

## Ziryab: Transforming culture from Baghdad to Al-Andalus

HASAN MERT KAYA  
CULTURE PAGE 2



## Major music lineup lands in Istanbul

HAKAN UÇ  
CULTURE PAGE 2

## World Cup loses its spark to boring music

KELVIN NDUNGA  
SPORTS PAGE 11



LOCAL PERSPECTIVE. GLOBAL VISION

# DAILY SABAH

WEEKEND EDITION

APRIL 11-12 / 2026  
TL 25.00

www.dailysabah.com

# Trump, pope at odds as Iran war looms

Pope Leo XIV delivered an unusually direct and personal rebuke of Donald Trump over the Iran war, exposing rare tensions between the Vatican and Washington as moral authority and political power collide over the escalating conflict

ISTANBUL - DAILY SABAH

U.S. PRESIDENT Donald Trump is accustomed to criticism from coast to coast – Democrats, disaffected Republicans, late-night comedians and massive protests. Yet, in his second presidency, Trump's most influential American critic doesn't live in the country but at the Vatican. It's an unprecedented situation, with the first American pope directly assailing the

American president over the war in Iran, where a fragile cease-fire took hold this week. The announcement came after Pope Leo XIV declared that Trump's belligerence was "truly unacceptable."

Never before has the relationship between Washington and the Vatican revolved around two Americans – specifically, a 79-year-old politician from Queens and a 70-year-old pontiff from Chicago. They come from the same generation and share

some common cultural roots, yet bring jarringly distinct approaches to their positions of vast power. And the relationship comes with risks for both sides.

"They're two white guy boomers, but they could not be any more different in their life experiences, in their values, in the way they have chosen to live those values," said theology professor Natalia Imperatori-Lee of Fordham University. "This is a very stark contrast, and I think an inflection

point for American Christianity."

Experts on the Catholic Church emphasized that Leo's opposition to the war reflects established church teachings, not the reflexive politics of the moment.

"For the last five centuries, the church has been involved in a project of helping develop strong international norms," including the Geneva Conventions in recent centuries, said Catholic University professor William Barbieri. "It is a very long-

standing tradition rooted in Scripture and theology and philosophy."

Yet, the U.S. administration, which has close ties to conservative evangelical Protestant leaders, has claimed "heavenly endorsement" for Trump's war on Iran. PAGE 10

**PEZESHKIAN HAILS ANKARA'S STANCE, PUBLIC SOLIDARITY AMID TENSIONS** PAGE 6



Yasemin Shtat poses for a photo with her daughter at a shelter set up in Al-Azhar University, Gaza, Palestine, April 10, 2026. (AA Photos)



Sari Abdullah Shtat hugs his son during an interview, Gaza, Palestine, April 10, 2026.



Sumud al-Kafarna poses as her baby sleeps at a shelter established in Al-Azhar University, Gaza, Palestine, April 10, 2026.



Ikrum al-Kafarna poses for a photo with her daughter at the university shelter, Gaza, Palestine, April 10, 2026.

## DISPLACED GAZANS STRUGGLE WITH HUNGER, POOR CONDITIONS, SORROW

STRIKING images recently released by Anadolu Agency (AA) reveal the harsh living conditions of Palestinians displaced by more than two years of Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip, many of whom now shelter in damaged buildings, makeshift tents and overcrowded schools. The photos, based on interviews with displaced families, document life inside a shelter set up at Al-Azhar University, where residents struggle with shortages of food, water and basic services after fleeing their homes in northern Gaza. PAGE 10

**OPINION - İHSAN AKTAŞ**  
**HOW WILL HUMANITY COPE WITH ISRAELI CATASTROPHE?** PAGE 9

**OPINION - VIŞNE KORKMAZ**  
**A FRAGILE CEASE-FIRE IN A BURNING REGION** PAGE 9

## Şimşek says war shock manageable, won't derail economic program

TREASURY and Finance Minister Mehmet Şimşek said on Friday the economic impact of the Middle East conflict would be negative but manageable, stressing that Türkiye's disinflation-focused program had already proven its resilience against external shocks.

Şimşek described the conflict as a "major shock" and warned that wars tend to have longer-lasting and deeper economic consequences than other types of crises.

He was speaking at the International Economy Summit in the Sapanca district of the northwestern Sakarya province.

"Wars create much more permanent and larger consequences than other shocks," Şimşek said. "We believe Türkiye is resilient. We proved this last year, and we will prove it again this year."

The U.S.-Israeli war on Iran, which started in late February before the sides agreed on a fragile two-week cease-fire this week, has damaged Gulf energy production, stranded tanker traffic and boosted oil prices by about 50% in the world's worst energy shock. That came as a major test for countries that import most of their energy needs, including Türkiye. PAGE 5

## Syria, Türkiye near correspondent bank account deal, mull currency swap

SYRIA is in the final stages of establishing a correspondent bank account with neighboring Türkiye's central bank and will also discuss a potential currency swap aimed at boosting trade, according to the Syrian central bank chief.

Türkiye has been the main backer of the Syrian government of President Ahmed al-Sharaa since the ousting of longtime dictator Bashar Assad in late 2024. Al-Sharaa has been seeking to rebuild state institutions and the economy after more than a decade of war, sanctions and financial isolation.

Trade between the two countries has

surged, but businesses say the lack of a cross-border payments system was one of the biggest impediments to further growth and investment. A correspondent bank account would help to facilitate cross-border payments and trade finance transactions, which traders say are currently cash only and handled by traditional money transfer offices.

In written responses to Reuters questions, Abdulkader Husrieh, Syria's central bank governor, said he expected Syrian-Turkish cooperation to expand "into integrated payment systems, cross-border settlements, and more structured trade finance frameworks." PAGE 5

## Cruise passenger numbers hit 16-year March high

CRUISE passenger traffic in Türkiye rose to its highest March level in 16 years, Transport and Infrastructure Minister Abdulkadir Uraloğlu said on Friday.

According to Uraloğlu, Türkiye welcomed 41,039 cruise passengers last month, up 4.9% from March last year.

A total of 26 cruise ships called at Turkish ports during the month.

"March 2026 was recorded as the highest March cruise passenger figure of the last 16 years, with 41,039 passengers," Uraloğlu said in a statement.

In the first quarter as a whole, 56 cruise ships arrived at Turkish ports, while total cruise passenger numbers reached 93,787.

Istanbul ports ranked first in March with 13,307 passengers arriving on eight cruise ships.

They were followed by Kuşadası Port, which hosted 12,191 passengers on seven cruise ships, and İzmir Alsancak Port, which received 9,723 passengers on five cruise ships.

Other Turkish ports welcomed 5,818 cruise passengers from six ships during the month. PAGE 5

OPINION - MAHMUT ÖZER

## Rethinking politics in an age of legitimacy crisis

POLITICS is one of the fundamental activities at the center of societies' efforts to sustain their existence. While the human instinct for survival compels individuals to live together, the question of how they will live together naturally brings politics to the forefront. For this reason, much of public debate – directly or indirectly – takes shape around politics. The nature of politics, its purpose, its source of legitimacy and whether it possesses an autonomous domain are questions as old as human history itself. As conceptions of existence evolve, the meaning of politics inevitably changes

as well. Within this framework, significant works on political thought have been produced in our intellectual tradition, establishing a continuous platform of discussion and generating a rich body of knowledge about the role of politics within society.

As modern civilization has transformed all areas of life according to its own language and logic, politics has likewise received its share of this transformation and continues to do so. Given the profound influence politics exerts on daily life, it becomes necessary to revisit its origins, its meaning, and its societal aims. PAGE 8

## Social media use rises nationwide, experts warn of addiction risk

EXPERTS warn that rising social media use is increasing the risk of addiction and may also contribute to or trigger other forms of behavioral and substance-related dependencies.

As digitalization accelerates, social media has become a central part of daily life, shaping communication, information access and entertainment habits. However, experts say this growing integration is also bringing psychological and social risks, particularly due to increasing levels of excessive use among young people. Specialists note that higher social media

consumption is linked to increased addiction risk and may also function as a gateway factor for other types of addiction. They stress that the issue extends beyond individual behavior and represents a broader societal concern.

Hakan Çetin, academic director at the Turkish Green Crescent Society (Yeşilay), explained that the organization carries out prevention-focused work on addiction and related risks. He said that, based on global indicators, Türkiye is above the international average in addiction-related usage patterns. PAGE 3

