



# 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**

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**28 MARCH 2017**

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## 1. IRAQ

- **Jubouri: We Will Have to Stop Mosul Operations If Victims Continue Falling**

House Speaker, Salim al-Jubouri said "we will have to stop the liberation of Mosul if the victims continue to fall." He said in a televised statement followed by NINA that "the parliament began through its competent committees to collect information on operations and we will also as presidency and committees to visit the areas to find out the situation of the displaced in particular."

More Details:

[http://www.ninanews.com/News\\_Details.aspx?EOc0RHYc9QKjsyVF2Ofyvg%253d%253d](http://www.ninanews.com/News_Details.aspx?EOc0RHYc9QKjsyVF2Ofyvg%253d%253d)

- **Gorran Operative Attempting to Establish Hashd Al-Shaabi Force in Soran**

An operative of the Kurdish Gorran (Change) Movement in Soran city, northeast of Erbil, claims that the Iraqi government has promised to support him in establishing an armed force of Hashd al-Shaabi in the area. Sardar Omar Agha Surchi, the Gorran operative in Khalifan district of Soran, has told the local media outlets that he has a close relationship with a number of Iraqi government officials and they have assured him of their support to establish an armed force from the youth of the area.

More Details:

<http://www.iraqinews.com/baghdad-politics/gorran-establish-hashd-al-shaabi-soran/>

- **Baghdad Planning to Cut Kirkuk Public Servants Salaries**

Kurdish member of the Iraqi parliament has warned about a serious plan by the country's ministry of finance to cut the monthly salaries of Kirkuk public servants. MP Masoud Haider stated that he has followed up the issue and found out that there is an unofficial consent from the finance minister on the cut of the salaries in Kirkuk.

More Details:

<http://www.basnews.com/index.php/en/news/iraq/339063>

- **Civilian deaths, Old City fight force Mosul battle rethink**

Iraq Perched in bombed-out apartments overlooking west Mosul, Iraqi police snipers have in the last few days advanced to within a few hundred meters of the mosque where Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al—Baghdadi declared his caliphate nearly three years ago. Through holes knocked in walls, troops have a clear view of the al Nuri mosque's crooked, brown minaret and Islamic State's black flag on its white tip -- a hugely symbolic target in the battle to recapture Mosul now in its sixth month.

More Details:

[http://www.shafaaq.com/en/En\\_NewsReader/cca0bd7c-d033-4ece-9215-b653a0c246a8/Civilian-deaths--Old-City-fight-force-Mosul-battle-rethink](http://www.shafaaq.com/en/En_NewsReader/cca0bd7c-d033-4ece-9215-b653a0c246a8/Civilian-deaths--Old-City-fight-force-Mosul-battle-rethink)

- **'We Are Shocked': Berlin Calls for Investigating Deadly US-Led Airstrike in Iraq**

Berlin called for investigating the March 17 airstrike by the US-led coalition in Iraq which reportedly killed civilian casualties. The deadly US-led coalition airstrike in Iraq's West Mosul which reportedly caused civilian casualties two weeks ago should be investigated, the German Foreign Ministry said Monday. "We are shocked when such disasters occur. Of course this should be investigated, the goal for those who are united in this coalition is to avoid such tragic events in the future," ministry spokesman Stefen Seibert said.

More Details:

[http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN\\_Direje.aspx?Jimare=40065](http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN_Direje.aspx?Jimare=40065)

- **Two civilians injured in blast southwestern Baghdad**

An explosive charge blew up on Monday in southwestern the capital Baghdad, leaving two civilians injured, a security source told The Baghdad Post. In a press statement, the source said, "A roadside explosive device implanted near a popular market in al-Redwaneya district in southwestern Baghdad, blew up on Monday, wounding two civilians".

More Details:

<http://www.thebaghdadpost.com/en/story/8677/Two-civilians-injured-in-blast-southwestern-Baghdad>

- **US airstrikes kill 85 people in Mosul: Al-Amaq**

The U.S. Coalition allegedly killed a large number of people in Mosul City over the last 48 hours amid the Iraqi Army's current offensive in the western part of the provincial capital. According to the Islamic State's official media wing, the U.S. Coalition killed 85 people and wounded at least 215 others after conducting several airstrikes over Mosul these past two days.

More Details:

<https://www.almasdarnews.com/article/us-airstrikes-kill-85-people-mosul-al-amaq/>

- **Civilians in western Mosul are being shot at by Isis and Iraqi forces alike**

Civilians trying to flee the besieged Isis-held enclave in west Mosul are being shot dead by Isis and Iraqi army snipers as they try to cross the Tigris River, says an eyewitness trapped inside the city with

his family. In an exclusive interview with The Independent, Jasim, a 33-year old Iraqi Sunni living in west Mosul near the 5th Bridge, said: “I want to rescue my mother and take her to the eastern part, but it is dangerous. Three people were killed in our neighbourhood trying to cross the river to the eastern side. They were shot dead by the snipers.”

More Details:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/west-mosul-isis-battle-city-northern-iraq-army-coalition-forces-syria-daesh-islamic-state-sunni-a7652401.html>

- **ISIS in Africa: Implications from Syria and Iraq**

At the end of 2016, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, leader of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), announced that the group had “expanded and shifted some of our command, media, and wealth to Africa.” ISIS’s Dabiq magazine referred to the regions of Africa that were part of its “caliphate”: “the region that includes Sudan, Chad, and Egypt has been named the caliphate province of Alkinaana; the region that includes Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, and Uganda as the province of Habasha; the North African region encompassing Libya, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Nigeria, Niger, and Mauritania as Maghreb, the province of the caliphate.” Leaving aside the mismatched ethno-linguistic groupings included in each of these “provinces,” ISIS’s interest in establishing a presence in Africa has long been a part of its vision for a global caliphate.

More Details:

<http://isnblog.ethz.ch/security/isis-in-africa-implications-from-syria-and-iraq>

- **Iraq's new marginalised population**

Across Iraq, as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as ISIS) loses its territorial footholds, it is leaving behind entire populations terrorised by its fighters, but also a community of families tainted by their relatives' affiliation with the group. These families are among the most vulnerable people in the areas the Iraqi military have retaken, with many of their neighbours apparently eager to take revenge for the past two years of brutal suffering.

More Details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2017/03/iraq-marginalised-population-isil-families-170327102713024.html>

- **Mosul civilians caught in ISIS crossfire as dramatic video emerges**

Dramatic new video from the ISIS stronghold of Mosul captures the pitched battle between the black-clad jihadist army and the U.S.-backed Iraqi forces - and the innocent civilians caught in the crossfire. Airing Monday on Fox News' “Shepard Smith Reporting,” the Sky News video captured the

firefights, damage and desperation as the world's most feared terrorist group makes its last stand in the war-torn nation.

More Details:

<http://www.foxnews.com/world/2017/03/27/u-s-sending-200-troops-to-iraq-to-assist-in-anti-isis-mosul-offensive.html>

- **Iran exports more than one billion dollars goods to Iraq and Kurdistan**

Governor of Qasr-e-Shirin city Faramarz Akbari said on Monday that in the past year (ended March 20) totally one billion and 28 million dollars of goods have been exported from Parviz Khan and Khosravi border terminals to Iraq and Kurdistan Region. He told IRNA that the weight of the exported goods in this period is 3.255 million tons and mainly included Portland cement, cake and biscuit, cooler, tomato and tomato paste, watermelon, dairy products, construction materials, fruits and vegetables.

More Details:

<http://ekurd.net/iran-exports-billion-kurdistan-2017-03-27>

- **Restarting economic opportunity in post-ISIS Iraq**

The Islamic State (ISIS) has lost significant territory, but its genocide continues. How can it be ended? How can it be reversed? American and United Nations plans for post-ISIS reconstruction in Iraq focus primarily on Sunni and Shia areas, scandalously neglecting minorities in Northern Iraq — particularly the Christians — who continue to suffer from the ISIS genocide and ongoing discrimination within their country.

More Details:

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/mar/27/iraq-after-isis-will-boast-economic-opportunity/>

- **US not changing 'good' rules of engagement in Iraq following deadly strike in Mosul**

The Pentagon said it will not alter the rules of engagement in the war against Islamic State (IS, former ISIS/ISIL) in Iraq as the US-led coalition faces allegations of killing dozens of civilians in one of their airstrikes on Mosul. US forces are not planning to change the way they conduct airstrikes despite the battle for Mosul entering more densely populated areas in the Western part of the city, the spokesman of the US Central Command, Colonel John Thomas, told reporters.

More Details:

<https://www.rt.com/news/382502-us-forces-mosul-airstrikes/>

- **Daesh Fighter Fesses Up Location of Mass Grave in Iraq**

In another sign that Daesh's way of governing resembles that of ruthless tyrants, a prisoner Daesh militant may have unveiled the GPS coordinates of a mass graveyard that Daesh has been using in its attempts to conquer territories throughout the Middle East. The alleged mass grave is in Saadiya, 60 km northeast of Raquba, according to the Diyala Organization for Human Rights.

More Details:

<https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/201703281052022223-daesh-fighter-mass-grave-iraq/>

- **Spike in civilian deaths in Iraq 'flagrant violation of international law' - Amnesty**

The US-led coalition against ISIL could be at fault for failing to limit civilian deaths in Iraq, according to a new report from Amnesty International. The human rights group says that a high civilian toll suggests a failure to prevent civilian casualties, in flagrant violation of international law. In a new report Amnesty cites evidence pointing to an 'alarming pattern' of US-led airstrikes which 'have destroyed whole houses with entire families inside' during the Mosul offensive.

More Details:

[http://www.euronews.com/2017/03/28/spike-in-civilian-deaths-in-iraq-flagrant-violation-of-international-law-amnesty?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+euronews%2Fen%2Fnews+%28euronews+-+news+-+en%29](http://www.euronews.com/2017/03/28/spike-in-civilian-deaths-in-iraq-flagrant-violation-of-international-law-amnesty?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+euronews%2Fen%2Fnews+%28euronews+-+news+-+en%29)

- **ISIS Tells Iraqis, 'Wake Up And Attack' US Soldiers In Iraq**

The Islamic State group, also known as ISIS, has issued new threats to U.S. soldiers in Iraq, apparently infuriated by the lack of resistance they have faced from locals. The warnings came through encrypted social media application Telegram, where the jihadists and their supporters have established a number of channels capable of transmitting information without detection. The messages, which were quoted Thursday by data mining news site Vocativ came specifically in response to the U.S. military presence in the former ISIS stronghold of Ramadi. The central Iraqi city was one of many that were captured by the group in 2014, but it was retaken last year by Iraqi troops, Sunni Muslim tribal fighters and Shiite Muslim militias.

More Details:

<http://www.ibtimes.com/isis-tells-iraqis-wake-attack-us-soldiers-iraq-2515643>

- **U.S. Military in Iraq wears new black uniforms to fight ISIS**

To assist Iraqi forces in the fight against the Islamic State group, also known as ISIS in Iraq, a number of U.S. military personnel have adopted new black uniforms. U.S. military advisers have begun

wearing outfits similar to soldiers in Iraq's elite counterterrorism units, one of the forces Washington has backed in the operation to oust ISIS from its final and largest Iraqi stronghold of Mosul, Military Times reported Monday.

More Details:

[http://www.newsweek.com/us-military-iraq-new-black-uniform-fight-isis-574718?piano\\_t=1](http://www.newsweek.com/us-military-iraq-new-black-uniform-fight-isis-574718?piano_t=1)

- **Iraqi Forces close in on Mosque where Baghdadi declared himself ISIS Caliph**

Iraqi coalition forces fighting to oust the Islamic State militant group ISIS from the city of Mosul have turned their sights onto a street in the Old City that is around the corner from the famed mosque where Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi declared the Islamic State a caliphate and he its head. Security forces reached the Old City several weeks ago but face tough resistance from ISIS fighters who have responded with suicide car bombs, ambushes and sniper fire.

More Details:

[http://www.newsweek.com/fresh-push-iraqi-forces-bid-mosul-mosque-where-baghdadi-delivered-first-sermon-574570?piano\\_t=1](http://www.newsweek.com/fresh-push-iraqi-forces-bid-mosul-mosque-where-baghdadi-delivered-first-sermon-574570?piano_t=1)

## 2. SYRIA

- **More than 500 Gunmen and Their Family Members Leave Al-Wa'er Neighborhood in Homs**

More than 500 gunmen and some of their family members on Monday left al-Wa'er neighborhood in Homs city and headed for the northeastern countryside of Aleppo. The evacuation of the second batch came within the framework of the reconciliation agreement which aims to evacuate all gunmen and weapons from the neighborhood and pave the way for the return of all state-owned institutions to it.

More details:

<http://sana.sy/en/?p=103046>

- **Syrian Forces Liberate Areas in Suwayda from Daesh Terrorists**

Syrian army troops backed by allied forces managed to liberate 300 square kilometers of land in the Southern province of Suwayda from the Daesh (ISIS or ISIL) terrorist group, killing a number of the foreign-backed militants. According to Tasnim dispatches, Syrian forces retook full control over some villages and townships in Suwayda province, including Tall Asfar and Bi'r Qassab, clearing an area of 300 square kilometers from Daesh terrorists.

More details:

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2017/03/28/1365554/syrian-forces-liberate-areas-in-suwayda-from-daesh-terrorists>

- **ISIS Repositions After Abrupt Withdrawal from Southeast Syria**

ISIS has recently evacuated wide regions southeast Syria and Eastern Qalamoun, and has headed towards the Syria desert. Opposition and regime forces shared control over regions of where ISIS pulled out. Activists revealed that the group withdrew from more than 14 villages in the north of As-Suwayda in a surprising movement so the regime forces advanced in these sites without any conflicts.

More details:

<http://english.aawsat.com/nazeer-rida/news-middle-east/isis-repositions-abrupt-withdrawal-southeast-syria>

- **Syrian Army Expands Security Zone around Palmyra- General Staff**

The Syrian army and militias supporting it have expanded the security zone around Palmyra, the chief of the Russian General Staff's Main Operations Directorate, Colonel-General Sergey Rudskoy told a news briefing on Tuesday. "In the area of Palmyra the Syrian army and militias supporting it keep expanding the security zone around the city. Government troops have moved forward 16 kilometers northeast, eight kilometers east and twelve kilometers southeast," he said.

More details:

<http://tass.com/world/937897>

- **U.S. backed Syria Forces Resume Fighting near Tabqa Dam**

US-backed forces in Syria are resuming an offensive against ISIL fighters at a major hydroelectric dam, saying it is in no danger of collapsing amid conflicting claims over its integrity. The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces' (SDF) offensive was briefly suspended on Monday, a day after a senior Syrian government official warned that the Tabqa dam had been damaged by US-led air raids and cited an increasing risk of catastrophic flooding.

More details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/03/backed-syria-forces-resume-fighting-tabqa-dam-170327173005420.html>

- **Around 40.000 Syrians displaced by Fighting near Hama: UN**

About 40,000 people, mainly women and children, have been displaced by fighting northwest of Hama city in Syria, the United Nations said on Tuesday. Since a rebel offensive began in the area a week ago, people have fled south and west to Hama city and to other towns nearby and in neighboring districts including Homs, Latakia and Tartous, the United Nations said.

More details:

[http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-hama-idUSKBN16Z0UV?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews&utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+Reuters%2FworldNews+%28Reuters+World+News%29&rpc=401](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-hama-idUSKBN16Z0UV?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Reuters%2FworldNews+%28Reuters+World+News%29&rpc=401)

- **Syrian Opposition Demands Assad's Immediate Exit from Power**

In yet another call for President Bashar al-Assad's departure, the Syrian opposition said on Monday that the prerequisite was a key aspect of political settlement in the war-ravaged country. Following a meeting with UN Secretary General's Deputy Special Envoy for Syria Ramzi Izz Eddin Ramzi, the chief negotiator for Syria's opposition High Negotiations Committee (HNC), Nasr al-Hariri, said: "Today, we continued to discuss the political period and a constitutional declaration that will be in effect in the transition period."

More details:

<https://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2017/03/28/Syrian-opposition-demands-Assad-s-immediate-resignation-.html>

- **Al-Bab Residents Rebuild Town Saved from IS**

The people of Al-Bab are busy bringing the northern Syrian city back to its former state following its liberation from Islamic State. Civilians have been returning to their homes since Turkish-led Operation Euphrates Shield removed the terror group in mid-February.

More details:

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/28/03/2017/Al-Bab-residents-rebuild-town-saved-from-IS>

- **No fight against Militants possible while air strikes continue: Syrian Opposition**

The Syrian opposition is "fed up" with banned militants but they cannot be stopped if Syria continues evicting populations of besieged areas, opposition negotiator Basma Kodmani said on Sunday. Syria's government has always cited the fight against "terrorism" to justify its part in a six-year war that has killed hundreds of thousands, and brands all its opponents and their backers as terrorists and sponsors of terror.

More details:

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/syria-opposition-fed-militants-warns-they-will-endure-while-bombing-continues-340780073>

- **Syria: ISIL withdraws Forces from Northeastern Sweida**

The Syrian Army forces took back almost 300sq/km of land in Northeastern Sweida after ISIL terrorist group pulled its fighters back from 14 villages, local sources said. The sources said that ISIL has left the villages of Khirbet al-Sa'ad, al-Qasr, Bastareh, Rajm al-Daleh, al-Saqiyeh, Tal Asfar, al-Fadyan, al-Shohayb al-Qarbi, al-Shohayb al-Sharqi, Tal Masitabeh, Taloul Salman, al-Shafraney, al-Sweimereh and Ba'ar al-Qasab East of the main road connecting Damascus to Sweida.

More details:

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13960108000193>

### 3. IRAN

- **Iran-Rusia Ties Positive for Regional, Global Stability, Security: Rouhani**

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani says relations between the Islamic Republic and Russia are “growing,” stressing that their mutual ties will play an effective role in promoting regional and international stability and security.

More details:

<http://presstv.ir/Detail/2017/03/27/515820/Iran-Russia-Hassan-Rouhani-Dmitri-Medvedev>

- **US Official on Recent Pinalties over Iran’s Arm Program**

The recent US sanctions imposed on foreign companies or individuals over their contribution to Iran’s missile program are outside the scope of the 2015 nuclear deal (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action/ JCPOA), a State Department official told Trend on condition of anonymity.

More details:

<http://en.trend.az/iran/politics/2735572.html>

- **Iran ‘Precedent’ for Middle East Countries ‘imposing Sanctions Againts US’**

In particular, Tehran underscored that the sanctions were imposed due to the companies’ involvement in the atrocities committed by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territories" and due to

the support they provided for "terrorist activities" in the region. The complete list of sanctioned companies was published on the Iranian Foreign Ministry's website.

More details:

<https://sputniknews.com/politics/201703281052027190-iran-sanctions-us/>

- **Nuclear Program Fully Peaceful, Transparent**

Bahram Ghasemi said Iran's nuclear program has been fully transparent and all IAEA reports attest that the country's nuclear activities are peaceful and non-damaging. Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Bahram Ghasemi said recent remarks by US Vice President Mike Pence in a Zionist lobby in Washington as repetitious, fictitious and in line with hostile and unilateralist policies of the American government against Iran.

More details:

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/124444/Nuclear-program-fully-peaceful-transparent>

- **Iran calls for an end to bloodshed in Yemen**

Iranian Foreign Ministry issued a statement on Sunday, calling for putting an end to the devastating war and bloodshed in Yemen. "It is two years after waging a devastating and inconclusive war on people in Yemen claiming lives of thousands of women and children. According to the international organizations, over 18 million of Yemeni civilians are in dire need of humanitarian aid and some eight million people mainly children suffer malnutrition, famine and hunger", the statement said.

More details:

<http://www.tehrantimes.com/news/412193/Iran-calls-for-an-end-to-bloodshed-in-Yemen>

- **ISIS threatens to Attack Iran**

ISIS rarely takes on Iran in Farsi, but the terror group has released a propaganda film aimed at Tehran out of its Diyala Province arm. Diyala stretches from Baghdad to Iraq's border with Iran and was the nerve center of ISIS operations before the group spread into the north and west of the country.

More details:

[http://en.abna24.com/news/middle-east/isis-threatens-to-attack-iran\\_820437.html](http://en.abna24.com/news/middle-east/isis-threatens-to-attack-iran_820437.html)

- **Iran Says Russia Can Use Its Military Bases 'On Case by Case Basis'**

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif told Reuters on Tuesday that Russia could use Iranian military bases to launch air strikes against militants in Syria on a "case by case basis." Russia

and Iran are both key allies of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and have played decisive roles in the past 18 months to turn the tide of the Syrian conflict in his favor.

More details:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-iran-rouhani-base-idUSKBN16Z0NU>

- **Iranian Judiciary Chief Censures UN for Renewal of Human Rights Rapporteur's Mandate**

Iranian Judiciary Chief Ayatollah Sadeq Amoli Larijani slammed the UN Human Rights Council's move to renew the mandate of the UN special rapporteur on the human rights situation in Iran.

More details:

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2017/03/28/1365591/iranian-judiciary-chief-censures-un-for-renewal-of-human-rights-rapporteur-s-mandate>

#### 4. ISRAEL – PALESTINE

- **US ambassador to UN: Days of Israel-bashing are over**

Addressing AIPAC conference, Nikki Haley says anti-settlement resolution passed at the UN in December was 'not only embarrassing it was hurtful,' vowing 'it will never happen again.' The US ambassador to the United Nations received a rapturous welcome Monday at Washington's biggest pro-Israel forum, where she vowed never to allow "Israel-bashing" at the world body.

More details:

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4941558,00.html>

- **Mashal on assassination: 'We are at open war' against Israel**

While not mentioning Israel by name, Hamas's Qatar-based leader says 'the enemy' has 'settled the score' with Mazan Fukha, a released prisoner who returned to terror activity and was killed last week in a mysterious assassination. Following the assassination of Hamas commander Mazan Fukha, leader Khaled Mashal threatened on Monday that his organization was in "an open war against the criminal enemy."

More details:

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4941482,00.html>

- **Israel air force partakes in Drill with Arab Forces, among others**

While Israel does not have any diplomatic relations with the UAE, last year the IAF took part in the Red Flag aerial exercise in the United States alongside UAE, and Pakistan. The Israel Air Force along with pilots from the United Arab Emirates and a number of other countries began a joint drill in Greece Monday, marking the second time crews from the two countries have flown side by side.

More details:

<http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Israel-Air-Force-launches-joint-drill-exercises-with-Arab-Greek-forces-485391>

- **Tree believed to have hidden Jews during Holocaust voted Europe's best**

Local residents and historians say hollowed-out trunk of 650-year-old Polish oak sheltered brothers from Nazis during WWII A 650-year-old oak in Poland that local legend holds served as a shelter for two Jewish brothers hiding from the Nazis during WWII was recently voted Europe's most popular tree.

More details:

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/tree-believed-to-have-hidden-jews-during-holocaust-voted-europes-best/>

- **Bedouin soldier: You don't know anything about Israel**

Bedouin man who served in IDF tours US to show how little anti-Israel Jews know about the Jewish state. As anti-Israel – and increasingly, anti-Semitic – elements on college campuses have become more vocal, more active, and more provocative on college campuses around the US, pro-Israel activists are working to combat the hatred and misinformation found at so many institutions across the country.

More details:

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/227395>

- **Hamas Obtains Heavy Rockets to Wreak Havoc on Israeli Gaza Border Towns**

The militant group is in possession of dozens of such short-range rockets as it steps up arms production in preparation of a future conflict with Israel. Hamas has dozens of short-range heavy rockets it has recently developed, which the group intends to use against communities bordering with the Gaza Strip in a future conflict with Israel.

More details:

<http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.779904>

- **2 Palestinian youths injured in al-Jalazun shooting transferred to Israeli hospital**

Two of three seriously injured 18-year-old Palestinians were transferred to a hospital in Israel on Monday evening, medical sources said, four days after Israeli forces opened fire on them in the central occupied West Bank in a shooting that left another teenager dead. Jassem Muhammad Nakhla, Muhammad Hattab, and Muhammad Moussa Nakhla remained in critical condition, sources at the Palestine Medical Complex in the occupied West Bank city of Ramallah -- where the youth had initially been treated -- told Ma'an.

More details:

<http://www.maannnews.com/Content.aspx?id=776153>

- **Israeli police detain six more guards at Jerusalem's al-Aqsa**

Israeli police detained on Tuesday six Islamic Awqaf guards at al-Aqsa Mosque compound in in Jerusalem. WAFA correspondent said that Israeli police raided the houses of the four guards and detained them. On Monday, Israeli police detained four guards after they stopped a Jewish archaeologist from stealing an ancient mosque stone. Director of of Al-Aqsa Mosque, Omar Kiswani, was also detained when he tried to intervene on behalf of the guards as they attempted to prevent the theft.

More details:

<http://english.wafa.ps/page.aspx?id=XiSgkQa69593131113aXiSgkQ>

- **Khaled denounces US attempts to reach decisions on settlements in absence of Palestinian side**

Member of the Executive Committee of Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Head of the Palestinian Expatriates Affairs Department, Tayseer Khaled, on Monday condemned US attempts to reach agreements with Israel on settlements in the absence of the Palestinian side, and called on the US administration to respect the international law and decisions on Israel's settlement activities in the occupied West Bank including Jerusalem.

More details:

<http://english.pnn.ps/2017/03/27/khaled-denounces-us-attempts-to-reach-understandings-on-settlements-with-israel-in-absence-of-palestinian-side/>

- **Israel's Mossad May Have Turned French Spies into Double Agents during Joint Op in Syria**

Israeli intelligence agency Mossad attempted to turn French spies into double agents during a joint operation in Syria, Le Monde newspaper reported, citing a French intelligence report. The report, part-published by the French daily, reveals Mossad's efforts to develop relationships with French spies between 2010 and 2011, in an effort to achieve its goal of turning them into double agents and obtain sensitive information for Tel Aviv.

More details:

<https://www.palestinechronicle.com/report-israels-mossad-may-have-turned-french-spies-into-double-agents-during-joint-op-in-syria/>

## 5. JORDAN and LEBANON

- **King Salman Gets Rousing Welcome in Jordan**

Saudi Arabia's King Salman has received a royal welcome in Jordan, in a lavish ceremony complete with cannon salutes, guards on camel back and a cream-colored vintage Mercedes. Salman is in Jordan to attend the annual Arab Summit, to be held on Wednesday. Issues on the summit agenda include conflicts in Syria, Libya and Yemen.

More details:

<http://gulftoday.ae/portal/5082fd24-a432-4823-8d55-39163cca1798.aspx>

- **Arab league chief urges Arab Governments to act on Syria**

Arab League chief Ahmed Abul Gheit urged Arab governments on Monday to do more to resolve the conflict in Syria rather than leaving it to other powers. He was speaking as Arab foreign ministers met to prepare for the Arab League's annual summit, set for Wednesday in Jordan.

More details:

<http://www.muscatdaily.com/Archive/Gcc/Arab-League-chief-urges-Arab-governments-to-act-on-Syria-4zhq#ixzz4cbyggOXA>

- **British Airways expands Jordan presence with new sales centre opening**

British Airways, the UK's flagship carrier, has celebrated 65 years of services to Jordan by opening a new sales office in the country's capital, Amman. Following hot-on-the-heels of British Airways' appointment of AlShamel as its general sales agent (GSA) in Jordan earlier this year, the new sales

office will cater to the growing demands of the country's travellers for premium products and access to more European and North American destinations.

More details:

<http://www.albawaba.com/business/pr/british-airways-expands-jordan-presence-new-sales-centre-opening-955584>

- **King Abdullah holds summit meeting with Saudi King Salman**

His Majesty King Abdullah and Saudi King Salman on Monday held a summit meeting in Amman during which the two leaders discussed bilateral ties and the latest regional developments. Meanwhile, the two countries signed a series of agreements aimed at boosting ties, foremost of which is the memorandum of association for a company that will run the Saudi-Jordanian Investment Fund, which will be investing \$3 billion in projects in Jordan.

More details:

<http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/king-abdullah-holds-summit-meeting-saudi-king-salman>

- **Arab leaders tackle regional crises at Jordan summit**

Arab leaders are in Jordan to discuss ways to tackle a series of long-running regional crises. Despite calls for unity, member states remain divided on key issues, including the six-year war in Syria. Al Jazeera's Jamal Elshayyal reports from the Dead Sea in Jordan.

More details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/video/news/2017/03/arab-leaders-tackle-regional-crises-jordan-summit-170328051837895.html>

- **The Lebanese Armed Forces-Orientation Directorate issued on Monday the following statement:**

"The Intelligence Directorate referred to specialized judiciary Syrian national Moayad Ahmad Al Waw for belonging to the terrorist organization ISIS in the outskirts of the town of Aarsal, and participating in attacks on LAF units in 2014 in said town."

More details:

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/77145/LAF-Syrian-national-referred-to-judiciary-for-ISIS-affiliation>

- **Israel mulls law to regulate offshore border with Lebanon**

Israel is mulling a new law on offshore zones which Lebanon sees as laying claim to a disputed 860 km<sup>2</sup> block. A spokeswoman for Israel's energy ministry told NGW: "The maritime zones law is intended to precisely define the various maritime zones according to the international law and the Israeli laws that will prevail there. As for the disputed zone with Lebanon, Israel did not include it in its competitive licensing round zones in question. Israel is open to every dialogue in order to solve the dispute while safeguarding the Israeli interests."

More details:

<http://www.naturalgasworld.com/tension-between-israel-and-lebanon-surrounding-exploration-blocks-36594>

- **Lebanon Cabinet Approves First Budget Since 2005**

Lebanon's cabinet approved the 2017 state budget, paving the way for a possible breakthrough in the decade-long impasse over the country's finances. The spending plan, approved late Monday, now goes for a vote in parliament, which hasn't passed a budget since 2005. The budget deficit is forecast at \$5.2 billion, or 9.54% of gross domestic product, on spending of \$15.8 billion, according to the draft released last year.

More details:

<https://www.bloomberg.com/politics/articles/2017-03-28/lebanon-cabinet-approves-budget-in-possible-breakthrough>

- **Aoun promises united message at Arab League summit**

President Michel Aoun said Tuesday that he will carry a united message on behalf of Lebanon at the Arab League summit in Amman, Jordan.

More details:

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2017/Mar-28/399481-aoun-promises-he-will-carry-a-united-message-at-arab-league-summit.ashx>

- **Cabinet Convenes at Baabda to Discuss Electricity-Reform Plan**

A cabinet meeting devoted to study an electricity-reform plan convened at the Presidential Palace in Baabda and chaired by President Michel Aoun. The cabinet is set to discuss a "Power Saving Plan" proposed by Energy Minister Cesar Abi Khalil with the aim of improving electricity production.

More details:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/227635-cabinet-convenes-at-baabda-to-discuss-electricity-reform-plan>

## 6. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

- **Market share or higher prices? The Saudi, Russia oil dilemma: Russell**

Saudi Arabia and Russia are likely to discover that when pursuing two incompatible goals, the one deemed less important will ultimately be sacrificed. The world's top two oil exporters appear to be chasing both higher crude prices through their curbs to production and market share by increasing exports, at least in Asia, the world's biggest crude importing region and the fastest growing.

More Details:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/column-russell-crude-asia-idUSL3N1H52HO?rpc=401&>

- **Saudi Arabia intercepts 4 ballistic missiles from Yemen**

Saudi forces have destroyed 4 ballistic missiles launched from Yemen which were targeting two border cities, Al Arabiya local news reported on Tuesday. The cities are Abha and Khamis Mushait and they are among other border areas that have been targeted in such attacks since the beginning of Saudi-led war against Houthi militias in Yemen that completed two years this week.

More Details:

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/28/c\\_136164544.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/28/c_136164544.htm)

- **King Salman Youth Center Holds Workshop to Boost Role of Saudi Youth**

The King Salman Youth Center has proceeded its efforts in the “National Indexes for Youths” project, which is set to be launched soon in partnership with the United Nations Development Project (UNDP). The center hosted an elite of Saudi youth who participated in an interactive workshop to survey their views on important subjects.

More Details:

<http://english.aawsat.com/theaawsat/news-middle-east/saudi-arabia/king-salman-youth-center-holds-workshop-boost-role-saudi-youth>

- **Qatar to be transformed into a knowledge hub: PM**

Prime Minister and Interior Minister H E Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani said yesterday that Qatar will invest £5bn (QR22.5bn approximately) in the UK economy over the next

three to five years. The announcement was made at the high level Qatar-UK Business and Investment Forum which the Prime Minister opened here yesterday.

More Details:

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/28/03/2017/Qatar-to-be-transformed-into-a-knowledge-hub-PM>

- **Qatar Airways chief accelerates India push, plans new routes to UK**

Qatar Airways Ltd. may order 100 new jetliners before the end of this year to power its push into India and also plans to announce two new routes to the UK even as the country prepares to exit the European Union, Chief Executive Officer Akbar Al Baker said. The Gulf carrier is confident that a new aviation policy mapped out by "futuristic" Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will permit 100 per cent foreign ownership of a domestic airline, Al Baker said Monday in London.

More Details:

<http://timesofoman.com/article/105886/Business/Aviation/Qatar-Airways-chief-accelerates-India-push-plans-new-routes-to-UK>

- **UK complicit in the destruction of Yemen say campaigners**

The UK has licensed over £3.3 billion of arms to Saudi Arabia since the beginning of a bombing campaign intended to influence the outcome of the civil conflict in Yemen. It has created a humanitarian catastrophe. Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) is awaiting verdict of legal action against arms exports being used by the Saudi regime in Yemen The morning of March 26 marked two years since the Saudi-led bombardment of Yemen began. Since then, 10,000 people have been killed and millions have been left without access to vital infrastructure, clean water or electricity. An estimated 17 million people are food insecure and require urgent humanitarian assistance.

More Details:

<http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/23852>

- **From Yemen to Mosul, Trump's rocky start in the Middle East**

US President Donald Trump has vowed to wipe Islamist terrorism "from the face of the Earth" and says he wants the US to "start winning wars again" -- but he's gotten off to a rocky start in the Middle East. The US and Iraq are investigating whether a US-led coalition airstrike in the city of Mosul was behind the deaths of more than 100 people on March 17. If it is, it could be one of the greatest losses of civilian life caused by the coalition since it began strikes on ISIS in 2014.

More Details:

<http://us.cnn.com/2017/03/28/politics/trump-mosul-yemen-middle-east/index.html>

- **Dubai Tourism announces new Sustainability Awards**

Dubai's Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing, Dubai Tourism, today announced the launch of the "Sustainability Awards" that are part of the Dubai Sustainable Tourism, DST, initiative. The awards inauguration is part of Dubai Tourism's commitment to supporting the United Nation's announcement of 2017 being the "International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development", and aim to recognise hotels and individuals who are driving environmental awareness and are adopting tangible measures to ensure enhanced sustainability within the tourism sector.

More Details:

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395302605541>

- **Oman, Jordan agree on Visa Exemption**

Oman and Jordan on Monday signed an agreement on mutual visa exemption for holders of the diplomatic, special, official and service passports. The agreement comes within the framework of the good relations between the two countries in various spheres. The agreement was signed on behalf of the Government of Oman by H E Yousuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah, Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs, whilst it was signed from the Jordanian side by Ayman al Safadi, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates.

More Details:

<http://www.muscatdaily.com/Archive/Oman/Oman-Jordan-agree-on-visa-exemption-4zhe#ixzz4cbgcQSND>

- **MG's first overseas training academy opens in Duba**

Iconic British automotive brand MG today announced the opening of its new Middle East training academy, the latest stage of the company's strategy to strengthen its presence across the region. The first-of-its-kind academy to be located in one of MG's overseas regions, the new facility cements the brand's commitment to offering the highest standards of service to its customers across the Middle East, said a statement.

More Details:

[http://www.tradearabia.com/news/MTR\\_322525.html](http://www.tradearabia.com/news/MTR_322525.html)

## 7. EGYPT

- **Warm welcome for HM in Egypt**

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa and Egyptian President Abdelfattah Al-Sisi chaired the plenary session of official talks at Al-Ittihadiya Palace in Cairo yesterday. HM the King, who arrived here yesterday with a delegation, expressed thanks and appreciation to President Al-Sisi for the warm welcome and hospitality he found in Egypt. The two sides reviewed deep-rooted historic relations and strategic cooperation between the Kingdom of Bahrain and Egypt, in light of both countries' keenness on strengthening bilateral relations towards achieving mutual interests.

More Details:

<http://www.newsofbahrain.com/viewNews.php?ppld=31690&TYPE=Posts&pid=21&MNU=2&SUB=1>

- **Houthi leader slams Saudi Arabia, hails Egypt's positions**

Leader of the Shia militias in Yemen, Abdel-Malik Al-Houthi, accused Saudi Arabia of putting pressure on Egypt to join the Arab coalition led by Riyadh, the Anadolu Agency reported yesterday. In a recorded speech broadcasted by a TV channel loyal to the Houthis, Al-Houthi accused Saudi Arabia, the UAE, the US and Israel of committing the "worst crimes" during the past two years.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170327-houthi-leader-slams-saudi-arabia-hails-egypts-positions/>

- **Korea to seek a free trade deal with Egypt**

The Korean government seeks to have a free trade deal with Egypt, which would be the first African country if the deal is struck. It appears to be one of its efforts to diversify export destinations for the country that faces China's retaliation against the THAAD anti-missile system. Egypt is a strategic hub connecting Africa, the Middle East and Europe with the largest population of 92 million in Arab nations. "We proposed the Egyptian government a free trade deal between Korea and Egypt," Yim Seong-nam, the 1st vice minister of foreign affairs, told Korean correspondents at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Cairo, Egypt, on Sunday.

More Details:

<http://english.donga.com/List/3/04/26/882524/1>

- **China Jushi's expansion in Egypt is ahead of Schedule**

Fiberglass producer Zhejiang, China has announced its third furnace in Suez, Egypt will come on-stream in the second half of 2017. The production facility will be completed three years earlier than planned, and will have an annual capacity of 200,000 tons. James Wang, general manager of international sales at Jushi, stated: "The industry requires truly excellent suppliers. Through the implementation and completion of our worldwide globalization strategy, serving Europe and North America, we can supply to every continent in the world, which is important for our global customers."

More Details:

<http://www.compositesworld.com/news/china-jushis-expansion-in-egypt-is-ahead-of-schedule->

- **French Development Agency, Egypt sign €259 million financing agreements**

Egypt and the French Development Agency (AFD) have signed Monday four financing agreements totalling €259 million (\$281.5 million) in energy, waste water, and health sectors. Egyptian Minister of Investment and International Cooperation Sahar Nasr and Laurence Breton-Moyet, Executive Director in charge of Operations of the AFD, has signed the agreements.

More Details:

<http://en.amwalalghad.com/business/financial-institutions/55944-french-development-agency-egypt-sign-259-million-financing-agreements.html>

- **Pakistan-Egypt trade exchange hit \$182 million in 10 months: envoy**

Trade exchange between Egypt and Pakistan has recorded around \$182 million during the first 10 months of 2016, said Pakistani ambassador to Cairo, Mushtaq Ali Shah on Monday. Pakistan's exports to Egypt amounted to \$83 million during the period from January until October of 2016, covering threads, cloths, paper, frozen shrimps, polyethylene, and medical apparatus, Ali Shah added.

More Details:

<http://en.amwalalghad.com/investment-news/industry-trade/55942-pakistan-egypt-trade-exchange-hit-182-million-in-10-months-envoy.html>

- **Mapso Pi series pilot boats for Egypt**

28 Pi series pilot boats have now been built or ordered from Egyptian engineering company Mapso since the first of class hit the water in 2007- All of them featuring the famous Camarc double chine hull form. According to a Mapso spokesman, the main reason for this success is that the hull lines

provide an excellent compromise between speed, seaworthiness, and ride comfort in all weather, as achieving high speed in flat water is of no value if you have to reduce speed in rough seas.

More Details:

<http://www.maritimejournal.com/news101/vessel-build-and-maintenance/ship-and-boatbuilding/mapso-pi-series-pilot-boats-for-egypt#sthash.nA7ay9f0.dpuf>

- **3,800-Year-Old Intact Tomb Found in Egypt**

According to a report in Ahram Online, an intact tomb dating to the 12th Dynasty has been discovered in the necropolis at Qubbet El-Hawa by the Spanish Archaeological Mission. Alejandro Jiménez-Serrano of the University of Jaen said that the tomb's mummy, covered with polychrome cartonnage, collars, and a mask, is well preserved.

More Details:

<http://www.archaeology.org/news/5404-170327-egypt-shemai-coffin>

- **'State Department report on human rights in Egypt reflects Obama's negative view,' says foreign ministry**

In a meeting of the Egyptian parliament's human rights committee, Deputy Foreign Minister for Human Rights Laila Bahaaeddin accused the Obama administration of painting a "bleak view" of the human rights situation in Egypt. "The most recent report issued by the US State Department on human rights in Egypt reflected the view of the former Obama administration which had always sought to tarnish the image of Egypt in any way," said Bahaaeddin, adding that "this report was issued in a secret way and without the media taking note of it."

More Details:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/261737/-.aspx>

## 8. NORTH AFRICA

- **Emirates Airlines launches Airbus A380 flights to Morocco**

Emirates airlines have launched its Airbus A380 flight from Dubai to Casablanca's Mohammed V Airport. In a statement, the airlines said that it is the first A380 operator to fly into North Africa and South America. It also made a return to Tokyo-Narita.

More Details:

<http://africabusinesscommunities.com/news/emirates-airlines-launches-airbus-a380-flights-to-morocco/>

- **Morocco wins pivotal supply chain investments but potential could be limited**

Morocco has seen a number of big supplier investments recently, which will help it meet ambitious production targets, but the lack of OEMs could restrict future growth. By Megan Lampinen Morocco has been on a roll, bagging new investment commitments from global vehicle manufacturers over the past few months. The supply side is now kicking up a gear as well, with the promise of new arrivals to beef up the local supply chain

More Details:

<http://www.automotiveworld.com/analysis/morocco-wins-pivotal-supply-chain-investments-potential-limited/>

- **Rooftop shanties top once iconic Casablanca buildings**

Shanties have mushroomed on the rooftops of historic apartment buildings in Casablanca, as the Moroccan city's once-prestigious centre crumbles below. Clotheslines, satellite dishes and tangled cables have sprouted on the deteriorating facades of the buildings, constructed nearly a century ago under French rule.

More Details:

<http://www.france24.com/en/20170328-rooftop-shanties-top-once-iconic-casablanca-buildings>

- **Libya to pay \$300m in medical debts to Jordan**

Libya has been told it owes Jordanian hospitals approximately \$300 million in unpaid debts for treating its citizens. During a visit by a Libyan delegation last week, the Jordan's Private Hospitals Association informed the group of the debts which the delegation agreed to pay.

More Details:

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170327-libya-to-pay-300m-in-medical-debts-to-jordan/>

- **IS remains active in southern Libya's Sirte: spokesman**

A military spokesman said that IS affiliates are still active in southern Sirte despite the defeat by the government's forces. Mohamed Gunono, spokesman of the air emergency chamber of the UN-backed government, said that the current political division is helping IS fighters regroup.

More Details:

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/28/c\\_136162573.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/28/c_136162573.htm)

- **Italy wants US to do more to foster stability in Libya**

Italy will push for greater US involvement in fostering stability in Libya when President Donald Trump and other world leaders meet in May, Italy's deputy foreign minister said. Italy hosts the annual meeting of seven of the world's biggest industrialized economies (G7) in the town of Taormina in Sicily on May 26-27. It will be Trump's first scheduled trip to Europe.

More Details:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1075171/middle-east>

- **Iran, Algeria both against extremism: Algerian minister**

Algerian Minister of Culture Azzeddine Mihoubi says cultural movements play an important role in fighting against Takfiri and extremist groups, stressing that Algeria sees itself very close to Iran as the two countries have stood against those groups. Mihoubi made the remarks in a meeting held in Algeria with his Iranian counterpart Reza Salehi-Amiri.

More Details:

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82475964/>

- **LAICO plans Tunis hotel reopening by end of August**

The LAICO hotel group, part of the Libyan Investment Authority, plans to fully reopen its five-star Abu Niwas hotel in downtown Tunis by the end of August, it was announced today. The hotel, which has been closed for eight years, has been undergoing refurbishment recently. According to Ashraf Elataeb, the general manager of Laico Tunisia, the aim is to restart operations at the end of June, gradually building up to the grand reopening two months later.

More Details:

<https://www.libyaherald.com/2017/03/27/laico-plans-tunis-hotel-reopening-by-end-of-august/>

- **Morocco provokes crisis by refusing to allow Western Sahara in AU meeting**

As the meeting between the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the African Union (AU) was set to start in Dakar, Senegal, Morocco called on Friday for the exclusion of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic from the conference citing that it is not a UN member state. The meeting was supposed to prepare for the arrival of African ministers of economy on 27 and 28 March.

More Details:

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/morocco-provokes-crisis-refusing-allow-western-sahara-au-meeting-1951416276>

- **NNPC Revives 11 Fertilizer Plants from Phosphate Supply Deal with Morocco**

The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) has disclosed that 11 fertiliser blending plants in Nigeria have been revived into production with the signing of a phosphate supply deal between Nigeria and Morocco. The corporation also stated that so far, 1.3 million tonnes of fertiliser have been produced from these plants, while about 50, 000 jobs have been added from their production revival.

More Details:

<https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2017/03/28/nnpc-revives-11-fertilizer-plants-from-phosphate-supply-deal-with-morocco/>

## 9. AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

- **Panama case decision likely next Monday**

Rescheduling of a hearing before the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) Monday points towards the much-awaited judgment in the Panama Papers case to be announced anytime next Monday. The five-member larger bench of the Supreme Court hearing the case of Panama Papers had concluded hearing on February 23, and the final judgment was reserved. Headed by Justice Asif Saeed Khosa, the larger bench comprises Justice Ejaz Afzal Khan, Justice Gulzar Ahmed, Justice Sh Azmat Saeed and Justice Ijazul Ahsan.

More details:

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/195013-Panama-case-decision-likely-next-Monday>

- **Saudi business tycoon eyeing investment in Afghanistan**

A renowned businessman from the royal family of Saudi Arabia has evinced a keen interest in investing in Afghanistan, urging international companies to do business with the landlocked country.

More details:

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2017/03/28/saudi-business-tycoon-eyeing-investment-afghanistan>

- **Gas expansion schemes for Punjab 'detrimental to national harmony', complains Murad**

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's decision to approve 97 natural gas expansion schemes, a majority of which are meant for the ruling party's political base — Punjab — is a "source of discontent" and may affect national harmony in the country, Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah said on Tuesday in a letter addressed to the prime minister.

More details:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1323359/gas-expansion-schemes-for-punjab-detrimental-to-national-harmony-complains-murad>

- **Haqqani network neither Pakistan's friend nor proxy: Aizaz Chaudhry**

Pakistan's ambassador to the United States (US) Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry stated that the Haqqani network is neither Pakistan's friend nor proxy. "We don't want it (Haqqani network) to act against the US or Afghanistan," the ambassador said. Speaking to foreign media, Chaudhry said that Indian delay in negotiations with Pakistan encourages terrorists.

More details:

<https://www.geo.tv/latest/135784-Haqqani-network-neither-Pakistans-friend-nor-proxy-Aizaz-Chaudhry>

- **Afghan forces received 1370 new Humvee vehicles last year: Ahmadzai**

The Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) received 1,370 new Humvee vehicles from the international partners last year, the Ministry of Defense (MoD) officials said Tuesday.

More details:

<http://www.khaama.com/afghan-forces-received-1370-new-humvee-vehicles-last-year-ahmadzai-02457>

- **Russia and US Speed up Their Competitions in Afghanistan**

BNA correspondent regarding the issue reports Russia is seeking to revive its regional role especially on Afghanistan's developments. Russia considers Afghanistan as an outlet of Islamist extremists influence to Central Asia and believes dissimulation of extremism to those countries is a part of US and western countries intelligences programs. Apparently, Russia has focused its intention in to political solution for Afghan problem. For this purpose, so far has hold three sessions, two of them held with participation of China and Pakistan that faced to serious reaction of Afghanistan and India.

More details:

<http://www.bakhtarnews.com.af/eng/politics/item/28062-russia-and-us-speed-up-their-competitions-in-afghanistan.html>

- **MoD Calls On Pakistan to Stop Supporting Terrorists**

At a media briefing on defense ministry issues Waziri said terrorist group leaders are based in Pakistan and some had even been killed in Pakistan.

More details:

<http://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/mod-calls-pakistan-stop-supporting-terrorists>

- **Punjab seizing Sindh's gas reserves, CM Murad complains**

Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah has written a letter to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif complaining that Punjab its taking hold of Sindh's gas reserves.

More details:

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/03/28/cm-murad-complains-punjab-seizing-sindhs-gas-reserves/>

- **Pakistan starts building fence along Afghanistan border**

Pakistan's military has begun fencing parts of its disputed northwestern border with Afghanistan to curb the movement of Pakistani Taliban fighters it says are based on Afghan soil, according to a statement.

More details:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/03/pakistan-starts-building-fence-afghanistan-border-170326081848483.html>

- **Afghan forces received 1370 new Humvee vehicles last year: Ahmadzai**

The Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) received 1,370 new Humvee vehicles from the international partners last year, the Ministry of Defense (MoD) officials said Tuesday. The deputy chief of the procurement department of the Ministry of Defense, Ghulam Sakhi Ahmadzai, told reporters that the vehicles were delivered last year.

More details:

<http://www.khaama.com/afghan-forces-received-1370-new-humvee-vehicles-last-year-ahmadzai-02457>

## 10.TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- **ISIL, YPG, FETO hurt Muslims most, says Erdogan**

ISIL and other terrorist groups have caused the greatest havoc for Muslims, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Monday. Speaking at a youth gathering in Istanbul organized by the Turkey Youth Foundation (TUGVA), Erdogan said Muslims had suffered the most harm at the hands of ISIL, the YPG and the Fetullah Terrorist Organization (FETO).

More Details:

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/turkey/186917/galatasaray-told-to-detail-feto-links-of-sacked-players>

- **US' Tillerson to talk Daesh fight next steps in Turkey**

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson will devote part of his upcoming visit to Turkey to discuss the campaign to seize Raqqa from Daesh, senior State Department officials said Monday. Broader stabilization efforts in Syria will also be discussed. Tillerson will arrive in Ankara on Thursday to meet with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and other senior Turkish officials.

More Details:

<http://aa.com.tr/en/americas/us-tillerson-to-talk-daesh-fight-next-steps-in-turkey/780976>

*\*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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