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Türkiye, Iraq set for ‘historic’ water deal

The countries seem ready to turn the tide on the water issues they face, as Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan hailed a new deal on the matter in the works during a visit to Baghdad yesterday

ISTANBUL - DAILY SABAH

» **GROWING** Turkish-Iraqi ties brought Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan to Baghdad yesterday, just three weeks after his counterpart, Fuad Hussein, visited Türkiye. Speaking at a joint news conference with Hussein in the Iraqi capital, Fidan signaled a turning point in bilateral relations on water issues, with a deal involving the use of Iraq’s oil revenues to rehabilitate the country’s water resources, with assistance

from Turkish companies.

“We will sign today a crucially important agreement,” Fidan told reporters. “For years, Türkiye and Iraq sought the most efficient use of water and about two and a half years ago, during my meeting with Mr. prime minister, we reached an agreement. We decided to follow a two-pronged approach: finding a better method for water use between Türkiye and Iraq, and developing a framework for cooperation to rehabilitate Iraq’s water infrastructure and

irrigation systems. We have worked hard on these matters since then,” Fidan told reporters. The two countries announced a tentative deal last month to share water and manage the Tigris (Dicle) and Euphrates (Firat) rivers. In the past, Iraq complained that dams built by Türkiye on the two rivers reduced its water supply, as its major fresh-water sources.

Upstream Turkish dams, however, are essential, especially for Türkiye’s south-eastern and eastern regions, which rely

heavily on agriculture, in a country whose water resources face severe shortages at times due to climate change. Fidan said the agreement would hopefully pave the way for the permanent rehabilitation of Iraq’s water systems and would be “the biggest infrastructure investment” in Iraq’s history. “This is rather a work that exhibits the Iraqi government’s visionary approach and will to improve its people’s welfare. Once implemented, this deal will comprise a significant step toward resolving the water problem.

We hope the next generations will not suffer from the problems we suffered,” Fidan underlined. The two ministers later signed a “mechanism document” to finance water cooperation projects between the two countries, in the presence of Iraqi Prime Minister Muhammad S. Al Sudani. Foreign Ministry sources said the mechanism includes regulations for implementing the framework agreement on water cooperation, signed during President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s visit to Iraq in 2024. **PAGE 6**

OPINION

HAKKI ÖCAL

Only international force can maintain peace in Israel

» **I CERTAINLY** hope that no country would refuse to be an international peace force in Gaza if asked by the signatories of the 20-item Cairo peace plan, as suggested by King Abdullah of Jordan. His grand-daddy told the Zionists during the partition of Palestine between the Jews and Muslims that they should not bother to demarcate lands for Muslims because he would have them if the Western shores of the river were given to Transjordan.

The grand-dad, Abdullah bin Hussein, was then the emir of Transjordan, a British protectorate, and later the king of an independent Jordan. As a member of the Hashemite dynasty, the rulers of the area after the Ottoman sovereignty ended in 1918, Abdullah I annexed a major part of the West Bank. This was the largest region marked to be part of the Muslim part of Palestine. Draining away the population of this land gave the Zionists, the British and the U.S. a major argument that “a two-state solution was not necessary.”

Now the current Abdullah of Jordan seems to be looking for ways to leave Israel (read, the Zionists) alone in whatever it is doing by evading the responsibility to create peace and safeguard it. I hope against hope that not only Türkiye, but all the neighboring Arab countries and Muslim and non-Muslim countries like Türkiye, Pakistan, Indonesia, Azerbaijan, Australia, Malaysia, Canada and France are willing to be part of that force, and soon. **PAGE 8**



The wreckage of a vehicle is left strewn on the side of the road, a day after an Israeli airstrike that killed its occupants, in the village of Kfar Roummane, southern Lebanon, Nov. 2, 2025. (AFP Photo)

ISRAEL THREATENS TO RAMP UP LEBANON STRIKES OVER HEZBOLLAH DISARMAMENT

ISRAEL threatened Lebanon yesterday with intensifying strikes on Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon, a day after an Israeli air raid killed four people, according to Lebanon’s Health Ministry. Despite a November 2024 cease-fire with the Lebanese armed group, Israel maintains troops in five areas in southern Lebanon and has kept up regular strikes. “Hezbollah is playing with fire, and the president of Lebanon is dragging his feet,” Defense Minister Israel Katz claimed in a statement. “The Lebanese government’s commitment to disarm Hezbollah and remove it from southern Lebanon must be implemented. Maximum enforcement will continue and even intensify – we will not allow any threat to the residents of the north.” Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu claimed that Hezbollah was attempting to “rearm” itself. “We expect the Lebanese government to fulfil its commitment – to disarm Hezbollah – but it is clear we will exercise our right of self-defense under the terms of the cease-fire,” Netanyahu told the Cabinet at its weekly meeting yesterday. **PAGE 10**

AK Party dominates country’s politics since winning first vote in 2002

» **THE JUSTICE** and Development Party (AK Party) made it into the annals of Türkiye’s democratic history recently as the only party since first genuinely multiparty elections in 1950 to govern uninterruptedly for the longest time.

Today marks the 23rd anniversary of the party’s first election victory and a senior party official links the party’s longevity to resistance to multiple challenges with unwavering unity between the party, its leader President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the nation. “He never grabbed his hat and left (in the face of challenges),” the party’s act-

ing chair, Efkan Ala, told Anadolu Agency (AA) yesterday, drawing a comparison with late Prime Minister and President Süleyman Demirel, who reportedly said this quote in response to imminent collapse of his government decades ago.

Founded in 2001 under the leadership of Erdoğan, the AK Party was a true underdog in Turkish politics back then, a mixture of people with different political views, mostly those who split from the defunct Welfare Party (RP), including Erdoğan.

Erdoğan himself was in a difficult period in his life. **PAGE 7**

Trump warns Nigeria of military action

» **U.S.** President Donald Trump said Saturday he has directed the Pentagon to prepare for possible swift military action in Nigeria if the government fails to curb alleged attacks on Christians.

The U.S. government will also immediately stop all aid and assistance to Nigeria, Africa’s most populous nation and top oil producer, Trump said in a post on Truth Social.

If the United States sends in military forces, it would go in “guns-a-blazing,” to completely wipe out ... who are committing these horrible atrocities,” Trump wrote, without providing any evidence of specifics about the treatment of Christians in Nigeria.

Trump called Nigeria a “disgraced country” and warned its government must move quickly. “If we attack, it will be fast, vicious, and sweet, just like the terrorist thugs attack our CHERISHED Christians!” he wrote.

Abuja had no immediate reaction to Trump’s threat of military action. The White House also had no immediate comment on the potential timing of any U.S. military action. **PAGE 10**

Türkiye eyes regaining regional FDI hub status: Şimşek

» **TÜRKİYE** aims to be back as a major regional hub for foreign direct investment (FDI) as it regains momentum, Treasury and Finance Minister Mehmet Şimşek said on Saturday.

Evaluating the global and domestic economic outlook, the minister reiterated the main goal of price stability and lowering inflation to single digits.

“We kinda like for (the) past decades slowed, now we are regaining momentum. We want to be back as a major regional hub for foreign direct investment,” Şimşek said in his address at TRT World Forum.

Citing Türkiye’s population and large

market, he noted that FDIs have increased almost twentyfold over the past 20-25 years, adding that they hope to achieve investment-grade status over the next few years.

“We think there is significant upside ... We’ve seen two-three notches of upgrades over the past couple of years,” he said, referring to recent upgrades. All major rating agencies upgraded Türkiye’s credit rating following a shift to more conventional economic policies back in 2023.

He also pointed to strong growth performance in Türkiye since 2002 and in general among emerging markets, which stood at 5.4% between 2003 and 2024. **PAGE 5**

Millions risk losing food aid as US govt shutdown enters 2nd month

» **APPROXIMATELY** one in eight Americans receiving food stamp benefits from the U.S. government faced a threat as the main program backing them was on track to lose its funding as of Saturday due to the government shutdown, which has now entered its second month.

One such beneficiary is Eric Dunham, a 36-year-old man who became disabled after an accident and needs help from the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to live.

“If I don’t get food stamps, I can’t eat,”

Dunham told Agence France-Presse (AFP), explaining that after all his expenses, he has just \$24 left over per month.

“That’s it,” the father of two teenagers said. “The rest goes to child support.”

Since the federal government closed on Oct. 1 due to ongoing budget disagreements between Republicans and Democrats in Congress, President Donald Trump’s administration has announced it would no longer be able to fund SNAP as of Saturday – the first cessation since the program began six decades ago. **PAGE 4**