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मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

## Armenia

### **PM: We can proudly state that, among other crucial things, Armenia's nuclear plant symbolizes our sovereignty**

Armenia News, March 21, 2024

For decades, the Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant had been serving as a critical element of our energy system ensuring the stability and sustainability of energy production. Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan stated this in his address Thursday at the first-ever Nuclear Energy Summit in Brussels, the capital of Belgium. Pashinyan added as follows, "Presently, about 30% of our country's electricity derives from nuclear energy. Our course of arrival to that point was thorny, marred with the dramatic period of the closure of the Nuclear Power Plant. However, this critical role means great responsibility. We are committed to upholding the highest standards of nuclear safety and security in the operation of the Armenian Nuclear Power Plant. Armenia actively collaborates with the International Atomic Energy Agency [(IAEA)], adopting a proactive stance to ensure nuclear safety and security while fulfilling all its obligations.

<https://news.am/eng/news/813559.html>

### **Armenia's PM says he must return disputed areas to Azerbaijan or face war**

Reuters, March 19, 2024

Armenia could face a war with Azerbaijan if it does not compromise with Baku and return four Azerbaijani villages it has held since the early 1990s, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said in a video published on March 19, 2024. The four villages, which have been uninhabited for over 30 years,

are of strategic value to Armenia as they straddle the main road between Yerevan and the Georgian border. Russia's TASS state news agency quoted Pashinyan as telling residents in the video clip that was circulated by his government that failure to compromise over the disputed villages could lead to war with Azerbaijan "by the end of the week". Yerevan suffered a major defeat in September, 2023 when Baku's forces retook Nagorno-Karabakh in a lightning offensive, prompting almost all of that region's estimated 100,000 ethnic Armenians to flee to Armenia.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/armenias-pm-says-he-must-return-disputed-areas-azerbaijan-or-face-war-tass-2024-03-19/>

### **Armenia-Italy defence consultations held in Rome**

Armenia News, March 21, 2024

From 19 to 20 March, the Armenia-Italy defence consultations were held in Rome with the participation of the delegation led by the Head of the Defence Policy and International Cooperation Department of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Armenia, Levon Ayvazyan from the Armenian side, press-service of the Ministry informs. Throughout the consultations, the delegation of the Ministry of Defence has discussed with the Deputy Chief of Cabinet of the Minister of Defence of Italy and Defence Policy Director, Major General Enrico Barduani, and the Head of the International Cooperation Branch of the Italian General Staff, Colonel Mattia Zuzzi, the current status of the of Armenia-Italy defence cooperation and prospects of its

development. During the discussion, L.Ayvazyan has introduced the security situation around Armenia and the ongoing reforms of the Armed Forces.

<https://news.am/eng/news/813623.html>

### **Pashinyan, Macron in Brussels, conferred about steps to normalise Armenia-Azerbaijan relations**

Armenia News, March 21, 2024

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan met with French President Emmanuel Macron within the framework of the first-ever Nuclear Energy Summit in Brussels, the capital of Belgium. The high-level political dialogue between Armenia and France was emphasised, and the determination to further strengthen their multi-sectoral cooperation was stressed. Also, they discussed the steps towards the normalisation of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and the processes taking place in the South Caucasus. In addition, views were exchanged on the further development and expansion of Armenia-European Union cooperation.

<https://news.am/eng/news/813583.html>

### **Armenia FM: Lack of adherence to principles of international law continues to lead to new exacerbations**

Armenia News, March 22, 2024

Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan, was on a visit in March 2024 to Uruguay, met with the latter's foreign minister, Omar Paganini. The interlocutors noted with satisfaction the high level of political dialogue between Armenia and Uruguay, expressing readiness to take steps to further enrich the bilateral agenda in

various domains, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia. Both sides emphasised that this historic visit of the Armenian FM to Uruguay, as well as the opening of resident embassies in the capitals of both countries, are the best evidence of the desire to deepen cooperation. Mirzoyan and Paganini attached great importance to the development of trade, economic, and business relations in accordance with the level of political dialogue, as well as the maximum use of new opportunities in education and high tech between Armenia and Uruguay. In the context of unblocking regional transport and economic channels, FM Mirzoyan presented the Crossroads of Peace program of the Armenian government, and its economic opportunities to the South Caucasus and beyond.

<https://news.am/eng/news/813712.html>

### **Armenia opposition MP: Enduring peace unattainable when Karabakh people are forcefully uprooted from their homeland**

Armenia News, March 25, 2024

It had been six months since the armed forces of Azerbaijan attacked and conquered the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh. Armenian opposition MP Levon Kocharyan stated this in his speech during the 148th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Geneva, Switzerland. Levon Kocharyan, who is also the son of Armenia's second President Robert Kocharyan, added as follows: "Indeed, on September 19, 2023, after enduring nearly 10 months of a blockade that caused mass starvation, deprivation, illness, and death, and now faced with

imminent destruction, over 120,000 Armenians, virtually the entire population, were forced to leave their homeland in just a few days. The people of Nagorno-Karabakh have an ancient and profound connection to their homeland, with historical evidence dating back centuries. Generations have lived, worked, and built their lives in this region, establishing a rich cultural heritage that binds them to the land. Under Articles of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh have the absolute right to return to their homeland. On March 12 the European Parliament adopted a resolution calling on Azerbaijan to ‘genuinely engage in a comprehensive and transparent dialogue with the Karabakh Armenians to ensure respect for their rights and guarantee their security, including their right to return to and live in their homes in dignity and safety under international presence.’

<https://news.am/eng/news/814241.html>

### **Urgent action needed to address Azerbaijan’s violation of Armenian POWs’ rights under Geneva convention**

Armenia News, March 25, 2024

The Committee for the Protection of the Fundamental Rights of the Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) People is gravely alarmed by recent reports detailing Azerbaijan’s flagrant violations of the rights of Armenian prisoners of war (POWs), particularly in regard to the fundamental principle of the right to be free from public curiosity as outlined in the Third Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War. These actions are not only morally reprehensible,

but also in direct contravention of international humanitarian law. In light of these egregious violations, we urgently call upon state actors and human rights organisations to take direct action to prevent Azerbaijan from further airing videos or interviews of POWs and hostages. This includes leveraging diplomatic channels, imposing sanctions if necessary, and issuing public condemnations to hold Azerbaijan accountable for its actions. Therefore, it is imperative that all states parties take immediate and decisive action to prevent any and all retransmission of such Azerbaijani broadcasts of such videos on any and all servers, media and/or platforms under their jurisdictions.

<https://news.am/eng/news/814195.html>

### **Armenia nuclear plant, Rosatom Service directors sign contract on new cooling systems for plant**

Armenia News, March 25, 2024

Eduard Martirosyan, General Director of Armenian Nuclear Power Plant CJSC, and Evgeny Salkov, General Director of Rosatom Service company, signed a contract on the design, assembly, and complete installation of cooling systems for the Armenian nuclear plant. Armenia nuclear plant, Rosatom Service directors sign contract on new cooling systems for plant. Eduard Martirosyan, General Director of Armenian Nuclear Power Plant CJSC, and Evgeny Salkov, General Director of Rosatom Service company, signed a contract on the design, assembly, and complete installation of cooling systems for the Armenian nuclear plant. The aforesaid contract was signed on the

margins of the ATOMEXPO-2024 International Forum in Sochi, Russia. And in the final phase of the first program of extending the operation period, the system's health introduction will be carried out in our Armenian nuclear power plant. The contract amount is about \$6 million.

<https://news.am/eng/news/814555.html>

### **Kirill Komarov: Rosatom can offer Armenia nuclear reactors with capacity of 50 to 1,000 MW**

Armenia News, March 26, 2024

Rosatom State Atomic Energy Corporation of Russia can offer Armenia nuclear reactors of various capacities, from 50 to 1,000 MW. This was stated by the Rosatom First Deputy CEO for Corporate Development and International Business, Kirill Komarov, at a press conference within the framework of the ATOMEXPO-2024 International Forum in Sochi, Russia. According to Komarov, the Armenian authorities will have to decide which nuclear reactor to choose. "There are various predictions about how much power the unit needs. I communicate with our energy partners, and there are various opinions that Armenia is interested in a thousand-ton unit, especially if it is possible to provide some partial export to neighbouring countries, for example, Georgia. Therefore, this is still a matter that should be resolved by the leadership of Armenia," said Komarov. He emphasised that Rosatom's product line enables the implementation of any decision by the Armenian government.

<https://news.am/eng/news/814541.html>

### **Armenia, Argentina FMs discuss regional security**

Armenia News, March 26, 2024

Armenia's Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan, who was in Buenos Aires on an official visit, on March 25, 2024, met with Argentina's Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship, Diana Mondino, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia stated. During the meeting, both sides expressed willingness to explore new opportunities and deepen cooperation in domains of mutual interest, including trade, economy, high tech, education, and energy. It was noted with satisfaction that a wide legal contractual base has been formed between the two countries, at the same time stressing the readiness to supplement it in new domains in line with the expansion of cooperation. Regional security was also discussed by the FMs of Armenia and Argentina.

<https://news.am/eng/news/814467.html>

### **FM: NATO membership not on Armenia agenda**

Armenia News, March 29, 2024

An interview in Buenos Aires with Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan, the latter responded to questions also about Armenia's partnership with the European Union (EU) and NATO. "We are a democratic country, and we want to strengthen democratic institutions [in Armenia]. We see that, for example, the United States and the European Union are the main partners. "The security mechanisms that we had for several decades did not work. Now we are deepening economic and political relations

with Brussels and Washington. I wouldn't call it a turning point, we are trying to ensure our security, and for that we see that there are good partners in the West," said Mirzoyan. It is impossible to hide the problems that Armenia has in relations with Russia. "As for the intention to join NATO, then no. That is not the point that is on the agenda of Armenia today. In the case of the EU, I can say that Armenians really have European aspirations," Mirzoyan said.

<https://news.am/eng/news/815368.html>

## Azerbaijan

### Azerbaijan petitions to Nuclear Energy Summit co-chairs regarding Armenia nuclear plant

Armenia News, March 22, 2024

Several representatives of Azerbaijan's civil society have written an open letter—regarding the Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant of Armenia—to Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Rafael Grossi, co-chairs of the first-ever Nuclear Energy Summit, which started on March 21, 2024 in Brussels. In the open letter, the Azerbaijani side called on the leadership of the summit to pay attention to the "global danger posed by the nuclear power plant," and to raise before the Armenian government the matter of immediately stopping the operation of this nuclear plant. Armenia has repeatedly stated that it actively cooperates with the IAEA in ensuring nuclear safety, and fulfilling all its respective obligations. And Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on

Thursday reaffirmed this during the aforesaid Nuclear Energy Summit, also informing that Armenia is extending the operation period of the nuclear power plant from 2026 to 2036.

<https://news.am/eng/news/813691.html>

## Bahrain

### Political Affairs Undersecretary participates in GCC Vision for Regional Security launch

Bahrain News Agency, March 29, 2024

Dr. Shaikh Abdulla bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Political Affairs Undersecretary at the Foreign Affairs Ministry, has participated in the launch of the "Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Vision for Regional Security". The GCC Vision for Regional Security was unveiled during a ceremony held at the GCC headquarters in Riyadh, in the presence of Jasem Mohamed Albudaiwi, GCC Secretary-General, representatives of GCC countries' foreign affairs ministries and those of permanent members of the UN Security Council, in addition to heads of diplomatic missions to Saudi Arabia, as well as representatives of media outlets and research centres. The Political Affairs Undersecretary stressed the importance of the launch of the GCC Vision for Regional Security at this critical period, during which multiple and interconnected events and crises are unfolding, which requires a precise definition of the concept of regional security, as well as the nature of fundamentals and threats.

<https://www.bna.bh/en/ArchiveDetails.aspx?archiveId=747168>

### **Bahrain condemns Israeli authorities' confiscation of Palestinian lands in West Bank**

Bahrain News Agency, March 27, 2024

The Kingdom of Bahrain has strongly condemned the Israeli authorities' announcement to confiscate 800 hectares of land in the occupied Palestinian territory in the Jordan Valley in the West Bank, stressing that it is a blatant violation of the principles of international law, as well as a threat to the peace process, and the rights of the Palestinian people to establish their independent state on the borders of June 4, 1967 with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the two-state solution, the Arab Peace Initiative, and international legitimacy resolutions. The Ministry called on the international community to implement resolutions related to stopping "illegitimate" settlement policies, and preventing extremist settler attacks on Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. In its statement, the Foreign Affairs Ministry also called for creating serious conditions to resume the just and comprehensive peace process, in a way that would achieve security, stability, and peace for all the peoples of the region.

<https://www.bna.bh/en/ArchiveDetails.aspx?archiveId=746928>

### **Iran**

### **Nuclear technology has promoted Iran's political status in the world: Kamalvandi**

Tehran Times, March 22, 2024

Behrouz Kamalvandi, the spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran

(AEOI), said it was because of the paramount importance of the nuclear industry that "we are now witnessing multiple problems that have been created" by the West for Iran, IRNA reported. Citing an example of nuclear technology in the health sector, the official said now over a million patients in Iran are receiving radiopharmaceuticals. Kamalvandi, who is also in charge of the AEOI department for international and legal affairs, went on to say that Iran would have now faced difficulty importing nuclear medicine if it had not mastered nuclear technology. The nuclear official said Iran is now exporting radiopharmaceuticals to other countries as well. Due to sanctions Iran was never allowed to import nuclear materials for producing radiopharmaceuticals, he pointed out. Quoting Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, he said, "As mentioned by the Supreme Leader of the Revolution, this industry is a source of honour for the country and contributes to its power. Besides its effects on people's lives, this industry also brings power and honour to the country politically."

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/496389/Nuclear-technology-has-promoted-Iran-s-political-status-in-the>

### **Iran, EU push for talks to lift nuclear sanctions**

Tehran Times, March 26, 2024

In a telephone conversation on March 25, 2024, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian and European Union Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borrell highlighted the significance of sustainable talks and exchange of visits to lift nuclear-

related sanctions on Iran. Amir Abdollahian pointed to the recent talks between his political deputy Ali Bagheri Kani and Borrell's deputy Enrique Mora about the resumption of nuclear talks and said, "The Islamic Republic of Iran is firm in its decision for sustainable and constructive talks with the International Atomic Energy Agency, and in return really expects the Western sides honour their obligations in the nuclear talks and show full commitment to remove sanctions." The 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), was ditched by Donald Trump in May 2018. Abdollahian praised Borrell's position on the need to stop the Israeli war on Gaza and send humanitarian aid to the 2.3 million people in the coastal enclave who have been started by the Israeli regime.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/49645/2/Iran-EU-push-for-talks-to-lift-nuclear-sanctions>

### **Israel's hopes to disintegrate Iran will not be realised: spox**

Tehran Times, March 16, 2024

Nasser Kanaani, spokesperson for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, conveyed this criticism via a post on the X social media platform, formerly known as Twitter, on March 16, 2024, in direct response to comments made by Mordechai Kedar. Kedar, who currently serves as a lecturer at Bar-Ilan University and holds the position of vice president at NEWSRAEL newsfeed, suggested instigating ethnic tensions in Iran as a means to prompt a regime change. The spokesman wrote, "This is not the first time such sentiments have been expressed by Iran's adversaries. Kedar's remarks echo

previous assertions made by elements within the Zionist establishment, including acknowledgments of Zionist military involvement in neighbouring countries." The 2022 riots in Iran, as an example, became a shining stage for behind-the-scenes orchestrators who aimed to foment sedition in Iran with the ultimate goal of breaking up the country. Individuals working for foreign organisations and media outlets have been accused of propagating narratives that advocate for Iran's breakup, thereby exacerbating internal tensions and fueling separatist sentiments. The role of foreign-based media outlets in amplifying voices calling for Iran's disintegration has come under scrutiny, with concerns raised about the influence of external actors in shaping perceptions of Iran both domestically and internationally.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/49628/8/Israel-s-hopes-to-disintegrate-Iran-will-not-be-realized-spox>

### **Iran Air Force safeguards nation with utmost vigilance: Commander**

Tehran Times, March 16, 2024

Brigadier General Ghader Rahimzadeh, the commander of Khatam al-Anbia Air Defense Base, has underscored the vital role played by the Air Defense Forces in safeguarding the nation's airspace with unwavering vigilance. During a meeting with joint deputies, Rahimzadeh expressed gratitude for the dedicated efforts of Air Defense Forces personnel nationwide. He attributed the significant progress achieved in various defence sectors throughout the Persian year of 1402 to the collaborative endeavours of individuals within the



Ministry of Defense, research institutions, universities, and knowledge-based companies. Rahimzadeh also highlighted the imperative of unity among Islamic nations and reiterated support for the Resistance Front in efforts to dismantle the Zionist regime, referencing Operation al-Aqsa Storm on October 7. In recent years, Iranian military experts and engineers have made noteworthy breakthroughs in producing a diverse range of indigenous equipment, achieving self-sufficiency for the armed forces.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/49629/9/Iran-Air-Force-safeguards-nation-with-utmost-vigilance-commander>

### **Tehran, Baku underscore need to ‘open new chapter’ in bilateral ties**

Tehran Times, March 17, 2024

Abbas Mousavi, Iran's ambassador to Azerbaijan, noted that after attempts by both sides to clear up misconceptions, Tehran and Baku have underlined the need to “open a new chapter” in ties between the two neighbours. After meeting with the Azerbaijani President's aide, Hikmet Hajiyev, in Tehran on March 16, 2024, Mousavi stressed, "We have actively pursued a course of reconciliation and renewal in bilateral relations, leveraging wisdom, insight, and foresight. The disruptive influence of shared adversaries, alongside select regional actors and regimes, particularly through their security apparatus, is palpable in exacerbating tensions between Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan." After an attack on the nation's embassy in Tehran in January of

2023, which Baku called a “terrorist act,” the country's relations with Iran were tense. “We are in contact with the officials of Armenia and Azerbaijan. Iran is sensitive about the security of its northern borders and is closely watching the situation, he pointed out.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/49634/2/Tehran-Baku-underscore-need-to-open-new-chapter-in-bilateral>

### **Iran will never pay ransom to killer of General Soleimani: Report**

Tehran Times, March 17, 2024

Stimson Center in a report by Barbara Slavin, an expert on Iran, writes that the nuclear agreement with Iran fell apart after Trump's administration withdrew from the JCPOA in 2018, while Tehran fully adhered to it. It was claimed that in September 2023, Tehran and the United States were able to reach an informal agreement to reduce tensions by reducing Iran's 60% uranium enrichment speed and release two Iranian-American dual citizens. One idea is to allow Iran to keep a large amount of 60% enriched uranium under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency on Iranian soil, but this cannot be initiated unless Iran significantly increases transparency about its program and restores some of the JCPOA monitoring measures. Another idea is to use the revival of diplomatic relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia to create a regional consensus where, in exchange for some nuclear concessions, Iran is compensated by Arab investments. The report concludes by stating that Iran,

like other parts of the world, is trying to prepare itself for the possibility of a second Trump administration.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/496343/Iran-will-never-pay-ransom-to-killer-of-General-Soleimani-report>

### **Iran, Syria defence ministers condemn U.S., Israel's attacks on Damascus**

Tehran Times, March 17, 2024

During a meeting with Syrian counterpart Ali Mahmoud Abbas on March 16, 2024, Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani cautioned against schemes by the U.S. and Israel to escalate tensions throughout West Asia. He affirmed Iran's readiness to leverage its complete capacities to aid Syria in bolstering its defence and deterrence capabilities against the U.S. and Israel. Stressing the importance of creating deterrence as the primary strategic approach against these attacks, he announced that necessary and urgent measures, along with strategic planning, are already underway to prevent further aggression from this regime. Highlighting the dire circumstances in the region, the Minister of Defense emphasised the tragic toll of over 30,000 fatalities and 70,000 injuries. Tel Aviv has significantly increased its airstrikes against Syria since October 2023, coinciding with the start of its aggressive military campaign against the Gaza Strip. Damascus has lodged multiple complaints with the United Nations regarding the Israeli attacks, urging the Security Council to intervene against Tel Aviv's unlawful actions.

However, these appeals have been ignored.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/496346/Iran-Syria-defense-ministers-condemn-U-S-Israel-s-attacks>

### **Iraq**

#### **KDP urges resolution of crisis between Baghdad and Erbil**

Al Shafaq News, March 21, 2024

The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) bloc in the Iraqi Parliament called for an end to the "manufactured crisis" between Baghdad and Erbil, cautioning against leading Iraq into "an unknown and complicated situation." In a statement on the Newroz occasion, the bloc criticised the recent decisions of the Federal Court, deeming them "contrary to the spirit of the constitution." The court, in February 2023, had declared that a specific article concerning the minority quota in KRG's provincial election law was deemed "unconstitutional." The SAC coalition was established following Muqtada Al-Sadr's withdrawal from politics. It comprises mainly the KDP, led by Masoud Barzani, the Sunni Sovereignty, led by Khamis al-Khanjar, and the Iran-backed Shiite coalition forces (Coordination Framework). The UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) called on the Kurdish parties to prioritise the people's interests and consider holding the parliamentary elections "essential."

<https://shafaq.com/en/Iraq/KDP-urges-resolution-of-crisis-between-Baghdad-and-Erbil>

### **Iraq's political quagmire: Federal vs. Regional dynamics threaten stability**

Al Shafaq News, March 15, 2024

Amidst a wave of challenges surrounding the Kurdistan Region, the decisions made by Baghdad have posed a noticeable threat to the Region, which has long been considered the "bright side" in Iraq amidst security and political problems. The decisions of the Federal Supreme Court of Iraq stand out as one of the most influential factors in this regard. In recent years, the relationship between Baghdad and the Kurdistan Region has witnessed tensions, predominantly political in nature, before decisions described as "booby-trapped" by the Federal Court came to the forefront. It is reasonable to believe that extending the "Development Road" through the Region itself will contribute to activating the economy through direct investment in the railway line and highways required by the project. Moreover, activating the road will allow for establishing of commercial and touristic projects along its stretch. This could contribute not only to improving the livelihoods of people in the areas traversed by the project but also to integrating development on the federal level in Iraq, including its governorates and Kurdistan Region.

<https://shafaq.com/en/Report/Iraq-s-political-quagmire-Federal-vs-Regional-dynamics-threaten-stability>

### **Rasool: Military, technical committees sent to numerous countries to buy anti-aircraft weaponry**

Iraqi News Agency, March 18, 2024

Major General Yehia Rasool, the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces'

spokesman, announced on Monday that military and technical committees have been sent to numerous countries to negotiate contracts for the purchase of anti-aircraft weapons, confirming the ongoing operation of the radar system in general. "Iraq contracted for French radars and a shipment arrived from them, and we are going to complete the radar system in general," Major General Rasool said to the Iraqi News Agency (INA), adding that "there are low, medium, and high-range radars." Hussein Hashim al-Amiri, a member of the parliamentary security and defence committee, noted that "the first phase of the GM403 radar contract with the French company Thales, by 4 radars, has been installed tactically." He clarified, saying, "An air defence missile system with a range of 100 km and an amount of 4 billion and a half billion euros was offered, provided that it is later developed for a greater distance, provided that Iraq pays one billion and 200 million euros." He also mentioned that the signing of the second phase of the contract was completed to secure 14 low-detection radars and an amount of 700 million euros, as the amount of 100 million euros was paid.

<https://ina.iq/eng/31897-rasool-we-dispatched-military-and-technical-committees-to-numerous-countries-in-order-to-purchase-anti-aircraft-weaponry.html>

### **JOC: A terrorist killed in a specific operation on the Iraqi-Syrian border**

Iraqi News Agency, March 28, 2024

The Joint Operations Command (JOC) announced on March 28, 2024, the killing of a terrorist in a specific operation on the Iraqi-Syrian border. JOC stated in a

statement received by the Iraqi News Agency (INA), that “with accurate, continuous and successful high-level security intelligence follow-up by the security and intelligence services and in coordination and follow-up with the Joint Operations Command in a qualitative operation and joint force, the terrorist Samir Khader Sharif Shihan Al-Nimrawi, who was responsible for the transfer of terrorists and weapons, was killed and equipment and explosives between Iraq and Syria.”

<https://ina.iq/eng/32011-joc-a-terrorist-killed-in-a-specific-operation-on-the-iraqi-syrian-border.html>

### **INSS Capture Terrorist Northern Baghdad following Purchasing Lands for terrorists' hideouts**

Iraqi News Agency, March 25, 2024

Iraqi National Security Service-INSS announced on Monday that, capturing the terrorist (Abu Yasser) in northern Baghdad, indicating that he had purchased lands and prepared them as hideouts. "A force from INSS carried out a security operation based on a judicial warrant, resulting in the capture of the logistics facilitator of the so-called northern Baghdad sector. The terrorist, codenamed (Abu Yasser), operated as a main facilitator and was tasked with several duties, including:

- Transporting Wali of northern Baghdad (Abu Maria-who had been killed by the security forces) to Al-Taji area using his own vehicle.
- Transporting weapons, night vision goggles, phones, and logistical materials between hideouts in the Taji area.

Commissioned by the so-called General Military Commander in the northern Baghdad sector to purchase land plots and construct a warehouse with rooms inside it in Taji. The statement added that “the extensive intelligence operations conducted by the National Security Service resulted in his capture and subsequent handover to the judicial authorities.”

<https://ina.iq/eng/31981-inss-capture-terrorist-northern-baghdad-following-purchasing-lands-for-terrorists-hideouts.html>

### **Iraq seeks to implement the zero-nuclear reactor project**

Al Sabah, March 19, 2024

The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research announced Iraq's endeavour to implement the zero nuclear reactor project to serve research issues, while the Atomic Energy Commission confirmed its support for the efforts of optimal use for energy for peaceful purposes. Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, Dr. Naeem Al-Aboudi, said during a joint press conference with the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Rafael Mariano Grossi, which was attended by “Al-Sabah”: He added that Iraq seeks to implement the zero-energy nuclear reactor that serves research issues to create key leaders for energy management and nuclear waste treatment, in addition to benefiting from energy in several sectors, most notably electricity, desertification and water. He pointed out that the next stage aims to achieve several things, most notably turning the page on the past and

shifting to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, as well as supporting and establishing a peaceful nuclear program in Iraq, as is the case in Arab countries such as the Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, and that these works strictly adhere to international standards.

<https://alsabaah.iq/93735-.html>

### **39 ISIS hideouts and tunnels destroyed in four provinces**

Al Sabah, March 19, 2024

The Security Media Cell stated in a statement that “in conjunction with the Promise of Truth operations and with a distinguished intelligence effort and a large-scale operation by the Counter-Terrorism Service units in Salah al-Din Governorate - Talul al-Baj and Nineveh Governorate - Hadhr District - Wadi Tharthar, a duty was carried out to search and clear the hideouts and tunnels belonging to the terrorist ISIS gangs, with the support of the heroic Iraqi Army Aviation.” It added that “the Counter-Terrorism Service was able to (destroy (29) hideouts, fill in (6) tunnels, find (12) explosive devices, (2) explosive belts, (4) mortar shells, (3) booby-trapped motorcycles, and (3) buried barrels containing explosive materials, where the above materials were detonated in the duty area, and (80) containers of (BKC) machine gun ammunition and Kalashnikov ammunition were seized.” She continued, “In a separate duty for the heroes of the Counter-Terrorism Service in (Kirkuk Governorate - Hamrin Mountains - the borders separating Kirkuk and Salahuddin Governorates), a duty was carried out to search and clear the annexes, which

resulted in the detonation and destruction of (4) dens that were used by ISIS terrorist gangs.”

<https://alsabaah.iq/93733-.html>

### **Israel**

#### **Biden administration said to approve transfer of over 2,000 bombs, 25 F-35s to Israel**

Times of Israel, March 29, 2024

The United States, in March 2024, authorised the transfer of billions of dollars worth of bombs and fighter jets to Israel even as it publicly expresses concerns about an anticipated military offensive in Rafah, The Washington Post reported. Citing Pentagon and State Department officials, the American daily said the new arms package included 1,800 MK-84 2,000-pound bombs and 500 MK-82 500-pound bombs, along with 25 F-35s that were initially approved as part of a larger package by Congress in 2008. Israel requested the third squadron of 25 F-35s last July, which when delivered brought the total size of the fleet to 75. Washington gives \$3.8 billion in annual military assistance to Israel, its longtime ally. The US has been rushing air defences and munitions to Israel as it fights against Hamas in Gaza, but some Democrats and Arab American groups have criticised the Biden administration’s steadfast support of Israel, and called for leveraging military aid. “We have continued to support Israel’s right to defend itself,” a White House official told The Washington Post, “Conditioning aid has not been our policy.”

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog-march-29-2024/>

### **IDF Raids Shifa Hospital in Gaza, Calls on Area Residents to Evacuate**

Foundation for Defence of Democracies,  
March 18, 2024

According to a press briefing by IDF Spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, the operation was based on intelligence showing that Shifa was being used by senior Hamas operatives “to command attacks against Israel.” IDF Arabic-language spokesman Avichay Adrae issued a call to people in the Rimal neighbourhood of Gaza City and in the hospital and its environs to evacuate the area immediately and head to the Al-Mawasi humanitarian zone located on the coast of southern Gaza. In Hagari’s press briefing, he stated that the IDF would provide “food, water, and other supplies” to Shifa patients and that its forces include doctors “to assist those in need” and Arabic speakers to enable communication with patients. On March 17, 2024, IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevi gave an update on the first 163 days of the war, stating that the IDF still has “a long way to go until the goals of the war are achieved.” He noted that in northern Gaza, the army is returning to areas in which it operated previously, using different methods and new intelligence, killing Hamas operatives, and destroying infrastructure. In Khan Younis in southern Gaza, the army is focusing its efforts on dismantling Hamas’s Khan Younis Brigade and has captured a large number of high-ranking terror operatives for interrogation, killing many as well.

<https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2024/03/18/israel-sitrep-march-18-2024/>

### **Israel’s war on Gaza updates: Israeli army says Hezbollah commander killed**

Tamila Varshalomidze and Maziar Motamedi

Al Jazeera, March 31, 2024

Hezbollah confirms the death of Ismail Ali al-Zin, who Israel says was commander of the group’s anti tank missile unit, after the Israeli army bombs a car in the south Lebanon village of Kounine. Hamas’s Osama Hamdan has denied reports that a new round of ceasefire negotiations will begin soon, saying that Israel refuses to answer the group’s demands. Gaza’s Government Media Office says Israel committed “a new massacre by bombing the tents of journalists and displaced people inside the walls of Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital”. At least 32,782 Palestinians have been killed and 75,298 wounded in Israeli attacks on Gaza since October 7. The revised death toll in Israel from Hamas’s October 7 attack stands at 1,139, with dozens still held captive.

<https://aljazeera.com/news/liveblog/2024/3/31/israels-war-on-gaza-live-hundreds-killed-in-al-shifa-hospital-siege>

### **Gaza to receive desperately needed food aid in the coming days by ship as death toll rises**

Times of Israel, March 31, 2024

Nearly 400 tons of food aid arrived in Gaza by ship towards the end of March, according to a nongovernmental organisation arranging the deliveries. In March, Israeli authorities denied 30% of humanitarian aid missions to northern Gaza and 10% of missions into southern Gaza, the United Nations Office for the

Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). About 9,000 patients stuck in Gaza require urgent evacuation abroad, World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said. The Israel Defense Forces said on March 30, 2024 that operations are ongoing around the Gaza City medical complex, where it says its forces “continued to eliminate terrorists.” Negotiations over a ceasefire and hostage deal between Israel and Hamas are expected to resume in Cairo on Sunday, Egypt’s state-run Al-Qahera News reported on March 30, 2024, citing a security source. Four peacekeepers affiliated with the UN’s peacekeeping mission in Lebanon were injured. The IDF quickly denied reports in Lebanese media that it was behind the attack.

<https://edition.cnn.com/middleeast/live-news/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news-03-30-24/index.html>

### **TV report: Israel prepared to free close to 800 Palestinian security prisoners for 40 hostages**

Times of Israel, March 24, 2024

Israel had conveyed a detailed document to Hamas setting out its positions on all three phases of a deal for the release of all hostages, Channel 12 reported, saying that Israel had shown new flexibility in several key areas. Where February’s Paris framework had provided for the release of 400 Palestinian security prisoners in exchange for 40 hostages — women, children, the sick and elderly — in the first phase of a deal, during a 6-week truce, Israel is now ready to free “almost double that number,” Channel 12 reported, including 100 murderers. Israel has ruled

out a full return of Gazans to the north of the Strip as part of the deal, the report stressed. Crucially, it added, Israel continues to hold to “red lines” that rule out a complete IDF withdrawal from Gaza, and insists that the campaign to destroy Hamas will resume once the deal is carried out.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog-march-24-2024/>

## **Jordan**

### **Jordan-Iraq electrical connection operational, ending years of outages**

Jordan News, March 30, 2024

The Jordanian-Iraqi electrical connection began operations on March 30, 2024, as announced by Amjad Al-Rawashdeh, the General Manager of the National Electricity Company. In a press statement on March 28, 2024, Al-Rawashdeh stated that the shared line between the Jordanian Al-Risha power station and the Iraqi Al-Rutba station, operating at 132 kilovolts, will supply power to loads in the Al-Rutba area near the Jordanian border, Al-Mamlaka TV reported. The Iraqi Minister of Electricity, Ziyad Ali Fadel, emphasised that the official launch of the electrical connection between Iraq and Jordan followed extensive efforts and diligent oversight. The signing of the first amendment to the electricity sale contract on February 11, 2024, in Amman, marked a significant milestone in supplying the Iraqi side with 132-kilovolt electricity for the Al-Rutba area's power needs.

<https://www.jordannews.jo/Section-109/News/Jordan-Iraq-electrical-connection-operational-ending-years-of-outages-35054>

### **Mubaidin: Palestinian cause is a primary national security concern**

Jordan News, March 30, 2024

On March 29, 2024, Minister of Government Communication, Muhannad Mubaidin stated that any Jordanian cannot be considered Jordanian unless they denounce Israel, emphasising law enforcement against anyone jeopardising national security. Mubaidin, the government's spokesperson, highlighted Jordan's historical, geographical, political, and social ties with Palestine, asserting that Palestinian issues are a primary national security concern for Jordan, Al-Mamlaka TV reported. He acknowledged the role of security forces in maintaining public order but cautioned against disrespectful behaviour towards them during protests, emphasising that such actions do not represent Jordanians or Jordanian values.

<https://www.jordannews.jo/Section-109/News/Mubaidin-Palestinian-cause-is-a-primary-national-security-concern-35046>

### **JAF executes 8 airdrops of humanitarian aid to northern Gaza**

Jordan News, March 30, 2024

The Jordan Armed Forces - Arab Army (JAF), conducted eight airdrops of food and humanitarian aid, targeting several locations in the northern Gaza Strip. This operation comes as part of the ongoing international efforts by Jordan to alleviate the difficult humanitarian suffering caused by the Israeli war on the Gaza Strip, Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported. The operation involved the use of a C130 aircraft from the Royal Jordanian Air Force

(RJAF), a plane from Egypt, a plane from the UAE, two aircraft from the US, a plane from Germany, a plane from the UK, and a plane from Singapore. The Armed Forces reaffirm their commitment to continue sending humanitarian and medical aid through an airlift, to be delivered from Marka Airport to El-Arish International Airport, or through air drops to Gaza Strip, or land aid convoys.

<https://www.jordannews.jo/Section-109/News/JAF-executes-8-airdrops-of-humanitarian-aid-to-northern-Gaza-35043>

### **Energy Parliamentary Committee advances Renewable Energy Law 2024**

Jordan News, March 26, 2024

The Energy and Mineral Resources Parliamentary Committee completed the initial reading of a proposed amendment to the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Law for 2024 in March 2024. Chairing the committee's meeting, Talal Al-Nassour stated that updating and developing Jordan's energy sector and making it a regional hub for energy exchange in all its forms is an important strategic goal for the government, Al-Mamlaka TV reported. Nassour, in the presence of Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Saleh Al-Kharabsheh, and several concerned parties, emphasised that this helps provide the necessary energy for economic growth, improve citizens' quality of life, and contribute to environmental protection and carbon emissions reduction. Kharabsheh stated that Jordan is among the leading countries in promoting the use of renewable energy through issuing legislation and regulations for its utilisation, indicating that the utilisation



rate has reached 27 percent. He pointed out a significant development in the regulations governing renewable energy, affirming that amendments to the draft law ‘will not apply to previous metres, but only to new ones.’ Kharabsheh reiterated that the ministry does not withdraw the authority of the Energy and Minerals Regulatory Commission (EMRC) but works to strengthen its work.

<https://www.jordannews.jo/Section-109/News/Energy-Parliamentary-Committee-advances-Renewable-Energy-Law-2024-34986>

### **Israel’s weaponizing of food is a war crime and must end— Safadi**

Jordan News, March 23, 2024

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Ayman Safadi stated that ending Israel’s war on the Gaza Strip and stopping the famine for 2.3 million Palestinians are the ‘priority,’ adding that Israel's weaponizing of food is a war crime and must end, Al-Mamlaka TV reported. On March 21, 2024, Safadi participated in the ministerial meeting hosted by Egypt, attended by the Prime Minister of Qatar, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, the Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia, Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, the Foreign Minister of Egypt, Sameh Shoukry, the Minister of State for International Cooperation in the UAE, Reem Al Hashimy, and the Secretary-General of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Hussein Al-Sheikh, along with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken. The meeting discussed developments related to the Palestinian

issue and the crisis in Gaza, efforts to achieve a complete ceasefire, increase humanitarian aid access throughout the strip, and implement Security Council Resolution 2720.

<https://www.jordannews.jo/Section-109/News/Israel-s-weaponizing-of-food-is-a-war-crime-and-must-end-Safadi-34942>

### **Maritime corridor misuse risks Palestinian displacement - Mohammad Shtayyeh**

Jordan News, March 19, 2024

On Monday, former Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh sounded the alarm regarding the potential misuse of the maritime corridor between southern Cyprus and Gaza. "We have requested international protection for our people and all Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza, under the banner and umbrella of the UN," he stated. "We will protect our national project and serve as a shield for Palestinian nationalism, represented by President Mahmoud Abbas," Shtayyeh asserted, underlining the importance of national unity in facing upcoming challenges within the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) framework. Addressing financial concerns, Shtayyeh disclosed that the Cabinet has requested donor cash transfers to assist Gaza residents. "Today, the Israeli forces stormed Al-Shifa Hospital and killed patients," he lamented, highlighting the ongoing violence in the region.

<https://www.jordannews.jo/Section-109/News/Maritime-corridor-misuse-risks-Palestinian-displacement-Mohammad-Shtayyeh-34880>

## Kuwait

### **GCC emphasises diplomacy in its first unified vision for regional security**

The National, March 29, 2024

The Gulf Cooperation Council had presented its unified vision for regional security for the first time in its 43-year history. The published document emphasised that disagreements should be settled through diplomacy, not force. “Disputes between countries should be resolved through negotiations, diplomacy, and dialogue, rejecting the use or threat of force, in order to protect the security and stability of the region,” GCC Secretary General Jasem Al Budaiwi said at a ceremony late on March 28, 2024 at the General Secretariat in Riyadh. Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt ended a three-and-a-half-year dispute with Qatar in January 2021 with the GCC Al Ula agreement. The GCC vision sets out 15 pillars, including those focused on regional security and stability, economy and development, and environment and climate change. It also confirms support for international and regional efforts to make the Gulf region free of weapons of mass destruction, while emphasising that addressing nuclear risks is “essential to maintaining the security of the region and preventing it from falling into a nuclear race”. The document stressed the importance of ensuring the stability of global energy markets.

<https://www.thenationalnews.com/news/gulf/2024/03/29/gcc-emphasises-diplomacy-in-its-first-unified-vision-for-regional-security/>

## Lebanon

### **Lebanon to file a complaint to UN Security Council over Israeli strikes on south of country**

Armenia News, March 28, 2024

The Lebanese authorities will send a complaint to the UN Security Council because of the Israeli strikes on the south of the country, which killed 18 civilians. This was stated in a message posted on the official page of the Lebanese diplomatic ministry on the social network X. "The Ministry of Foreign Affairs submitted to the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the UN in New York the text of the complaint to be submitted to the Security Council regarding the Israeli attacks on health workers and civilians in localities in the south of the country," the ministry's statement reads. According to the ministry, special attention will be paid to the strikes on the settlements of c, al-Nakura, and Baalbek, which killed at least 18 civilians, including medical workers.

[https://news.am/eng/news/814968.html#google\\_vignette](https://news.am/eng/news/814968.html#google_vignette)

### **Echoes of Displacement: Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon Navigate Life and Loss**

Andrea López-Tomás

The Medialine, March 29, 2024

Many places in Lebanon feel as if they do not belong to the country. In these areas, life appears to be from another land. The narrow streets, portraits of political leaders and martyrs at every corner, and numerous Palestinian flags explain the absence of the Lebanese cedar flag. In the 12 Palestinian

refugee camps scattered across Lebanon, people live as though they were in Palestine. Their lives mirror those of their brethren who have lived in refugee camps in the West Bank and across the Middle East for over 75 years. Since October 7, nothing in these camps has remained the same. Spread across these dozen camps, 489,292 Palestinian refugees remain stateless, according to the most recent registration last March by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Despite having been in the country for more than seven decades, Palestinian refugees have never obtained Lebanese nationality.

<https://themedialine.org/by-region/echoes-of-displacement-palestinian-refugees-in-lebanon-navigate-life-and-loss/>

## Oman

### Deputy PM of Kosovo lauds Oman's efforts in promoting security, peace

Times of Oman, March 27, 2024

Donika Gërvalla-Schwarz, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora of the Republic of Kosovo, hailed the march of comprehensive development in the Sultanate of Oman, as well as its foreign policy, describing it as an oasis of security and stability in the Middle East region. This was stated when Dr. Mohammed Awadh Al Hassan, Permanent Representative of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Nations (UN) in New York received the Kosovo official at the headquarters of the Permanent Mission of the Sultanate of Oman to the UN. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora of Kosovo

called for strengthening the relations of cooperation and friendship between the Omani and Kosovo peoples in various fields, especially investment, education and tourism. The meeting was attended by officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo and Khalid Saleh Al Rubkhi, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Nations in New York.

<https://cdn.timesofoman.com/article/143736-deputy-pm-of-kosovo-lauds-omans-efforts-in-promoting-security-peace>

### Need to compensate Palestinians for the loss of innocent lives, says Oman's Foreign Minister

Times of Oman, March 18, 2024

Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Minister of Foreign Affairs, emphasised the imperative of compensating Palestinians in Gaza for the loss of innocent lives and those affected by the Israeli conflict, urging for collective action to alleviate the humanitarian crisis. In an interview with the American CNN network on the "Connecting the World with Becky Anderson" programme, Sayyid Badr touched on the critical and tragic situation in the Gaza Strip, calling on the international community to play a vital role in securing sustainable peace and taking quick measures to achieve it, and the urgent need for a unified and bold approach to peace and humanitarian relief. Highlighting the complexity of regional dynamics, particularly the escalating tensions in the Red Sea, Sayyid Badr emphasised the importance of inclusive dialogue involving all stakeholders. He underscored the necessity of engaging

with those holding divergent views to make genuine progress. Reaffirming Oman's steadfast commitment to regional peace and stability, Sayyid Badr urged global leaders and stakeholders to join concerted efforts to address these challenges with courage and determination.

<https://cdn.timesofoman.com/article/14342-4-need-to-compensate-palestinians-for-the-loss-of-innocent-lives-says-omans-foreign-minister>

## Qatar

### Qatar participates in launch of GCC Regional Security Vision

Qatar News Agency, March 29, 2024

The State of Qatar participated in the launch event of the GCC Regional Security Vision, organised by the General Secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) on Friday in Riyadh under the patronage of the GCC Secretary General. His Excellency indicated that the vision is based on several security pillars for the GCC, the most important of which is the Charter of the Council, which emphasises the common destiny and unity of purpose between the Council states and the achievement of coordination and integration, as well as the Joint Defense Agreement, which stipulates that any aggression against any of them is aggression against all of them, and any danger that threatens one of them threatens them all. He pointed out in a speech that promoting regional security is a priority for the State of Qatar during its presidency of the current session of the GCC, which reflects Qatar's long-standing commitment to the principle of contributing to strengthening the security of the region by

building bridges of dialogue and cooperation.

<https://www.qna.org.qa/en/newsbulletins/2024-03/29/0025-qatar-participates-in-launch-of-gcc-regional-security-vision>

### Iraq, Jordan to begin electrical connection process within days

Qatar News Agency, March 21, 2024

The Iraqi Ministry of Electricity announced, on March 21, 2024, the start of the electrical connection process with Jordan in the coming days. Ministry Spokesman Ahmed Musa said that the electrical connection with Jordan will commence in the upcoming days after reaching 100 percent readiness, explaining that the first phase will be in the Rutba district, west of Anbar. Musa also indicated that next summer will be reassuring and positive if the conditions of gas and fuel are available, and that the stability of the electrical system at present comes with the completion of maintenance on generating units, as well as the introduction of new units into the system. The GCC-Iraq Electrical Interconnection Project, funded by both the Qatar Development Fund and the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, scheduled to be completed by the end of 2024, is the first of its kind being implemented outside the GCC electrical system. It will work to meet part of the demand for electrical energy in southern Iraq by approximately 500 megawatts per hour.

<https://www.qna.org.qa/en/News-Area/News/2024-03/21/0048-iraq,-jordan-to-begin-electrical-connection-process-within-days>

### **Ministry of Communications and Information Technology calls for supporting Qatari projects participating in WSIS Prizes 2024**

Qatar News Agency, March 20, 2024

The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) called on citizens, residents, and all stakeholders in Qatar to participate in voting for Qatari projects nominated for the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Prizes 2024. After the voting phase ended, five projects that received the highest number of votes in each of the 18 categories were selected from all nominated projects from different countries around the world. The winners were announced and honoured as champions at this event. In the final stage of the competition, the official announcement was made for the 18 winners, in addition to honouring them alongside the 72 champions who had received certificates of excellence. Qatar is currently undergoing a technological resurgence, leading to rapid growth in the information and communications technology (ICT) sector. This resurgence is aligned with the Qatar National Vision 2030, which prioritises digital innovation and aims to position Qatar as a regional leader in this domain. The Digital Agenda 2030 serves as a comprehensive roadmap for Qatar's digital transformation. It comprises 6 primary pillars and 23 strategic initiatives aimed at fostering digital innovation, enhancing workforce skills in technology, improving e-government services, supporting technology entrepreneurship, and leveraging technology across various sectors.

[https://www.qna.org.qa/en/News-Area/News/2024-03/20/0046-ministry-of-](https://www.qna.org.qa/en/News-Area/News/2024-03/20/0046-ministry-of-communications-and-information-technology-calls-for-supporting-qatari-projects-participating-in-wsis-prizes-2024)

[communications-and-information-technology-calls-for-supporting-qatari-projects-participating-in-wsis-prizes-2024](https://www.qna.org.qa/en/News-Area/News/2024-03/20/0046-ministry-of-communications-and-information-technology-calls-for-supporting-qatari-projects-participating-in-wsis-prizes-2024)

### **Saudi Arabia**

#### **Royal Saudi Navy receives Spanish-made vessel Hail at King Faisal Naval Base**

Arab News, March 27, 2024

Saudi Arabia's naval forces on Tuesday received "His Majesty the King's Ship Hail" at the King Faisal Naval Base, the home of the Western Fleet, the Kingdom's Ministry of Defense announced. An official reception ceremony took place to mark the arrival of the ship — which came from the manufacturing headquarters in Spain — with Vice Admiral Fahad bin Abdullah Al-Ghofaily, the commander of the naval forces, attending. He boarded the ship upon its arrival, toured its sections, and viewed its modern equipment and advanced technologies, before signing the ship's logbook. Al-Ghofaily met the ship's commander and crew, and praised their efforts during the training stages in Spain, saying he was looking forward to serving with naval forces personnel to protect the Kingdom's vital strategic interests and confront all challenges and threats in the region, the Saudi Press Agency reported. The ship is the third of the Sarawat Project, which aims at the manufacture and construction of five naval vessels with specific capabilities to deal with various combat missions with high ability and efficiency.

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2483446/saudi-arabia>

### **Saudi Arabia introduces Madarik program to aid development of nation's space industry**

Arab News, March 28, 2024

Saudi Arabia's Communications, Space and Technology Commission on March 26, 2024, launched a program designed to empower and develop national capabilities in the space sector. The Madarik program aimed to build a sustainable future for the sector by drawing on the knowledge of partners with experience in the field to develop professional pathways for Saudi citizens, officials said. The goal is to build a foundation of knowledge in the space sciences to help participants in the program take their first steps on their journey to develop their skills and play a part in the growth of the nation's space sector. The commission said the program has been developed in partnership with the International Space University in France, the Georgia Institute of Technology, the Thunderbird School of Global Management in Arizona, and BAE Systems Saudi Development and Training, with Al-Yamama University in Riyadh as an educational partner. The space data and software track is for people who specialise in computer science, data science, data engineering and cybersecurity. And the space engineering track is for those qualified in engineering disciplines.

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2483466/saudi-arabia>

### **Saudi crown prince, Blinken discuss situation in Gaza**

Arab News, March 21, 2024

Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman had received US Secretary of

State Antony Blinken in Jeddah, as the US diplomat made his sixth tour of the region. The meeting discussed "Developments in the Gaza Strip, and efforts made to stop military operations and deal with their security and humanitarian repercussions," the SPA added. Blinken landed in Jeddah earlier on March 21, 2024, on the first leg of a regional tour that was extended to include Israel. Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan and Blinken discussed the "importance of an immediate ceasefire" in Gaza. Another major area of concern for the US has been the fate of Rafah in the far south of the Gaza Strip. Biden has put pressure on Netanyahu to pull back from a full-scale ground offensive on the tiny area, where up to 1.5 million Palestinians are sheltering after being driven from their homes elsewhere. "President Biden has been very clear – that we cannot support a major ground operation, military operation in Rafah," Blinken said.

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2480156/saudi-arabia>

### **Somali delegate visits counterterrorism coalition in Riyadh**

Arab News, March 18, 2024

The Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition welcomed Brig. Gen. Abdulrahman Turayre, the delegate from Somalia, to the coalition's headquarters in Riyadh. With Turayre's arrival, 33 countries have sent delegations to the coalition's headquarters, the Saudi Press Agency reported. The secretary-general of the coalition, Maj. Gen. Mohammed bin Saeed Al-Moghedi, commended the Somali delegate's arrival as a positive step taken by the leadership of the Somalian government

to collaborate with the coalition. The visit demonstrates Somalia's recognition of the importance of combating terrorism and rejecting violent extremism, Al-Moghedi added. Given its geographical location in the eastern part of Africa and proximity to the Bab Al-Mandab Strait, Somalia plays a crucial role in countering terrorism in various forms, especially maritime terrorism, Al-Moghedi said. He highlighted maritime terrorism perpetrated by extremist groups aiming to disrupt international development.

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2478641/saudi-arabia>

## Syria

### Israeli air strikes kill dozens in Syria

Peoples Dispatch, March 29, 2024

Syria claimed the Israeli air strike coincided with another attack by the terrorist groups who control a part of the country in the north. An unspecified number of civilians and military personnel were killed in the early morning on Friday, March 29 when Israel launched yet another air airstrike in Syria. The Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) did not mention the number of casualties. Reuters, citing some unnamed sources, claimed that at least 38 people were killed in the attacks. According to Syria's official news agency, the Israeli air strike, which happened at around 1:45 AM local time, coincided with a drone attack carried out by "terrorist organisations from Idlib and western countryside of Aleppo province." Israel has repeatedly targeted Aleppo and other parts of Syria since the beginning of the Syrian war in 2011, killing hundreds of civilians and military personnel. Israel had bombed the airport even during the devastating earthquake last year, when it

was the hub of humanitarian supplies to the country, disrupting the relief work. Syria had raised the issue of unprovoked Israeli aggression repeatedly in the UN, calling it an aid to the armed terrorist groups against the government and an attempt to prolong the war in the country and demanding action against Israel as per the UN charter.

<https://peoplesdispatch.org/2024/03/29/israeli-air-strikes-kills-dozens-in-syria/>

### US and allies continue to wash their hands off role in prolonging Syrian war

Peoples Dispatch, March 18, 2024

The US and its European allies issued a joint statement on the occasion of the 13th anniversary of war in Syria. Syria's Foreign and Expatriate ministry, while rejecting the statement, condemned the West's narrative by calling it "intended propaganda" which is aimed to "divert the attention" from real causes of the problem Syrians are facing. The Syrian government claimed, "over the past 13 years the governments of the US, the United Kingdom, France and Germany have continued their hostile approach against Syria by using all the tools of war against it." The US and its regional and European allies were responsible for providing military and financial support to groups which tried to overthrow the Assad government in 2011 prompting the war. The direct military support provided by the US and its allies in the region, though discontinued after a few years, aided the extremist elements in the region and gave birth to ISIS in 2014 prolonging and intensifying the war.

<https://peoplesdispatch.org/2024/03/18/us-and-allies-continue-to-wash-their-hands-off-role-in-prolonging-syrian-war/>

## Israel carries out several attacks inside Lebanon and Syria killing civilians

Peoples Dispatch, March 27, 2024

Early on Wednesday, March 27, its forces bombed an emergency response centre at al-Habbaniyah in southern Lebanon's Nabatieh region killing at least seven people. The attack followed another Israeli air strike in northern Lebanon's Bekaa region where at least four other Lebanese were killed. The strike on Bekaa was the second attack on northern Lebanon since October 8 when Israel began bombing the country. There were 12 people inside the response centre at al-Habbaniyah at the time of the attack. Israeli armed forces also carried out airstrikes in Syria's Deir Ezzor province on Tuesday, killing at least seven other people, including an Iranian military advisor to the Bashar al-Assad government. Both SANA and Al-Mayadeen said Israel carried out these attacks in collaboration with the US. Al-Mayadeen reported that the two countries carried out 10 attacks targeting both military and civilian infrastructure. Israel claimed the attacks were carried out to prevent alleged armed shipments to Hamas. The Syrian government condemned the attacks. It held the US responsible for the act saying that such attacks would keep the region unstable and "explosive."

<https://peoplesdispatch.org/2024/03/27/israel-carries-out-several-attacks-inside-lebanon-and-syria-killing-civilians/>

## Türkiye

### Türkiye aims to reach 7.2 GW nuclear capacity by 2035: Official

Daily Sabah, March 26, 2024

Türkiye aims to reach 7.2 gigawatts (GW) of nuclear capacity by 2035 and 20

gigawatts by 2050 in its energy mix, a senior official said Monday, highlighting the "critical role" nuclear energy plays in reaching the country's net zero emission target. "We want to use renewable energy. But we must balance these intermittent resources such as solar and wind with the base load," Energy and Natural Resources Minister Alparslan Bayraktar said in his address at the two-day international nuclear energy event ATOMEXPO-2024 that kicked off on March 25, 2024, in the Russian coastal city of Sochi. Nuclear energy plays a critical role in reaching the country's 2053 net zero emission target, and to this end, a further two nuclear plants are planned in addition to the Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant (NPP), which is under construction in the Mersin province on the Mediterranean coast. Bayraktar explained that the country's nuclear energy program, which he described as a "huge undertaking" is in line with the declaration made at the last U.N. climate conference, COP28 when the international community agreed that the world needs to triple its nuclear capacity by 2050.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/energy/turkiye-aims-to-reach-72-gw-nuclear-capacity-by-2035-official>

### Erdoğan says Türkiye ready to facilitate Russia-Ukraine peace talks

Hurriyet Daily News, March 19, 2024

According to the Communications Directorate, Erdoğan called Putin to congratulate him on late March 18, 2024. "Expressing his belief that the positive course in the Türkiye-Russia relations would increasingly continue in the new period, President Erdoğan stated that Türkiye stands ready to assume any



facilitating role in returning to the negotiating table in Ukraine,” read the statement. Russia staged a war against Ukraine in February 2022 and occupied the eastern Ukrainian territories. Türkiye has been one of few countries calling for the cessation of armed conflict between the two neighbours since the beginning of the war. It hosted Russian and Ukrainian foreign ministers in March 2022 in Antalya for talks on a lasting agreement. Ankara blames some Western countries for discouraging Ukraine to sit at the same table with Russia. President Erdoğan has repeatedly called on both Putin and Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky to give a chance to peace talks and that Türkiye stands ready to play the role of a facilitator. Underlining that Türkiye doesn’t expect much to change during the war in 2024 amid the West’s plans to create a peace table in 2025, Fidan reminded that the continuation of the war will create more casualties and destruction.

<https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/erdogan-says-turkiye-ready-to-facilitate-russia-ukraine-peace-talks-191742>

### **Türkiye says it won’t recognize Crimea annexation**

Hurriyet Daily News, March 17, 2024

Türkiye has reiterated that it won’t recognize Russia’s annexation of Crimea and underlined its support for the territorial integrity of Ukraine. The Foreign Ministry issued a written statement “Regarding the Tenth Anniversary of the Illegal Annexation of Crimea” on March 16, 2024. “It has been a decade since the Russian Federation annexed the Autonomous Republic of Crimea of Ukraine through an illegitimate referendum held on 16 March

2014,” read the statement. “Türkiye reiterates that it does not recognize this de facto situation, which constitutes a violation of international law, and underlines its support for Ukraine’s territorial integrity and sovereignty,” it added. Türkiye is in efforts for the cessation of the war between Russia and Ukraine since February 2022. Russian forces entered the Crimean Peninsula in February 2014, and in March formally annexed the region – a move that Türkiye, the U.N., the U.S. and the EU, all view as illegal.

<https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkiye-says-it-wont-recognize-crimea-annexation-191691>

### **UAE**

### **Angola project demonstrates GCC’s growing Africa interest**

Arabian Gulf Business Insight, March 28, 2024

Dubai Investments has appointed a Chinese construction company as the main contractor on its flagship project in Angola as GCC investments in Africa rise. China Harbour Engineering Company will undertake the first phase of Dubai Investments Park Angola, covering 2,000 hectares of residential, commercial and industrial property in the West African country. “Infrastructure works represent a crucial foundation for the overall success and sustainability of DIP Angola and lays down the framework for attracting further investment, businesses, and industries to the region,” he said. The project is part of a growing number of foreign direct investment (FDI) projects led by GCC-based investors in Africa. The DIP Angola project, based 50km from the capital

Luanda, includes an 18-hole golf course and housing near retail and industrial sites, as well as communal parks and leisure facilities. According to the International Monetary Fund, economic growth is estimated at 0.5 percent for 2023. Headline inflation increased significantly to 20 percent in December, driven by the depreciation of the kwanza and cuts in fuel subsidies.

<https://www.agbi.com/trade/2024/03/angola-project-demonstrates-growing-africa-interest/>

### **UAE and World Central Kitchen announce departure of second maritime aid shipment for Gaza**

Emirates News Agency, March 30, 2024

Three ships and a barge set sail from Cyprus on March 30, 2024 following better weather conditions, carrying hundreds of tonnes of food destined for northern Gaza. The historic opening of the maritime route to Gaza by sea is conducted by World Central Kitchen and Open Arms, in close partnership with the United Arab Emirates, and the support of Cyprus. By opening this maritime aid corridor with Open Arms and Cyprus, the UAE and World Central Kitchen were able to scale humanitarian efforts in Gaza. The UAE has delivered 26,000 tonnes of urgent supplies, including food, water, and medical items, dispatched through 229 flights, 19 airdrops, 1,035 trucks, and three ships. While this initiative is getting desperately needed food to the Palestinians, the opening of land crossings remains paramount to avert famine.

<https://www.wam.ae/en/article/b2eks12-uae-and-world-central-kitchen-announce-departure>

### **Hamdan bin Zayed visits Bu Hasa field, praises ADNOC's efforts in employing AI in production processes**

Emirates News Agency, March 30, 2024

H.H. Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Ruler's Representative in Al Dhafra Region, said that the United Arab Emirates, under the leadership of President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, is at the forefront of leveraging cutting-edge technologies like AI to drive sustainable growth and progress, particularly in the energy sector. He praised the pivotal role played by the Emirati female cadres working in the Bu Hasa field, where they contribute through their different positions to the implementation of ADNOC's plans to enhance efficiency, raise productivity and reduce emissions through the use of AI applications and tools and advanced technologies. The ADNOC team presented Sheikh Hamdan with details on several strategic projects underway at the Bu Hasa field. These initiatives aim to achieve growth, enhance efficiency, and reduce emissions, notably the plans to increase production capacity from 650,000 barrels per day to over 790,000 barrels per day and to increase associated gas production from 650 million cubic feet per day to more than 800 million cubic feet per day by 2027. This is in addition to strategic projects that include providing sustainable water supplies to the Bu Hasa and Bab fields. Other strategic projects include utilising treated seawater instead of groundwater in the Enhanced oil recovery (EOR) processes, reducing energy consumption and emissions, and the project to employ water and gas injection

technologies into reservoirs to enhance production.

<https://www.wam.ae/en/article/13u99uj-hamdan-bin-zayed-visits-hasa-field-praises-adnoc%E2%80%99s>

### **UAE, Kenya sign Investment Memorandum to advance digital infrastructure, AI initiatives**

Emirates News Agency, March 29, 2024

The UAE Ministry of Investment and the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Digital Economy of the Republic of Kenya have signed an Investment Memorandum establishing a framework for investment cooperation in digitalisation and technology. In addition to exploring investments in digital infrastructure and artificial intelligence (AI) services in Kenya, the cooperation may include developing data centre projects with a total capacity of up to 1,000 megawatts. In the field of AI, the technical and investment potential of developing Large Language Models will be assessed. There are currently several operational data centres in the country, and the local data centre market is expected to witness a compound annual growth rate of 11.22 percent between 2023 and 2028. The “digital corridor” concept is integral to this Memorandum, representing an interconnected network infrastructure enabling secure data exchange, hosting, processing, and transmission between the UAE and Kenya.

<https://www.wam.ae/en/article/b2dzbq3-uae-kenya-sign-investment-memorandum-advance>

## **Yemen**

### **Yemen’s president honours Saudi Project Masam**

Arab News, March 31, 2024

Yemen’s President Rashad Al-Alimi awarded Saudi Arabia’s Project Masam the Medal of Bravery for its humanitarian efforts to clear Yemen of landmines and other remnants of war. Al-Alimi, chairman of the Presidential Leadership Council and commander-in-chief of the armed forces in Yemen, presented the award to Ousama Al-Gosaibi, the project’s managing director. On June 26, 2023, Al-Alimi issued two decisions to award Project Masam and the National Mine Action Program for their role in clearing Yemeni lands of mines and unexploded ordnance planted by the Houthi militias, and in recognition of their martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the safety of the Yemeni people and the country’s future generations. Al-Gosaibi expressed his gratitude to Al-Alimi for honouring Project Masam. The explosives, which were planted indiscriminately by the Houthis across Yemen, posed a threat to civilians, including children, women and the elderly. Al-Gosaibi affirmed Project Masam’s determination to continue working to fulfil the initiative’s humanitarian mission.

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2485836/saudi-arabia>

# NUCLEAR AND ARMS CONTROL CENTRE

*Sylloge on West Asia is compiled by Ms. Shipra Dwivedi  
with inputs from Mr. Niranjana C. Oak.*

**Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses**

**No. 1, Development Enclave,  
Rao Tula Ram Marg,  
Delhi Cantt., New Delhi-110 010  
Telephone: 91-11-26717983;  
Fax: 91-11-26154191,  
Website: [www.idsa.in](http://www.idsa.in)**



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