition, have captured Al Dabouha district, the last stronghold of coup militias in Nahm towards Arhab province in Sana'a Governorate.

More Details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/1f4d341f-578d-4240-9952-1e87e7ca87b0.aspx>

- **UN Special Envoy to Yemen calls for political settlement and humanitarian support**

United Nations Special Envoy to Yemen Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed said that Yemeni conflicting blocs have been presented with a comprehensive and well-balanced framework to achieve a settlement.

More Details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/un-special-envoy-yemen-calls-political-settlement-and-humanitarian-support-951446>

- **Qatar and UK can leverage on their relations to promote inclusive growth**

Under the patronage of HE Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa al-Thani, the Prime Minister and Minister of Interior of the State of Qatar, the National Committee for organising the Qatar-UK Business and Investment Forum is organising the Forum's 8th Edition, the "Qatar-UK Business and Investment Forum", this month in the United Kingdom.

More Details:

<http://www.gulf-times.com/story/539122/Qatar-and-UK-can-leverage-on-their-relations-to-pr>

- **M'sia, Qatar elevate ties further with formation of High Level Committee**

Malaysia and Qatar will elevate their diplomatic ties by forming a High Level Committee (HLC) to focus on the structural framework of both countries' defence institutions.

More Details:

<http://www.nst.com.my/news/2017/03/222471/msia-qatar-elevate-ties-further-formation-high-level-committee>

- **UAE summons Swiss ambassador over Bahrain Statement**

Manama: The United Arab Emirates has summoned the Swiss ambassador over remarks made by Switzerland to the UN over the human rights situation in Bahrain.

More Details:

<http://www.newsofbahrain.com/viewNews.php?ppId=31467&TYPE=Posts&pid=21&MNU=2&SUB=2>

- **DP World Posts 28% Rise in Full-Year Net Profit**

Dubai-based global ports operator DP World on Monday reported a 28% year-over-year rise in net profit for 2016 as revenue from added port infrastructure in the United Arab Emirates and Canada helped offset slow container-volume growth.

More Details:

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/dp-world-posts-28-rise-in-full-year-net-profit-1489989998>

- **National Bank of Bahrain cannot afford to rest on its laurels**

The past year has not been an easy one for Bahrain's banks. With the government suffering from low reserves and high debt, the country's fiscal position remains weak and this has had a knock-on effect for the banking sector.

More Details:

<http://www.arabianbusiness.com/national-bank-of-bahrain-cannot-afford-rest-on-its-laurels-667383.html>

- **Belarus' Foreign Minister to visit Oman 20-21 March**

Belarus' Minister of Foreign Affairs Vladimir Makei is expected to pay a visit to the Sultanate of Oman on 20-21 March, BelTA learned from the press service of the ministry.

More Details:

<http://eng.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-foreign-minister-to-visit-oman-20-21-march-99592-2017/>

7. EGYPT

- **Egypt received two cargoes of diesel fuel from Saudi Aramco**

Egyptian Petroleum Minister Tarek El Molla said on Sunday his country had received two cargoes of diesel fuel from Saudi Arabian state-owned oil company Aramco on Friday and Saturday.

More Details:

http://af.reuters.com/article/investingNews/idAFKBN16R0DG-OZABS?feedType=RSS&feedName=investingNews&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+reuters%2FAFRICAbusinessNews+%28News+%2F+AFRICA+%2F+Business+News%29&&rpc=401

- **Mubarak exoneration: Why Egyptians have mixed feelings**

As Donald Trump kept grabbing international headlines following his inauguration as US president in January, a lot of crucial news about other international political figures has been drowned out.

More Details:

www.ejinsight.com/20170320-mubarak-exoneration-why-egyptians-didnt-care-much/

- **Egypt's Sisi to Visit Washington on April 3**

US President Donald Trump will host Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi for talks in Washington on April 3, a White House official said on Sunday.

More Details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Breaking-News/Egypt's-Sisi-to-visit-Washington-on-April-3-484641>

- **Egyptian-American parliamentary friendship association to be formed in Cairo: MP**

Dahlia Youssef, a member of the Egyptian parliament's foreign relations committee, disclosed Sunday that a US congressional delegation will visit Egypt next month to review relations between Cairo and Washington. "The visit will come as part of efforts to put Egyptian-American relations back on a sound track," said Youssef.

More Details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/261253/-.aspx>

- **Egypt army chief of staff and UN Libya envoy discuss end to Libyan crisis**

Egypt's Chief of Staff Mahmoud Hegazy and special representative of the UN secretary-general in Libya Martin Kobler discussed recent efforts to reach national consensus between factions in the war-torn country, Egypt's army said in a statement on Sunday.

More Details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/261251/-.aspx>

- **Al-Sisi meets with British Conservative Party members**

President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi met on Saturday with a delegation of the British Conservative Party that was assigned to follow up on issues of the Middle East. Also attending was Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sameh Shoukry, according to the presidency's spokesperson Alaa Youssef.

More Details:

<http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2017/03/19/619086/>

- **Egypt's Clashes with Islamic State in Sinai Has Led to Rise In Trauma For Children in Southern Israel**

Fighting between Islamic State-affiliated militants and the Egyptian army in the Sinai Peninsula has led to a 50% increase in trauma suffered by children in southern Israel who are hearing the sounds of explosions from across the border, the Hebrew news site Walla reported.

More Details:

<http://www.breitbart.com/jerusalem/2017/03/19/egypts-clashes-with-islamic-state-in-sinai-has-led-to-50-rise-in-trauma-for-children-in-southern-israel/>

- **Sudan's FM moves to end Egyptian presence in Halayeb region**

Sudan's foreign ministry has instructed the concerned bodies to develop a roadmap to end the Egyptian presence in the disputed area of Halayeb triangle, said border demarcation official.

More Details:

<http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article61936>

- **Expected rise of cooperation between Egypt and Lebanon: Nasr**

Egyptian Minister of Investment and International Cooperation Sahar Nasr said that the scheduled meeting of the Egyptian-Lebanese Joint Higher Committee on Monday will witness the signing of a number of official documents between the two countries. These documents focus on several fields, including consumer protection, support of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and cooperation in the industrial sector.

More Details:

<http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2017/03/19/expected-rise-cooperation-egypt-lebanon-nasr/>

- **Pope Francis to visit Egypt in April in interfaith effort**

Pope Francis will visit Egypt in late April, reflecting improved Vatican-Muslim dialogue after years of tension that developed during the previous papacy of Benedict XVI.

More Details:

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/pope-francis-to-visit-egypt-in-april-in-interfaith-effort/>

8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Morocco Sees G-20 as Key to `Accelerate Private Investments in Africa**

The Group of 20 meeting of finance ministers and central bank governors in Baden-Baden, Germany, was a “first step” to kick start private investment in Africa, Moroccan Finance Minister Mohamed Boussaid said.

More Details

<https://naija247news.com/2017/03/19/morocco-sees-g-20-key-accelerate-private-investments-africa/>

- **President of Indias message on the Eve of National Day of Tunisia**

The President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee has extended his greetings and felicitations to the Government and people of the Republic of Tunisia on the eve of their National Day (March 20, 2017).

More Details

http://www.business-standard.com/article/government-press-release/president-of-indias-message-on-the-eve-of-national-day-of-117031900389_1.html

- **“Compact with Africa” Gets Full Backing at G20 Meetings**

Under its presidency of the G20, Germany devised the initiative to tap as yet undiscovered investment potential on the continent, this time through private sector investors. The initiative’s mandate is to actively and vigorously promote the continent’s economy as a whole and to stem the flow of migrants into European Union (EU) countries.

More Details

<https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2017/03/211471/compact-africa-gets-full-backing-g20-meetings/>

- **Quartet backs Libya’s unity govt**

A quartet of international groups said Saturday it supported efforts by Libya’s unity government to assert control over Tripoli after days of fighting with rival militias.

More Details

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1070546/middle-east>

- **In conflicts, faith leaders must often stay above**

If faith leaders take sides in a conflict, do they give up any possible role as a trusted mediator? It is a vital question in many world troublespots from Ukraine to Nigeria. But none more so than in Libya. The North African country, which had a budding democracy in 2011 after ousting dictator Muammar Qaddafi, is fast descending into violent chaos. Some of its Islamic leaders could be the last hope for peace.

More Details

<http://www.csmonitor.com/Commentary/the-monitors-view/2017/0319/In-conflicts-faith-leaders-must-often-stay-above>

- **The four-organization meeting on Libya in Cairo**

The Arab League, the European Union, the African Union, and the United Nations renewed their commitment to the Libyan stability, sovereignty, integrity, and the unity of institutions emanating from the Libyan Political Agreement (PA) that signed in Skhirat, confirming the need for peaceful settlement to the Libyan crisis, refusing intimidation or use of military power, and the foreign intervention.

More Details

<http://libyapropect.com/index.php/2017/03/19/the-four-organization-meeting-on-libya-in-cairo/>

- **Zitouni: Algeria will not abandon cases requested from France**

Minister of Mujahideen Tayeb Zitouni said Saturday, in Al Bayadh, that “Algeria will not keep quiet and will not abandon the cases claimed from France, including the recovery of skulls of Algerian revolutionaries to bury them in Algeria.”

More Details

<http://en.aps.dz/algeria/17363-zitouni-algeria-will-not-abandon-cases-requested-from-france>

- **Algeria's ailing Bouteflika makes first appearance in a month**

Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika made a rare televised appearance on Sunday for the first time since a visit by Germany's chancellor was cancelled last month due to his ailing health. President Abdelaziz Bouteflika appeared on television on Sunday for the first time since a visit by Germany's chancellor was called off last month because of the Algerian leader's ailing health.

More Details

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/3/20/algerias-ailing-bouteflika-makes-first-appearance-in-a-month>

- **Algeria president makes video appearance after month of health rumors**

Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika appeared in a video on Sunday for the first time in a month since his abrupt cancellation of a meeting with German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Algiers triggered speculation over his health. Since a stroke in 2013, Bouteflika, 80, has appeared rarely in public and usually only in state news images with visiting dignitaries, leaving questions over whether the leader in power for nearly two decades will finish his term.

More Details

http://www.reuters.com/article/us-algeria-bouteflika-idUSKBN16R07H?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Reuters%2FworldNews+%28Reuters+World+News%29&&rpc=401

9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **'Water scarcity big threat to Pakistan'**

The Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) on Sunday said water scarcity is emerging as a grave threat to the survival of the country but policymakers seem to be least bothered. Pakistan is facing an acute water shortage and may hit masses, agriculture and industry soon, it said.

More Details

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/193448-Water-scarcity-big-threat-to-Pakistan>

- **Tatarstan president calls on PM**

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said on Sunday that Pakistan's longstanding partnership with the Russian Federation as well as with its Muslim regions, including the Republic of Tatarstan, would witness significant progress in all areas of mutual interest.

More Details

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1321680/tatarstan-president-calls-on-pm>

- **Asif Zardari joins Bol TV as political analyst**

Former president and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Co-Chairperson Asif Ali Zardari started his career as a political analyst on a weekly talk show on Bol TV. The channel took to Twitter to announce the

new show, Pakistan Khappay with President Asif Ali Zardari. The show was launched on March 19, and will be aired every Sunday at 9:30pm.

More Details

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/03/20/asif-zardari-joins-bol-tv-as-political-analyst/>

- **Partnership with Russia to promote regional peace: PM**

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Sunday said Pakistan’s “longstanding partnership” with the Russian Federation as well as with its Muslim regions, including the Republic of Tatarstan, would witness significant progress in all areas of mutual interests. The prime minister reiterated his resolve to establish a strong partnership between Pakistan and Russia in all the fields “as this cooperation will positively contribute towards promoting peace and stability in the region.”

More Details

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/03/20/partnership-with-russia-to-promote-regional-peace-pm/>

- **Gunfire in Kabul? It’s Not the Taliban — It’s the Politicians**

Heavy gunfire echoed down Darulaman Road, in the vicinity of Parliament and President Ashraf Ghani’s private home, for more than an hour very early Friday morning.

More Details

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/19/world/middleeast/kabul-afghanistan-gunfire-politicians.html>

- **Budget cuts may abolish position of US special envoy for Af-Pak region**

The Trump administration’s budget cuts may lead to disbanding of the office of the US Special Representative for Pakistan and Afghanistan, a key diplomatic position devoted to restoring peace to the region, according to diplomatic sources. The sources, who spoke to Dawn and US media outlets, said an unprecedented 28 per cent cut in the State Department’s budget would mainly affect the foreign assistance that the department provides to US allies. But the cut, proposed in the Trump administration’s 2018-19 budget, would also force the State Department to cut down its size.

More Details

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1321661/budget-cuts-may-abolish-position-of-us-special-envoy-for-af-pak-region>

- **Journalists Reflect People Voices, CE**

Chief Executive, Dr. Abdullah Abdullah said that media and journalists were one of the terrorist groups' goals, because they have realized the power of media, his office said in a statement.

More Details

<http://www.bakhtarnews.com.af/eng/culture/item/27969-journalists-reflect-people-voices-ce.html>

- **Afghan security forces need on-time equipment**

President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Mohammad Ashraf Ghani during telephone conversation with provincial security officials said the country's security forces needed enough and on-time military supply, a plan he believed would help the forces succeed against enemy.

More Details

<http://thekabultimes.gov.af/index.php/opinions/politics/13390-afghan-security-forces-need-on-time-equipment.html>

- **Paktika governor's door to door campaign for children's education**

The provincial governor of the southeastern Paktika province has launched a door to door campaign to encourage the families send their children to schools for education. Local officials are saying Governor Elias Wahdat started knocking the doors of the residents by launching the campaign for children's education on Sunday.

More Details

<http://www.khaama.com/paktika-governors-door-to-door-campaign-for-childrens-education-02433>

- **Boosting Pak-US relations**

Pakistan's new Ambassador to the United States Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhary seems to be in full gear to take up the challenge of not only mending fences with Washington but is also eyeing at strengthening ties to the mutual advantage. That is what he loudly conveyed during his interaction with Pakistani media on Friday where he pointed out that the two countries have a historic and multi-faceted relationship spanning over seven decades.

More Details

<http://pakobserver.net/boosting-pak-us-relations/>

10. TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Turkey criticizes official use of Iraqi Kurdish flag in Kirkuk**

The Turkish Foreign Ministry has criticized the Kirkuk governorate's decision to fly the Iraqi Kurdistan Regional Government's (KRG) flag on state buildings on official state days. "The Kirkuk Governorate's request from the Kirkuk Provincial Council for a motion to raise the KRG flag beside the flag of Iraq throughout official buildings is disconcerting," said ministry spokesperson Hüseyin Müftüoğlu in a written statement.

More Details:

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/-.aspx?pageID=238&nID=111025&NewsCatID=510>

- **Turkish Red Crescent boosting aid to Syria's Al-Bab**

Most parts of a northern Syrian town captured from Daesh have suffered widespread destruction and the Turkish Red Crescent will provide all kinds of support to help daily life return to normal, according to the organization's head. Kerem Kinik told Anadolu Agency on Monday that nearly 75,000 people were living in the Al-Bab area.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/turkish-red-crescent-boosting-aid-to-syria-s-al-bab/775473>

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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