



MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

GÜNLÜK ORTADOĞU 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 Güvenliği

Economy News

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Peace Process

Barış Süreci

Ethnic and Secterian Groups

Etnik ve Mezhepsel Gruplar

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Relations with the West

Batı'yla İlişkiler

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1. IRAQ

- **Mosul battle will be finished within days - Iraqi army chief**

Iraqi security forces are only days away from completing the operation to recapture Mosul from so-called Islamic State, the army's chief of staff says.

More Details

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39882257>

- **Iraqi forces move to surround Mosul's old city, held by IS**

U.S.-backed Iraqi forces were moving to surround Mosul's Old City on Thursday, a week after launching a fresh push to drive Islamic State militants from areas they still hold, according to an Iraqi officer overseeing the operation.

More Details

http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/M/ML_IRAQ?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&CTIME=2017-05-11-08-30-13

- **KRG seeks assistance from international bodies to uncover ISIS mass graves**

The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) has stepped up its investigations of alleged ISIS mass graves across southern and western parts of the country, seeking expert support from international organisations including the United Nations.

More Details

<http://www.rudaw.net/english/kurdistan/110520171>

- **Shiite militias in Iraq: why context matters**

Iraq's Shiite militias are a product of the destitution and Baath brutality of the 1990s and the disorder and violence of post-2003 Iraq. The political outlook and consciousness of the fighters that comprise the militia groups today developed in the 1990s, when the 1991 uprising unfolded and failed, Saddam decimated Iraq's Shiite community, and destitution followed.

More Details

<https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/shiite-militias-in-iraq-why-context-matters/>

- **IS welding doors shut, trapping civilians in Mosul**

The Islamic State (IS) is booby-trapping homes with civilians inside and welding doors shut in western Mosul to prevent families from fleeing as Iraqi forces close in on the Old City.

More Details

<http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/cd09974c-b749-4918-b131-94b15ca4f3b5/IS-welding-doors-shut--trapping-civilians-in-Mosul>

- **Iraqis dig their own wells in battle-scarred Mosul**

The families start queuing every day near the well in Mosul's Karaj al-Shamal neighborhood, filling their large plastic containers with sulfurous, nearly undrinkable water.

More Details

<http://www.iraqinews.com/features/iraqis-dig-wells-battle-scarred-mosul/>

- **Abadi Shows No Opposition to Kurdistan Independence Referendum: MP**

Following a meeting with Abadi on Thursday, MP Ardalan Nouralldin said they had discussed the Erbil-Baghdad relations as well as the future of their partnership if the Kurds decide to secede from Iraq.

More Details

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/kurdistan/349765>

- **Hundreds of Female Drivers dominated the Roads of Sulaimani**

Today on 11th of May, a high number of female activists carried out a campaign to stress on their rights to drive cars on the roads. They stated "We give beauty to the streets," their spokesperson stated that the goal of this campaign is to deny all the negative thinking carried out against women while doing normal daily activities such as driving car" Hundreds of female drivers drove their cars from one side of the city to the other, dominating the streets of Sulaimani.

More Details

http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN_Direje.aspx?Jimare=40367

- **Iraqi forces foil suicide attack in western Ramadi**

Two suicide bombers were shot dead while their attempt to infiltrate into al- Razzaza Lake in western Ramadi, Anbar Operations Commander Gen. Mahmoud al-Falahi said Thursday. In a statement, al-Falahi announced that the 8th division in the army foiled the attack, killed the two suicide bombers

and destroyed their vehicle. The Iraqi cities are witnessing a state of insecurity and chaos as terror attacks target civilians.

More Details

<http://www.thebaghdadpost.com/en/story/10409/Iraqi-forces-foil-suicide-attack-in-western-Ramadi>

- **ISIS keeps harassing Iraqi Army positions with armed drone attacks**

On Wednesday, one of these drones hit an Iraqi military outpost north of Rutbah town in the western part of Anbar province. For over a month this desert area has seen regular daily raids by ISIS militants. Unable to confront Iraqi Army directly, they rely on hit-and-run tactics conducting blitz attacks.

More Details

<https://www.almasdarnews.com/article/pictures-isis-keeps-harassing-iraqi-army-positions-armed-drone-attacks/>

- **Australian fighter jets involved in Anzac Day airstrike against IS**

“Australian F/A-18 Hornets supported Iraqi forces in contact with Daesh elements during operations in Mosul,” the release said. “The Australian aircraft struck one Daesh fighting position with precision guided munition during several hours of support.” The Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull visited Iraq and Afghanistan as part of Anzac Day commemorations in April.

More Details

<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2017/05/12/australian-fighter-jets-involved-anzac-day-airstrike-against>

- **Paratrooper killed in Iraq comes home to Fort Benning on Friday**

A U.S. Army paratrooper killed in action last month in Iraq will arrive home to Georgia Friday morning when his body is flown into Lawson Army Airfield at Fort Benning. First Lt. Weston Lee, 25, of Bluffton, Ga., will be escorted home by a procession of law enforcement officers led by the Georgia State Patrol.

More Details

<https://www.stripes.com/news/us/paratrooper-killed-in-iraq-comes-home-to-fort-benning-on-friday-1.468037#.WRVh5dSLRkg>

- **More efforts needed to help Mosul civilians**

In a commentary published today, 'Gulf Today'said that thousands of civilians have been fleeing Mosul every day since Iraqi troops began their push into the last Daesh-held areas last week, with food and water running out.

More Details

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302613425>

- **Iraqi forces discover three more mass graves in Iraq's Anbar**

Three mass graves have been discovered in Iraq's western province of Anbar, containing the bodies of an estimated several dozen civilians and security forces executed by Daesh Takfiri terrorists.

More Details

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/05/12/521562/Iraq-mass-grave-Anbar-Daesh>

- **Texas health agency's waste watchdog also was working for Iraq**

The governor has fired the state inspector general at one of Texas' largest public agencies amid revelations he was doubling as a consultant for the government of Iraq as it successfully sought to pull the country from the Trump administration's travel ban, officials confirmed Thursday.

More Details

<http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local/article/Texas-health-agency-s-waste-watchdog-also-was-11140400.php>

- **Iraq Foils Inside Job Attempt to Assassinate Health Minister**

"A grenade was placed in the ministry's building by one of the staff who had hidden it inside the ceiling of the second floor in preparation for using it to assassinate the minister," according to a statement by the ministry. "Security authorities were informed and they rushed and found the grenade planted in one of the secondary ceilings of the second floor and dealt with it," it said.

More Details

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/iraq-foils-inside-job-attempt-assassinate-health-minister-973360>

- **Condoleezza Rice: US Invaded Iraq to Oust Saddam Hussein, Not to Bring Democracy**

Condoleezza Rice, the US national security adviser under President George W. Bush, said Thursday in an interview that the goal the United States pursued during the 2003 invasion of Iraq was toppling of President Saddam Hussein, not bringing democracy to the Middle East country.

More Details

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201705121053529129-us-iraq-no-democracy/>

2. SYRIA

- **Some 70 Daesh Fighters Concede to SDF Terms near Syria's Tabqa – Coalition**

Operation Inherent Resolve said that about 70 fighters of the Daesh terror group (banned in Russia) have conceded to the terms of the Syrian Democratic Force near Syria's Tabqa

More Details

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201705111053505643-daesh-fighters-syria/>

- **Austria Convicts Asylum Seeker for 20 Civil War Killings in Syria**

A Syrian asylum seeker has been sentenced to life in prison for war crimes by an Austrian court, including the killing of 20 government soldiers.

More Details

<http://dailycaller.com/2017/05/11/austria-convicts-asylum-seeker-for-20-civil-war-killings-in-syria/>

- **De Mistura: The next Geneva talks on Syria will last for 3 days**

The UN Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura announced on Thursday that the sixth round of Geneva talks which will start on May 16th will be short to "hit the iron while it's hot" following the last round of Astana talks.

More Details

<http://sana.sy/en/?p=105880>

- **Stoltenberg: NATO will not take part in combat operations in Syria or Iraq**

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg stresses the alliance will not participate in combat operations against the IS terrorist group

More Details

<http://tass.com/world/945441>

- **Syria chemical incident US pretext to justify intervention: Assad**

Washington fabricated the alleged chemical attack in Syria's town of Khan Shaykhun, in Idlib Province, to cover US intervention in the country, says President Bashar al-Assad

More Details

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82526282/>

- **Bashar al-Assad: Syria-Belarus relationship continues, based on common interest**

Relations and cooperation between Syria and Belarus continue, based on the common interests, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad said in an interview with the ONT TV channel aired on 11 May, BelTA has learned

More Details

<http://eng.belta.by/politics/view/bashar-al-assad-syria-belarus-relationship-continues-based-on-common-interest-101192-2017/>

- **US-led airstrikes in eastern Syria allegedly killed 59 civilians since May 1st**

At least seven civilians were reported killed on Wednesday night by airstrikes allegedly from the US-led coalition in al-Sour town in Deir Ezzor, eastern Syria , said human rights organizations.

More Details

<http://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/syria/11052017>

- **Yorkshire extremist who tried to join IS in Syria faces jail term**

Ghulam Hussain admitted two terror offences after being caught preparing to travel to the murderous group's heartland in the Middle East.

More Details

<http://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/yorkshire-extremist-who-joined-is-in-syria-faces-jail-term-1-8539607>

- **Upcoming Syria peace talks to be short, business-like: UN Envoy**

The UN Syria envoy confirmed Thursday that the next round of Syria peace talks is slated to kick off on May 16, adding that negotiations between warring factions will be both short and business-like.

More Details

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2017-05/12/content_29316392.htm

3. IRAN

- **Iran Is Preventing Displaced Iraqis from Returning Home**

The following is a press release by Struan Stevenson, the President of European Iraqi Freedom Association (EIFA) issued on May 11, 2017. Concerning, Iran regime's criminal act of preventing evacuated Iraqi's from getting back to their homeland.

More Details

<http://www.ncr-iran.org/en/news/terrorism-fundamentalism/22765-iran-is-preventing-displaced-iraqis-from-returning-home>

- **The Dti to lead an Outward Selling Mission to Iran and United Arab Emirates**

According to the Minister of Trade and Industry, Dr Rob Davies the OSM also aims to create more awareness of South African goods and services, as well as fostering further interactions and collaboration in these countries

More Details

<http://www.africa-newsroom.com/press/the-dti-to-lead-an-outward-selling-mission-to-iran-and-united-arab-emirates?lang=en>

- **Iran to Putin: A News Junkie's Guide to the Most Decisive Upcoming Elections**

From a surging hardliner in Iran to Palestinian infighting and the UK's doubling down on Brexit, here is everything you need to know about key upcoming elections

More Details

<http://www.haaretz.com/world-news/1.788673>

- **India to import LPG from Iran to meet rising demand**

India has for the first time ever signed a contract to import LPG from Iran as it looks at additional sources of cooking fuel to meet rising domestic demand, The Economic Times reported.

More Details

<http://en.trend.az/iran/2752679.html>

- **Exec says US firm to invest in Iran**

A top executive from Iran's Panid Engineering said on Wednesday that US company Pall Corporation would invest in a project to produce oil equipment in Iran.

More Details

<http://www.theoilandgasyear.com/news/exec-says-us-firm-to-invest-in-iran/>

- **Iran's role in the upcoming OPEC meeting**

Miswin Mahesh, oil analyst at Energy Aspects, speaks about compliance with OPEC's current agreement to cut supply

More Details

<http://video.cnbc.com/gallery/?video=3000618078>

- **Iranians celebrate birth anniversary of Imam Mahdi**

Millions of Iranians across the country have held ceremonies to mark the birth anniversary of the 12th and the last Shia Imam, Imam Mahdi. Shias believe that Imam Mahdi is the prophesied redeemer, who will bring peace and justice to the world.

More Details

<http://www.presstv.com/Detail/2017/05/12/521576/celebrate-birth-anniversary-of-Imam-Mahdi->

- **In Senegal, Iran and Saudi Arabia vie for religious influence**

In an upmarket suburb of Senegal's seaside capital, a branch of Iran's Al-Mustafa University teaches Senegalese students Shi'ite Muslim theology, among other subjects. The branch director is Iranian and a portrait of Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei hangs on his office wall.

More Details

http://www.reuters.com/article/us-senegal-saudi-iran-insight-idUSKBN1880JY?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Reuters%2FworldNews+%28Reuters+World+News%29&rpc=401

- **How presidential race causes upward trend in Iran's stock market?**

Ahead of Iran's May 19 presidential election the country's economy is still struggling with deep recession but the stock market is on a bullish run. Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE) Main Index advanced for the eighth consecutive week to close at 80127.1 this week, setting a new high for 2017.

More Details

<http://en.trend.az/iran/business/2752871.html>

- **The World Needs to Watch Iran’s Election**

The main squares and junctions of Mashhad, home to the country’s most important shrine, are covered in posters of cleric Ebrahim Raisi. In his black Shiite turban, he stares out onto wide boulevards and sidewalks as women pass in black chador cloaks.

More Details

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2017-05-12/iran-s-election-is-a-chance-for-angry-hardliners-to-win-back-power>

4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **Nasrallah mocks 'weak' Israel**

Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah on Thursday mocked Israel and called it “weak”, following a recent incident in which a Lebanese citizen successfully infiltrated into Israel via the northern border. In a speech, Nasrallah claimed that the infiltration was proof that Israel's defensive measures on the security fence along the border are ineffective.

More Details

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/229544>

- **Abbas has decided to sign peace deal with Israel’**

Palestinian authority President Mahmoud Abbas has crossed the Rubicon and voiced “unprecedented” readiness to reach a peace deal with Israel, sources close to the efforts to renew talks between Israel and the Palestinians have told The Jerusalem Post. Abbas, according to the sources, made this clear to President Donald Trump during their meeting at the White House last week. The president plans to use his trip to Israel later this month to receive assurances from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that he, too, is committed to a peace agreement.

More Details

<http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Abbas-has-decided-to-sign-peace-deal-with-Israel-490530>

- **All the embassies should move to Jerusalem**

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu on Thursday evening attended a conference of Likud activists and expressed his full support for the moving of the American Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. "Jerusalem is the eternal capital of the Jewish people. It is the capital of the State of Israel. All the embassies, and especially the Embassy of our friend the United States, should move to Jerusalem. This is their natural place," said Netanyahu.

More Details

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/229535>

- **If it were not for US Jewry, we probably wouldn't have a state**

The Israeli government and Culture Minister Miri Regev did the right thing in dedicating one Independence Day torch to representatives of the Jewish people, and in selecting two American Jews—Rabbi Marvin Hier and Michael Steinhardt—to light it. The criticism voiced by many Israelis, that there is no room for representatives of the Jewish Diaspora in an official state ceremony, is not only outrageous and irritating but also points to the ignorance of those taking the name of Zionism in vain.

More Details

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4960585,00.html>

- **Palestinian local elections highlight Hamas-Fatah division**

Palestinians vote in municipal elections tomorrow, but only in the West Bank and not the Gaza Strip, illustrating the persistent inability of rival movements Fatah and Hamas to overcome deep divisions. The Israeli-occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip – the two territories that would in theory form an independent Palestinian state – have not participated in an election together since 2006.

More Details

<http://www.gulf-times.com/story/547748/Palestinian-local-elections-highlight-Hamas-Fatah->

- **Abbas, in meeting with Putin, says Moscow must be part of peace process**

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas met with Russian President Vladimir Putin at the Sochi resort in Western Russia on Thursday, and said that solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will be "impossible" without the participation of Moscow in the peace process. "It is impossible to solve the Palestinian issue without Russia's meaningful participation in the peace process. That is what we have been emphasizing at all international meetings," Abbas said in his meeting with Putin, according to the official Russian State news agency Tass.

More Details

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/abbas-in-meeting-with-putin-says-moscow-must-be-part-of-peace-process/>

- **Palestinian woman blinded by Israeli rubber bullet returns home to Jerusalem**

Fatima Obeid from the occupied East Jerusalem neighborhood of Issawiya left an Israeli hospital on Thursday blinded in one eye, after Israeli forces shot her with a rubber-coated steel bullet during a raid in April. The 52-year-old has permanently lost sight in her left eye. In April, Obeid was sitting on the balcony of her house with her daughter and son in-law when Israeli forces began shooting rubber-coated steel bullets into the neighborhood during a violent night raid aimed at dispersing a local dispute.

More Details

<http://www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?ID=776993>

- **Putin Foundation for Culture and Economics Launched**

A new complex named after Russian President Vladimir Putin was inaugurated on Thursday, in Bethlehem. Speaking via video conference from Sochi, in Russia, where he is meeting with Putin, President of the Palestinian Authority Mahmoud Abbas thanked Russia for its continuous support for the Palestinian people.

More Details

<http://imemc.org/article/bethlehem-putin-foundation-for-culture-and-economics-launched/>

- **Knesset's new bill 'portrays racism as entirely normal'**

New legislation to cement the definition of Israel as a state belonging exclusively to Jews around the world is a "declaration of war" on Palestinian citizens of Israel, the minority's leaders warned this week. The bill, which defines Israel as the "national home of the Jewish people", passed its first vote in the Israeli parliament on Wednesday, after it received unanimous backing from a government committee on Sunday.

More Details

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/05/knesset-bill-portrays-racism-normal-170510112023518.html>

- **Hamas catches killer of a top Gaza leader**

The Hamas group that runs the Gaza Strip said on Thursday it has apprehended the killer of one of its senior commanders and that he carried out the assassination on Israel's orders. Mazen Fuqaha, 38, was shot in the head and the chest in his car on March 24 near his Gaza home.

More Details

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1098121/middle-east>

5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **Jordan supports Azerbaijan's position on Karabakh conflict**

Jordan supports Azerbaijan's fair position in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict settlement and the solution of the conflict only on the principles of territorial integrity and inviolability of borders of Azerbaijan, said Azerbaijani Prime Minister Artur Rasizade. He was addressing a meeting with a delegation headed by Speaker of the House of Representatives of the parliament of Jordan Atef Yousef Saleh Al-Tarawneh.

More Details

<http://en.trend.az/azerbaijan/karabakh/2752781.html>

- **Import ban on Jordan fruits, vegetables stays**

The Ministry of Climate Change and Environment (MoCCaE) has denied rumours circulating on Jordanian media outlets with regard to the UAE's lifting of the ban on imports of certain vegetables and fruits from the Kingdom of Jordan, saying that no decision has been issued in this regard by the UAE. Last month, the Ministry announced a decision to ban imports of vegetables and fruits from select countries with effect from May 15, as those products have been found to contain pesticide residues in excess of permissible limits.

More Details

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/d25cca05-b1e2-4a11-9a24-2ec46504b02b.aspx>

- **Lebanese, Malaysian PMs Invited to Saudi-US Summit in Riyadh**

The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz has sent an official invitation to Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri, inviting him to attend the Arab-Islamic-American Summit to be held in Riyadh on May 21. Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak also received a similar invitation.

More Details

<http://english.aawsat.com/theaawsat/news-middle-east/lebanons-hariri-invited-saudi-us-summit-riyadh>

- **How Has a TV Station Fire Inflamed Tensions in Lebanon?**

It seems that Lebanese channel Al Jadeed just cannot catch a break after allegedly having been attacked for the fourth time in 6 months. A van belonging to the privately owned broadcaster was set on fire in the early hours of Thursday morning, according to reports in local media.

More Details

<http://www.albawaba.com/loop/how-has-tv-station-fire-inflamed-tensions-lebanon-973386>

- **Hezbollah Dismantles Military Positions on Lebanese-Syrian Border as Area Safe**

The Lebanon-based movement Hezbollah has dismantled its military positions on the border with Syria as the mission of securing the area has been completed, the movement's secretary general, Sayyed Hasan Nasrallah, said Thursday. He added that the presence of Hezbollah fighters in settlements along the Syrian border did not contradict the mission of providing assistance to local people.

More Details

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201705111053521600-hezbollah-lebanese-syrian-border/>

- **Fenianos inaugurates new radar system at Beirut Airport**

Minister of Public Works and Transportation, Youssef Fenianos, opened on Thursday the new radar center at Rafic Hariri International Airport, in the presence of Canadian Ambassador to Lebanon Michelle Cameron. Fenianos announced that the new radar system would improve the airport's capacity and would also improve the collection of climate data to assist air traffic controllers in guiding airplanes and detecting military and civil targets in the Lebanese airspace.

More Details

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/79122/Fenianos-inaugurates-new-radar-system-at-Beirut-Airport>

- **Hezbollah blames Israel as Lebanese receive thousands of anti-Nasrallah texts**

Hezbollah on Friday said tens of thousands of Lebanese citizens received text messages and recorded calls during a speech by group leader Hassan Nasrallah the previous night, branding him a “murderer.” The terror organization blamed Israel and an alleged “Israeli-Saudi alliance” for the

psychological warfare, “as part of its attempts to shake Lebanese faith in the resistance, and to plant seeds of division,” the Ynet news website reported.

More Details

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/hezbollah-blames-israel-as-lebanese-sent-thousands-of-anti-nasrallah-texts/>

- **Lebanon and Cuba Review Promising Moment in Bilateral Relations**

Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri and Cuban First Deputy Foreign Minister Marcelino Medina reviewed here the state of bilateral relations in several fields. Hariri met with Medina and Cuban Attaché Raul Madrigal at the Grand Serail (the venue of the Council of Ministers) in Beirut, where they discussed several issues of common interest and the political, social and economic situations in their countries.

More Details

<http://www.plenglish.com/index.php?o=rn&id=12839&SEO=lebanon-and-cuba-review-promising-moment-in-bilateral-relations>

- **Jordanians 'won't support ground intervention in Syria'**

A joint military exercise between Jordan and the US sparked a frenzy of speculation about an imminent American, British and Jordanian military intervention inside Syria to stem the threat posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as ISIS) group. The annual exercise, Eager Lion, was kicked off on Sunday by US and Jordanian troops with the participation of more than 20 nations. It is in its seventh year and is led by forces from US Central Command responsible for the Middle East region.

More Details

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/05/jordanians-won-support-ground-intervention-syria-170509110657155.html>

- **Mulki inaugurates development projects in northern governorates**

Prime Minister Hani Mulki on Thursday inaugurated several development projects to improve water supply services to northern governorates and provide more than 1,000 jobs in the Northern Ghor and the Northern Mazar, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported. Mulki inaugurated Wadi Al Arab Water Conveyance Project and a project to connect Hofa Reservoir to Beit Ras in Irbid, at a joint cost of around \$133 million. He also laid the cornerstone for two productive projects in Northern Ghor and Mazar.

More Details

<http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/mulki-inaugurates-development-projects-northern-governorates>

6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Saudis Plan \$40 Billion US Investment to "Cement Ties With Trump"**

Having gone all-in on a Hillary Clinton victory ahead of the elections, Saudi Arabia has quickly pivoted in its "appreciation" of the Trump administration, and having realized that the fastest way to Trump's heart is through the US Treasury's bank account, it is preparing to invest an "unprecedented" amount of money in the US. According to Bloomberg, the Kingdom's sovereign wealth fund will announce plans to "deploy as much as \$40 billion into U.S. infrastructure." The investment will likely be unveiled as early as next week when Trump is scheduled to visit the kingdom.

More Details

<http://www.zerohedge.com/news/2017-05-11/saudis-plan-40-billion-us-investment-cement-ties-trump>

- **Saudi Coalition Prepares for Assault on Port of Hodeidah**

A Saudi-led military coalition says that it intends to retake the Yemeni port of Hodeidah, which handles about 80 percent of the food aid that sustains the famine-stricken country. A source within the coalition recently told Reuters that it is examining "alternatives" to Hodeidah for routing aid shipments. Saudi forces contend that Houthi rebels use Hodeidah to receive shipments of arms and ammunition from Iran, making the control of the port a key strategic objective.

More Details

<http://maritime-executive.com/article/saudi-coalition-prepares-for-assault-on-port-of-hodeidah>

- **President of Equatorial Guinea Leaves Jeddah**

President of Equatorial Guinea Obiang Nguema Mbasogo left here today after paying an official visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. At King Abdulaziz International Airport, the President was seen off by a number of officials.

More Details

<http://sites.alriyadh.com/en/article/1158981/President-of-Equatorial-Guinea-Leaves-Jeddah>

- **Qatar Charity provides water for Taiz**

The project includes providing 104 barrels of diesel per month to ensure the operation of pumps for eight major wells in the province, which will provide water for more than 300,000 people living in difficult conditions because of the siege, QC has said in a press statement. Mohamed al-Kaabi, director of QC's Relief Department, said Qatar Charity has implemented the project in Taiz with the aim of reducing diseases and displacement and protecting people from the dangers of indiscriminate shelling during their journey to search for water in places far from their homes.

More Details

<http://www.gulf-times.com/story/547746/Qatar-Charity-provides-water-for-Taiz>

- **Over 50 Yemenis Die Of Cholera Outbreak in 2 Weeks**

A recent cholera outbreak in Yemen has claimed the lives of 51 people across the country over the past two weeks, the World Health Organization (WHO) said Thursday. According to the press release, the WHO has established ten new treatment centers in the affected areas and sent medicines and medical supplies there.

More Details

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201705111053522423-who-cholera-outbreak/>

- **Yemen's 'third government' emerges in southern Yemen**

Thousands of protesters gathered in the southern coastal city of Aden last week, declaring a renewed leadership within the southern secessionist ranks, after a controversial presidential order dismissed the popular governor of Aden. Demonstrators flooded the streets of Yemen's temporary capital in the days after President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi dismissed Major General Aidarous al-Zubaidi from his post as Aden's municipal leader, sparking anger among the pro-secessionist official's supporters.

More Details

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/indepth/2017/5/11/yemens-third-government-emerges-in-southern-yemen>

- **Bahrain PM receives UAE, Saudi ambassadors**

The Prime Minister of Bahrain HRH Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa has affirmed that the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries have adopted stronger stances commensurate to the size of the challenges faced by the region, and succeeded in overcoming the conspiracies targeting their security and stability, stressing that GCC states, thanks to the wisdom of their leaders and high awareness of their peoples, in foiling all conspiracies and plots. Bahrain News Agency (BNA) quoted Prince Khalifa as saying that the consolidation of GCC countries' cooperation with big countries have become

necessary, as the latter are showing understanding and adopting a positive vision towards what is going on in the region, especially regarding terrorism and the attempts by foreign sides to subvert its countries' security.

More Details

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302613426>

- **Qatar's Foreign Minister Participates IN International Conference in Support of Somalia**

Qatar's Minister of Foreign Affairs HE Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani participated today in the international conference in support of Somalia hosted by the British capital, London. The conference discussed means of supporting stability in Somalia and ensuring the realization of the security and prosperity plan 2020, through enhancing security and confronting the phenomenon of terrorism and economic challenges.

More Details

<http://www.qna.org.qa/en-us/News/17051122450071/Qatars-Foreign-Minister-Participates-in-International-Conference-in-Support-of-Somalia>

- **Saudi security forces clamp down on militants in eastern province**

Saudi security forces shot dead a wanted man in eastern Saudi Arabia on Wednesday, a local newspaper reported, after gunmen tried to stop redevelopment work at the old quarter of Awamiya, where authorities say Shiite militants are hiding. Reports from various news sites said several people were injured during clashes between security forces who had entered the old part of the town known as Al Musawara (the walled part) backed by bulldozers.

More Details

<http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/saudi-arabia/saudi-security-forces-clamp-down-on-militants-in-eastern-province-1.2025530>

7. EGYPT

- **Egypt cleric suspended, faces trial for non-Muslim remarks**

An Egyptian Muslim cleric has been barred from preaching and is set to appear before a court for saying Christians and Jews followed corrupt religions and would not go to heaven. Salem Abdel Galil, a former religious endowments ministry official, had made the remarks on a television show he hosts, sparking a backlash in a country reeling from deadly church bombings by Islamist extremists.

More Details

<http://www.france24.com/en/20170511-egypt-cleric-suspended-faces-trial-non-muslim-remarks>

- **Draft Laws in Egypt Could Lock Down Social Media**

The Egyptian parliament is reviewing a bill that would require social media users in Egypt to register with a government authority in order to use social media websites including Facebook and Twitter. Within six months of the law's adoption, users would have to register on the authority's website with their real names and state ID numbers to be able to use social media networks. Failure to do so could bring punishment of up to six months in jail and a fine. The bill, which has been endorsed by 60 members of parliament, is awaiting discussion by the parliament's legislative and constitutional committees before it is referred for plenary debate.

More Details

<https://globalvoices.org/2017/05/11/netizen-report-draft-laws-in-egypt-could-lock-down-social-media/>

- **Provisional agreement on foreign imports through Egypt**

A new agreement has been reached that allows foreign imports to transit through Egypt via the Musaid-Salloum land border. The deal was officially approved by the economy minister in the Beida-based interim government, Munir Ezer. For it to become active it still requires the approval of the head of Egypt's customs authority.

More Details

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/05/11/provisional-agreement-on-foreign-imports-through-egypt/>

- **Professor and former diplomat Mostafa El-Feki appointed head of Bibliotheca Alexandrina**

Egypt's President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi has approved the appointment of political science professor and former diplomat Mostafa El-Feki as the new director of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina. He will replace Ismail Serag El-Din, who has held the position since the library's inauguration in 2002.

More Details

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/268581/-.aspx>

- **Al-Sisi meets Kenyan counterpart to discuss bilateral relations**

President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi on Wednesday received his Kenyan counterpart Uhuru Kenyatta in Cairo, discussing bilateral relations. The last meeting between both leaders took place in February as

they discussed development projects between the Nile Basin countries, as well as the situations of African countries.

More Details

<http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2017/05/11/al-sisi-meets-kenyan-counterpart-discuss-bilateral-relations/>

- **'Pharaoh's daughter's burial chamber found in Egypt**

The ministry of antiquities said the chamber at the Dahshur royal necropolis, south of Cairo, contained a wooden box engraved with hieroglyphs. Inside the box were four canopic jars filled with the organs of the deceased, likely a daughter of King Emnikamaw.

More Details

<http://www.radionz.co.nz/news/world/330620/'pharaoh's-daughter's-burial-chamber-found-in-egypt>

- **Egypt focuses on China for banking expansion in light of Belt and Road Initiative**

The Egyptian banking sector focuses on the Chinese market for external expansion to enhance mutual trade between Egypt and China in the light of the Belt and Road Initiative, the vice chairman of an Egyptian giant national bank said in an interview with Xinhua. "We see China as one of the priorities of our bank for external expansion due to the large Chinese market and the volume of trade between China and Egypt that has exceeded \$11 billion," Banque Misr Vice Chairman Akef Abdel-Latif al-Maghraby said.

More Details

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/business/2017-05/12/content_29319758.htm

- **Sinai Tribes Rise against ISIS**

A number of tribesmen in Egypt's Sinai region revolted on Thursday against ISIS and started collaborating with the Egyptian Army to regroup ahead of launching a significant qualitative operation against the terrorist organization. Local sources in Sinai said the tribesmen's decision came after ISIS militants killed on Wednesday 13 members of the Tarabin tribe, one of the largest in northern Sinai.

More Details

<http://english.aawsat.com/mohamedhassanein/news-middle-east/sinai-tribes-rise-isis>

- **Egyptian Muslim cleric who called Christians 'unbelievers' to face trial for contempt of religion**

A Cairo misdemeanor court has set 24 June to start the trial of a prominent Islamic cleric and television presenter on charges of contempt of religion, after he described Christians as non-believers on an episode of his television show. The lawsuit filed against Salem Abdel-Geliel by lawyer Naguib Gibrail initially charged that Abdel-Geliel's comments displayed contempt of religion, threatened national unity, disrupted public peace and incited the killing of Christians.

More Details

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/268575/Egypt/Politics-/Egyptian-Muslim-cleric-who-called-Christians-unbel.aspx>

8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Italy arrests Libyan man over migrant slaying**

A Libyan migrant smuggler has been arrested in Sicily for his alleged role in the slaying of a migrant who failed to remove his cap when ordered.

More Details

http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/E/EU_EUROPE_MIGRANTS_THE_LATEST?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&CTIME=2017-05-11-08-53-06

- **Tunisia boasts cultural assets to attract Chinese investment – minister**

"Tunisia has a very important continental role in the Maghreb and the Arab zones," Zine El-Abidine, who will participate in the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing on May 14-15, told Xinhua in an interview Wednesday.

More Details

<http://en.people.cn/n3/2017/0511/c90000-9214080.html>

- **Algerian President Bouteflika Asks Islamists to Partake in Upcoming Government**

Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika has called for the Islamist opposition movement "Movement for a Society of Peace" MSP to rejoin the government after five years of abandoning it.

More Details

<http://english.aawsat.com/theaawsat/news-middle-east/algerian-president-bouteflika-asks-islamists-partake-upcoming-government>

- **Tunisian street vendor sets himself on fire**

A Tunisian street vendor set himself on fire yesterday in protest against police practices against him, provoking protests and confrontations with the police. The police used tear gas to disperse protestors in Tebourba, 35km from the capital Tunis

More Details

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170511-tunisian-street-vendor-sets-himself-on-fire/>

- **Misratan MPs slam Siala's Hafter remark**

Government of National Accord (GNA) foreign minister Mohamed Siala's reference to Khalifa Hafter as commander of the Libyan army continues to draw flack from the general's opponents.

More Details

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/05/11/misratan-mps-slam-sialas-hafter-remark/>

- **Market update – crude edges up, Shell follows, BP fails to benefit and Centrica suffers under Tory price cap**

Oil prices were at the fore as crude edged up another 1.4% to 50.92 US dollars a barrel yesterday, extending gains seen on Wednesday after Iraq and Algeria signalled support to extend Opec production cuts.

More Details

<https://www.energyvoice.com/marketinfo/139174/market-update-crude-edges-shell-follows-bp-fails-benefit-centrica-suffers-tory-price-cap/>

- **Ambassador to Morocco**

Today I announce the appointment of Ms Berenice Owen-Jones as Australia's first resident Ambassador to Morocco. Australia and Morocco enjoy close ties and celebrated the 40th anniversary of diplomatic relations in 2016. We share strong people-to-people links, with many thousands of Australians visiting Morocco each year.

More Details

<http://www.africa-newsroom.com/press/ambassador-to-morocco?lang=en>

- **From Morocco to Timbuktu review – cabs and camels with all-action Alice**

Alice Morrison is following the salt roads, ancient trading routes, to Africa's fabled city of gold in Mali. From Morocco to Timbuktu: An Arabian Adventure (BBC2) it's called. No, I'd never heard of

Alison before. She describes herself as an “Arabist and adventurer”. Timbuktu I do know about – through reading Hop on Pop by Dr Seuss, and – more recently – The Book Smuggler of Timbuktu by (disclaimer!) my friend and former colleague Charlie English. Recommended reading, both of them.

More Details

<https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2017/may/12/morocco-timbuktu-review-alice-morrison-africa-city-gold-michael-mosley-truth-sleep>

- **5,500 trafficked Nigerians to be deported from Mali, Libya – NAPTIP**

The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons says it is set to bring back 5,000 Nigerians, who are mainly victims of human trafficking in Mali, to the country.

More Details

<http://punchng.com/5500-trafficked-nigerians-to-be-deported-from-mali-libya-naptip/>

9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **PM says he is answerable after five years**

"The masses of Pakistan have rejected the foul-mouthed people who only know how to stage sit-ins, speak lies and make false accusations," said the prime minister, addressing a mammoth gathering at Rai Ali Nawaz Stadium in Chechawatni.

More Details

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/204017-PM-says-he-is-answerable-after-five-years>

- **Afghanistan security may get worse: US spymaster**

Kabul's political dysfunction and ineffectiveness will be “almost certainly” the greatest vulnerability to stability in 2017, a top American intelligence official says

More Details

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2017/05/12/afghanistan-security-may-get-worse-us-spymaster>

- **Afghan, Pakistani forces trade fire in Paktika**

Afghan and Pakistani border security personnel have clashed in the Barmal district of southeastern Paktika province, local officials said on Friday.

More Details

http://www.pajhwok.com/en/subscription-required?redirect_from=483974

- **Pak-Based Terror Groups 'Planning To Attack' Afghanistan, India**

Director of the United States National Intelligence Daniel Coats said Pakistan-based terror groups will present a sustained threat to U.S. interest in the region.

More Details

<http://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/pak-based-terror-groups-planning-attack-afghanistan-india>

- **Mashal's father demands arrest of facilitators**

I want justice for all the Mashal's in Pakistan. It will be good for our country and politicians if the seeds of justice are planted; our image abroad will also improve this way.

More Details

<https://www.geo.tv/latest/141492-Mashals-father-demands-arrest-of-facilitators>

- **Afghan govt approves in principle the Chabahar port implementation plan**

The Afghan government has approved in principle the Chabahar port agreement implementation plan, the Office of the President, ARG Palace said. According to a statement by ARG Palace, the decision was taken during a meeting of the Afghan cabinet of ministers today.

More Details

<http://www.khaama.com/afghan-govt-approves-in-principle-the-chabahar-port-implementation-plan-02740>

- **Taliban Terrorists Attack Security Forces Posts in Afghanistan, Get Punched Back**

The attack was staged in the Burka district of the Baghlan province at 12:00 a.m. (19:30 GMT) on Thursday, when the terrorists came close to the district governor's office, the TOLONews broadcaster reported citing its security sources on Friday.

More Details

<https://sputniknews.com/asia/201705121053534478-taliban-attacks-security-posts-afghanistan/>

- **Calls Mount for Implementation Of One Belt One Road Project**

Afghan officials said at the meeting that Kabul is fully committed to boost its economic and trade ties with China.

More Details

<http://www.tolonews.com/business/calls-mount-implementation-one-belt-one-road-project>

- **Afghanistan security to 'deteriorate' in 2018, warns US intelligence**

The Afghan military will continue to struggle with an emboldened Taliban insurgency, paving the way for more US troops into the country.

More Details

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/5/12/afghanistan-security-to-deteriorate-in-2018-warns-us-intelligence>

- **Pakistan's ties with Azerbaijan, Central Asia face no challenges**

A seminar entitled “Pakistan Relations with Central Asian Republics and Azerbaijan: Prospects and Challenges”, organized by the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) was held in Islamabad, Pakistan, dawn.com reported.

More Details

<http://en.trend.az/azerbaijan/politics/2752910.html>

10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **Turkey warns against backing PKK/PYD to take Raqqa**

Using the PKK/PYD to take the Syrian city of Raqqa from ISIL could create a new humanitarian crisis, a senior Turkish minister warned on Friday. Deputy Prime Minister Numan Kurtulmus also said it was “unacceptable” for NATO-member Turkey to tolerate the arming of terrorist organizations by its NATO allies.

More Details:

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/turkey/189399/turkey-warns-against-backing-pkk-pyd-to-take-raqqah>

- **Number of Syrian students in Turkey jumps to 15,000**

The number of Syrian students in Turkey has risen to 15,000 from just 600 five years ago, according to latest data from the country's higher education board. Among those students, around 12,500 are studying at universities -- mostly in medical and engineering departments -- according to Professor Hasan Mandal, acting chairman of the Council of Higher Education.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/education/number-of-syrian-students-in-turkey-jumps-to-15-000/816448>

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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