

The Early phoenix
29 December 2022

SYRIA

1. [**Syrians Protest Against Ankara's Outreach to the Assad Regime**](#) (*Syria TV*). On Wednesday activists in northwestern Syria called for demonstrations and vigils against the rapprochement between Turkey and the Syrian regime, in support of the movement in southern Syria. Earlier on Wednesday, Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar and intelligence chief Hakan Fidan arrived in the Russian capital, Moscow, to hold talks with Russian officials and officials of the Syrian regime.
2. [**Defense Ministers of Turkey, Russia and the Syrian Regime Meet in Moscow**](#) (*Enab Baladi*). The Turkish Ministry of Defense announced the holding of a tripartite meeting that brought together the Turkish and Russian defense ministers and the government of the Syrian regime, in the Russian capital, Moscow, on Wednesday. According to a statement issued by the Turkish Defense Ministry, the Turkish Minister of Defense, Hulusi Akar, and the head of Turkish intelligence, Hakan Fidan, met with the Russian Minister of Defense, Sergey Shoigu, and the Minister of Defense in the Syrian regime government, Ali Mahmoud Abbas, as well as the heads of the Russian and Syrian intelligence sources.

IRAN

3. [**Iranian Regime Seeks to Expand in Syria**](#) (*Asharq Al-Awsat*). Iran intends to do so by scaling up its purchase of homes and establishing new camps in areas adjacent to the zones of influence of Russia, which is currently preoccupied with its war in Ukraine. On Wednesday, Israel's defense minister said Israel could attack Iranian nuclear sites in [two or three years, in unusually explicit comments about a possible timeline](#).
4. [**Dozens of Sukhoi Su-35 Fighter Jets to Be Delivered to Iran by Russia Soon**](#) (*Tasnim Agency*). The development is likely to further anger the West as Tehran and Moscow strengthen their defense and economic cooperation in defiance of broad sanctions and coercive measures. According to media reports citing military experts, Iran will soon receive 24 of the fourth-generation twin-engine, super-maneuverable fighter jets that are primarily used for air superiority missions.
5. [**Iran-Oman Annual Trade Expected to Hit \\$2 Billion**](#) (*Tasnim Agency*). Highlighting the growing relations between Iran and Oman, the Iranian ambassador to Muscat said the volume of trade exchanges between the two neighbors during the past eight months has risen by 73 percent. The value of trade between Iran and Oman is projected to hit \$2 billion by March 20, 2023, the envoy noted, adding that such an extent of economic relations will be unprecedented.
6. [**Four Countries Demand Arbitration In Iran's Downing Of Airliner**](#) (*Iran International*). Nearly three years after Iran's Revolutionary Guard shot down Flight

PS752 shortly after takeoff from Tehran with two surface-to-air missiles, the UK, Canada, Sweden, and Ukraine have urged Iran to agree to arbitration as Tehran has stonewalled over an independent investigation and proper compensation.

EGYPT

7. [Iranian Regime Claims Egypt is Ready to Reconcile with Iran](#) (*Tehran Times*). "In light of the mechanisms on which Egyptian foreign policy is based, I believe that Egypt has accepted that there will be negotiation over contentious files with Turkey, despite the apathy in relations over the past years, and the same may be the case with regard to the file of relations with Iran," stated Egypt's Ambassador to Iran Ezzat Saad. The CEO of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs stated that Iraq may play a pivotal role in opening the door to consultations between Egypt and Iran.

THE GULF

8. [Saudi Arabia was world's largest development donor in 2021](#) (*Asharq Al-Awsat*) Saudi Arabia topped donor countries in providing official development assistance (humanitarian and development) to low- and middle-income countries in 2021, with an amount of 26.71 billion Saudi riyals (equivalent to \$7.12 billion), according to data published by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.
9. [A rare fall of hail creates an unprecedented snow scene in Kuwait](#) (*Asharq Al-Awsat*) Hail fell on areas in southern Kuwait, in a rare phenomenon that meteorologists said that the Gulf country, known for its high temperatures in the summer, had not witnessed for nearly two decades.
10. [Iran Reportedly Trafficking Stolen Yemeni Antiquities](#) (*Al Hadath*). The Yemeni Minister of Information, Muammar Al-Eryani, warned today, Wednesday, of what he described as the involvement of the Iranian regime and the Houthis in "organized looting" of antiquities in areas under Houthi control and "smuggling" them for trade abroad. Al-Eryani said that the Iranian regime is doing this "under the cover of fake projects within its scheme to obliterate Yemeni archaeological sites, bulldoze national identity and erase Yemeni history."

LEBANON

11. [Israeli army: We will not accept another "Hezbollah" in Syria](#) (*Al Nahar*). The head of the Israeli army's operations department, Oded Basiuk, said on Wednesday...that Tel Aviv "will not accept the presence of another Hezbollah in Syria." He added, according to what the Israeli army posted on Twitter, that sales of Iranian weapons used in the war in Ukraine "are the main influencing factor on the way the West and the United States view Iran and the entire region."