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The Last Thing to Read this Week

by

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Kingdom of Bahrain



Sunday, 3 June–Production from the newly discovered Khaleej Al-Bahrain basin oil-field will begin within the next five years, Bahrain's Crown Prince Salman Bin Hamad Al-Khalifa announced during the 20th meeting of the Higher Committee for Natural Resources and Economic Security. According to the schedule, several wells will be installed for research and evaluation purposes beginning in October 2018, with this initial phase set to be completed by June 2019. International companies will be selected by December 2019 to work with Bahrain in the oil production phase.

Monday, 4 June–The Ambassador for the China Arab States Cooperation Forum (CASCF) of the Foreign Ministry of China wrapped up a two day visit to Bahrain, during which he met with the Kingdom's Foreign Minister, Skaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al-Khalifa. In the meeting, which was also attended by An Wa'er, the Chinese Ambassador to

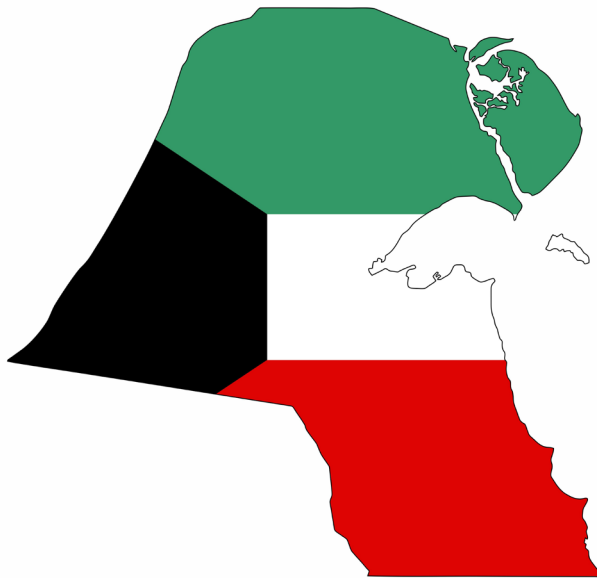
Bahrain, both sides exchanged views on the regional situation and China-Bahrain relations.

Wednesday, 6 June–Bahrain's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Skaikh Khalid Bin Ahmad Al-Khalifa, met with the Ambassador of France, Cecile Longe, the Ambassador of Germany, Alfred Simms-Protz, and the Ambassador of the United Kingdom, Simon Martin, to discuss the Iran nuclear deal. The three Ambassadors presented the Minister with a joint statement issued

by the joint committee of the parties to the nuclear deal, in which the efforts of their countries in preserving the agreement to prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear state were explained. The Minister reiterated Bahrain's support for the strategy adopted by the United States, as Iran continues to be a threat to regional stability and security through its support for terrorist groups, interference in sovereign states in the region and its ballistic missile programme.



State of Kuwait



Monday, 4 June–The Palestinian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Riyad Al-Maliki, visited Kuwait and met with the Emir, Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. During his visit, Maliki delivered a message of ‘thanks and appreciation’ from Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas for Kuwait’s support of the Palestinian people and the country’s position on Palestinian issues in the UN Security Council. Maliki reiterated the importance of his governments continued efforts to unify all Palestinian factions.

Monday, 4 June–Kuwait announced its intentions to extend economic support for Jordan through increased investments and concessional loans. The announcement was made by Kuwait’s Deputy Prime Minister, Anas Al-Saleh, on a visit to Jordan’s King Abdullah.



Sultanate of Oman

Sunday, 3 June–Oman is working on the introduction of a new temporary work permit for expats, which would allow non-Omani workers to be employed for specific specialised jobs over a limited period of time. The professions included are medical, academic, technical, consultancy, expertise and training occupations. The new permits are set to help companies in need of expat specialists. The jobs included will be updated by the Ministry of Labour on a yearly basis to correspond with the needs of the labour market.

Tuesday, 5 June–Oman's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah, met with Qatar's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, for talks in Doha. The pair discussed bilateral relations and how to further develop them.





State of Qatar



Sunday, 3 June–Qatar Petroleum has signed an agreement for the purchase of a 30% stake of two Exxon Mobil affiliates in Argentina. The state-owned company struck the deal with Exxon-Mobil Exploration Argentina S.R.L and Mobil Argentina S.A, which includes access to exploration, drilling and production of unconventional shale oil and gas in Western Argentina. The value of the deal, which marks the first time Qatar Petroleum has invested in Argentina, was not disclosed. Qatar has yet to fulfil the demands brought forward by four Arab states in the ongoing boycott of the country and is forced to look to unconventional partners to sustain itself amid the crisis.

Monday, 4 June–Qatar’s Foreign Minister, Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, responded to an open letter by Saudi’s King Salman to French President Macron from last Friday (2 June). In the letter, the King expressed “profound concern” over ongoing negotiations between

Russia and Qatar over the purchase of an advanced anti-aircraft weapon system. Al-Thani stated that arms acquisition was a sovereign matter and dismissed Saudi threats of military action. According to the Kingdom, the weapon sale would directly threaten Saudi security. Qatar is supported by Saudi Arabia’s arch rival Iran, which has long been attacking the Kingdom through multiple proxies, i.e. the Houthis in Yemen.

Wednesday, 6 June–NATO declined Qatari ambitions of becoming a member

of the military alliance. Qatar’s defense minister, Khalid bin Mohammed Al-Atiyah, previously expressed the country’s ambition of “full (NATO) membership”. A NATO official pointed out that the treaty of the alliance only allows European countries to join. The move can be seen as part of Qatar’s efforts to secure alliances abroad, as the state faces isolation in the Gulf amid accusations of its support for terror groups and violation of the sovereignty of its neighbors.



Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Sunday, 3 June–Saudi Arabia's State news agency SPA reported that King Salman decreed significant changes to the Saudi cabinet. The Ministers for Islamic Affairs and Labour were replaced, and the prince linked to the purchase of a \$450 million Leonardo da Vinci painting depicting Jesus, Badr bin Abdullah, was appointed Minister of Culture. The Kingdom furthermore announced the establishment of a royal commission for Makkah, which will be chaired by the Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Monday, 4 June–Saudi Arabia has issued the first ten driving licenses to women ahead of the lifting of the ban on women drivers on 24 June. The Saudi Information Ministry said in a statement that it expected an additional 2,000 women to receive their licenses in the next week.

Tuesday, 5 June–Saudi Arabia's King Salman received the chairman of the Presidential Council of Libya's Government of National Accord, Fayeze Al-Sarraj, in Makkah. During the meeting, the

Alshikh, during an interview with Bloomberg TV. The move comes as the Kingdom is strengthening its ties with the US. FIFA will select the host country on June 13. Al-Alshikh also announced that the Kingdom was looking to raise between \$800 million and \$1,5 billion through the privatisation of sports clubs. Saudi Arabia will also host three of the next five Italian Super Cups, which had most recently been hosted by Qatar.

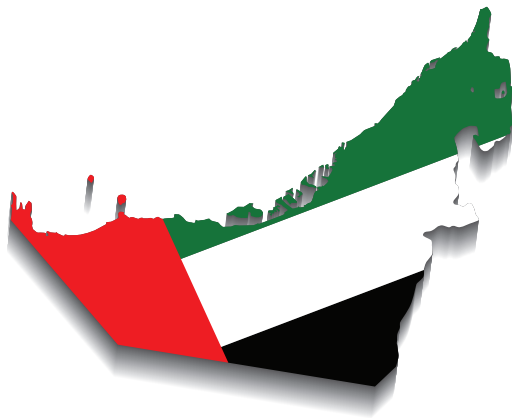
pair discussed the latest developments in Libya, including efforts to achieve security and stability in the country. Prior to meeting the King, Al-Sarraj met Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Jeddah.

Wednesday, 6 June–Saudi Arabia said it would back a joint bid of the US, Canada and Mexico to host the 2026 football world cup. The announcement was made by the head of Saudi Arabia's Sports Authority, Turki Al-





United Arab Emirates



Tuesday, 5 June–The Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Shaikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, met with Saudi Arabia’s Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Jeddah for the first meeting of the Saudi-Emirati Coordination Council. During the meeting, a joint ‘Strategy of Resolve’ for economic, developmental and military integration through 44 joint strategic projects was announced. The implementation has a timeframe of 60 months.

Wednesday, 6 June–The UAE, as well as Qatar, will be sending special troops to Afghanistan to join NATO’s Resolute Support Mission in the country. Afghan media reported that President Ashraf Ghani approved the offer by the Gulf states during a meeting of the National Security Council. The countries had made the offer during NATO’s defense ministerial meeting in Brussels in November 2017. The addition of the UAE and Qatar will bring the NATO mission in Afghanistan up to a 39-nation coalition.



The Arabian Gulf is rapidly becoming a geopolitical pivot. As a result, it is important to understand the internal and international dynamics unfolding in the region and the countries that compose it. We at EGIC are proud to present “The Last Thing to Read this Week” segment which contains a small, carefully selected, batch of the most important events unfolding in the countries of the Arab Gulf to help you map the region’s trends.

