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# Arab Gulf Country Bulletins



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by

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# Kingdom of Bahrain

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Tuesday, 16 April—Manama hosted the 11th Counter ISIS Finance Group Meeting, comprised of 54 members, which discussed the achievements and continuing challenges in countering the funding of Daesh, notably cash transports outside the modern financial system. The Meeting was inaugurated by Bahrain's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al-Khalifa, who praised the importance of the Manama Declaration, which was issued during the 1st Meeting of the Group, reaffirmed the

Kingdom's commitment to combatting terrorism, and highlighted the key role of the United States, Saudi Arabia and Italy in achieving the Group's goals. On the sidelines, Bahrain's Foreign Minister met William Roebuck, the US Deputy Special Envoy to the Global Coalition to Defeat Daesh.

Wednesday, 17 April—Bahrain's Minister of Finance and National Economy, Salman bin Khalifa Al-Khalifa, received the US Treasury's Assistant Secretary for Terrorist Financing, Marshall Billingslea, and his accompanying delegation, to discuss enhancing cooperation in combating terrorism funding.

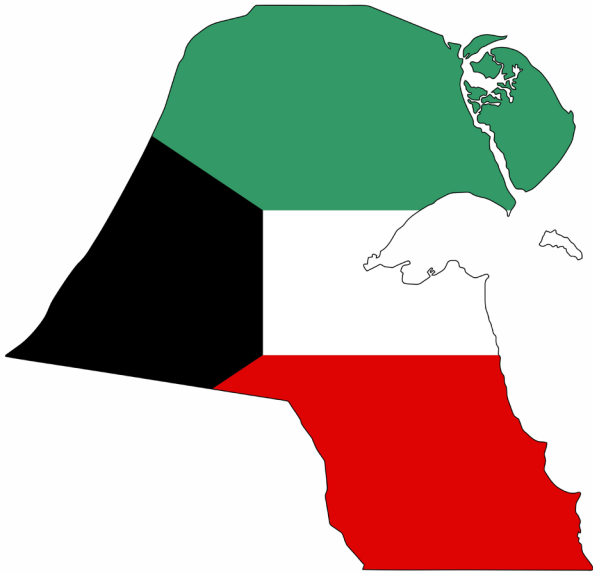


Thursday, 18 April—Manama hosted for the first time the annual Global Entrepreneurship Congress (GEC), which brought together around 3000 entrepreneurs, investors, policymakers and other experts from more than 150 countries. During the preparations for the GEC, the Startup Nations Ministerial Meeting, which comprised representatives from 35 countries, World Bank, the European Commission, the OECD and the United Nations, was held on 15 April. The Meeting was inaugurated by Bahrain's Minister of Industry, Commerce and Tourism, Zayed Al-Zayani, who emphasised Bahrain's potential as a regional hub for innovation, Fintech and development of environment for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and start-ups.



# State of Kuwait

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Sunday, 14 April—Kuwait National Guard announced the launch of military drills “CPX-Nasr 17” with the participation of 8 countries—the United States, the United Kingdom, Italy, France, China, Vietnam, Jordan and Turkey—Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Interior and other 11 government entities, aimed at improving combat readiness and exchange knowledge, with focus on emergency situations.

Thursday, 18 April—The Chief of General Staff of Kuwaiti Army, Lieutenant General Mohammed Khaled Al-Khader, discussed defence cooperation and promotion of military ties with his Polish counterpart, Lieutenant General Rajmund Andrzejczak.



# Sultanate of Oman

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Monday, 15 April— Oman's Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs, Yusuf bin Alawi, arrived on the first official visit to the Czech Republic for talks with his Czech counterpart, Tomáš Petříček, and the Prime Minister, Andrej Babiš. They focused on the strengthening of bilateral relations, with focus on the deepening of economic, political and technological cooperation, where Oman expressed interest for example in the Solar Air Water Earth Resource (S.A.W.E.R.) system for

getting water from air, which was developed by the Czech Technical University in Prague, and introducing direct flights amid the growing tourism exchange.

18 April—The Omani-Iranian Military Friendship Joint Committee concluded its annual six-day meeting in Oman. On the sidelines, the Royal Navy of Oman and the Iranian Naval Forces held naval exercises in the Sea of Oman. On 17 April, Badr Al-Busaidi, Secretary General of Oman's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, travelled to Tehran for an official visit, where he met with Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister, Morteza Sarmadi, to discuss the enhancing of bilateral ties, particularly in political, cultural and economic fields. Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister appreciated Oman's solidarity and humanitarian aid during the recent floods in Iran.



# State of Qatar

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Monday, 15 April—Qatar's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, met with Italy's Prime Minister, Giuseppe Conte, and Foreign Affairs' Minister, Enzo Moavero Milanesi, in Rome. During their discussions they focused on enhancing bilateral relations and regional issues, particularly the military escalation in Libya. Following the meeting, Prime Minister Conte called for an immediate ceasefire and expressed hope for the withdrawal of forces, while Qatar's Deputy

Prime Minister called for stopping arms supplies to General Haftar's Libyan National Army (LNA). Later that day, Prime Minister Conte met Libya's Deputy Prime Minister, Ahmed Maftig, from the UN-backed government to discuss the situation.

Wednesday, 17 April—Qatar's Emir, Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani received Albania's Prime Minister, Edi Rama, and his accompanying delegation to discuss bilateral relations and opportunities for their development. Later, Qatar's Prime Minister and Interior Minister, Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al-Thani, held talks with Albania's Prime Minister and then they witnessed the signing of maritime transport agreement, a memorandum of understanding on cooperation in sport and a letter of intent between both countries' Ministries of Interior on security cooperation.



Wednesday, 17 April—Qatar's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs, Dr Khalid bin Mohamed Al-Attiyah, received Lieutenant General Mahmoud Freihah, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Jordanian Armed Forces. They discussed bilateral military relations and witnessed the signing of several cooperation agreements between the Qatari Armed Forces and the Jordanian Armed Forces aimed to intensify and enhance their cooperation, particularly in administrative, technical, and organisational areas.



# Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

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Monday, 15 April—Saudi Arabia's King, Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, and Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Salman, met separately with the Commander of the US Central Command, General Kenneth McKenzie. During the meetings they focused on bilateral military relations and regional developments as Saudi Arabia is the United States' key regional military ally and partner in

the establishment of the Middle East Strategic Alliance (MESA), the so-called Arab NATO, which saw a setback with Egypt's decision to withdraw last week.

Tuesday, 16 April—Saudi Arabia's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Adel Al-Jubeir, led the Kingdom's delegation to the 5th Arab-Russian Cooperation Forum in Moscow. The Forum was attended by Russia's Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, and Foreign Ministers or their Deputies from the Arab League states. The Forum focused on ways to develop relations and cooperation between Arab countries and Russia in various fields as well as several regional and international issues. On the sidelines of the Forum, Minister of State Al-Jubeir held a bilateral meeting with Foreign Minister Lavrov to discuss ways to enhance bilateral cooperation and review latest regional developments.



Wednesday, 17 April—An Iraqi high-level delegation, led by the Prime Minister, Adel Abdul-Mahdi, arrived in Saudi Arabia, where they met with King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, the Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Salman, and other Saudi officials. The aim of the visit was to focus mainly on bilateral trade and economic ties. The two countries signed 14 instruments on cooperation, notably in energy and industry, transportation, investments and political cooperation. On the sidelines, Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister, Ibrahim Al-Assaf, and his Iraqi counterpart, Mohammed Ali Al-Hakim, held talks. Saudi Arabia and Iraq agreed to cooperate in security and intelligence matters and the state-owned giant, Saudi Aramco, will reportedly assist Iraq's government in exploring the country's western desert for gas.



# United Arab Emirates

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Monday, 15 April—Italy's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economic Development, Luigi Di Maio, led an Italian business delegation to the UAE, comprised of around 350 members, aiming to enhance economic and trade cooperation between Italy and the UAE and support Italian exports. On the occasion, the UAE-Italy Business Forum, focusing on infrastructure, energy, wa-

ter, environment and ITC, with the participation of Sultan bin Saeed Al-Mansouri, UAE's Minister of Economy, was held in Dubai and several Memoranda of Understanding were signed.

Tuesday, 16 April—The UAE and France held a Strategic Dialogue in Paris. The meeting was co-chaired by Maurice Gourdault-Montagne, Secretary-General of the French Foreign Ministry, and Khaldoun Al-Moubarak, President of the Abu Dhabi Executive Affairs Authority, and attended by UAE's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Anwar Gargash, among others. They focused on partnership in various fields, notably economy, renewable energy, nuclear power and space.



Thursday, 18 April—Italy's energy giant, Eni, and the RAK Petroleum Authority, energy company owned by the Government of Ras Al-Khaimah (RAK) Emirate, signed the Exploration and Production Sharing Agreement covering Block A Offshore RAK and the relevant Joint Operating Agreement, in the presence of Saud bin Saqr Al-Qasimi, RAK's ruler and member of the UAE Supreme Council. Eni will have 90% operating interest, while the Ras Al-Khaimah's National Oil Company RAK GAS will have the remaining 10%. The entry into the Ras Al-Khaimah Emirate is another step in Eni's expansion strategy in the Middle East and establishment of its foothold in the UAE.

Thursday, 18 April—UAE's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, travelled to Washington, DC, where he met with the US State Secretary, Mike Pompeo, and White House National Security Advisor, John Bolton. They focused on bilateral cooperation, they reaffirmed support for political solution to the conflict in Yemen and the need for stability in Libya and Sudan. They also highlighted the importance of efforts to counter Iran's regional destabilising efforts and the shaping of the Middle East Strategic Alliance.



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