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The Last Thing to Read this Week

by

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Kingdom of Bahrain

Monday, 4 February—Bahrain's Foreign Minister, Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al-Khalifa, along with his counterparts from the Arabian Gulf and other countries of the League of Arab States (LAS) participated in the 5th Ministerial Meeting between the European Union and the LAS, held in Brussels in preparation for the EU-Arab Summit in Egypt (24-25 February 2019). On the sidelines, Bahrain's Foreign Minister met with his Spanish counterpart, Josep Borrell, who stressed his country's interest to continue developing the political and economic ties between Spain and Bahrain.

Monday, 4 February—Bahrain opened its new embassy in Brussels. The ceremony was attended by senior officials, including Bahrain's Foreign Minister, Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al-Khalifa, and Saudi Ara-

bia's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Adel Al-Jubeir. Headquarters, where he participated in a counterterrorism exercise.

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Tuesday, 5 February—Jordan's Crown Prince, Al Hussein bin Abdullah II, arrived in Bahrain for a two-day official visit. During the visit he was received by King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa in the presence of Bahrain's Crown Prince, Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa. They hailed the long-standing ties between Bahrain and Jordan and their commitment to bolstering them further. Prince Al Hussein also visited the Royal Guard

Thursday, 7 February—Bahrain's Foreign Minister, Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al-Khalifa, attended the Ministerial Meeting of the Global Coalition Against Daesh held in Washington DC. On the side, he met with Hungarian Foreign Minister, Péter Szijjártó, who expressed Hungary's keenness to develop relations and cooperation with Bahrain, praising Manama's open policy approach to international cooperation.

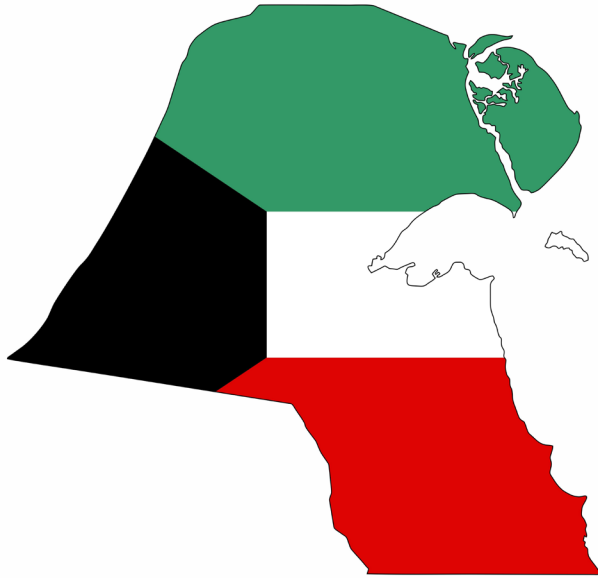


State of Kuwait

Monday, 4 February—During the meeting between Chair of the Kuwait Chamber of Industry and Commerce, Ali Al-Ghanim, and Italian Ambassador to Kuwait, Giuseppe Scognamiglio, Al-Ghanim expressed keenness to improve Kuwaiti economic ties with Italy and attract more Italian investments.

Tuesday, 5 February—Denmark's Parliament Speaker, Pia Kjaersgaard, on a 5 day visit in Kuwait, met with the Speaker of Kuwait's National Assembly, Marzouq Al-Ghanim, to discuss the boosting of bilateral relations and parliamentary coordination. Later, the Chair of the Kuwait Chamber of Industry and Commerce, Ali Al-Ghanim, also touched upon strengthening economic ties between Kuwait and Denmark, while the Danish Speaker called on the Kuwaiti businesses to form strategic partnerships with the Danish ones.

Thursday, 7 February—A delegation of senior Kuwaiti officials, led by Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, held talks with the US State Secretary, Mike Pompeo, in Washington DC, on the occasion of the Ministerial Meeting of the Global Coalition Against Daesh. They discussed the US-Kuwaiti Strategic Partnership, regional and international issues and ways to enhance bilateral ties.





Sultanate of Oman

Monday, 4 February—A 21-member delegation of representatives of leading French public and private sector organisations – the so-called French Business Syndicate, launched in February 2018 to invest in Oman’s Special Economic Zone Authority at Duqm (SEZAD) – arrived in Oman to finalise an economic cooperation agreement. They visited SEZAD, where they were received by its Chairman, Yahya bin Saeed Al-Jabri. On the occasion, a new French company, Colas, was formally added to the Syndicate, complementing four other French companies: CMA CGM, EDF Renewables, FIVES, and SUEZ.

Tuesday, 5 February—An Iranian airline, Qeshm Air, launched the first flight from Muscat to Qeshm, Iran’s largest island located in the Strait of Hormuz. There will be two flights per week between Muscat and Qeshm.

Thursday, 7 February—Oman’s Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers, Fahd bin Mahmoud Al-Said, received the Foreign Minister of Cyprus, Nikos Christodoulides, in Muscat. They reviewed bilateral relations and focused on how to strengthen them in various fields. They also focused on recent regional and international developments.





State of Qatar

Monday, 4 February—The Qatari Emir, Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani arrived in Kuwait to hold official talks with Kuwaiti Emir, Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The following day, the Kuwaiti envoy, Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs, Mohammed Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, personally delivered a letter from the Kuwaiti Emir to the King of Saudi Arabia, Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, which was received by Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Salman.

Thursday, 7 February—Qatar's Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr Ahmed bin Hassan Al-Hammadi, was received by his Italian counterpart, Elisabetta Belloni, in Rome. During the meeting they discussed the latest regional and international developments along with bilateral relations and ways to enhance them.

Wednesday, 6 February—Qatar obtained the first delivery of the 36 Rafale fighter jets from the French manufacturer Dassault. The ceremony in French city of Merignac was attended by Qatar's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs, Dr Khalid bin Mohamed Al-Attiah, who later met with the French Minister of the Armed Forces, Florence Barley, to discuss bilateral cooperation in military and defence and how to bolster them.





Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Wednesday, 6 February—Albania's Prime Minister, Edi Rama, was received by King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud. They discussed ways to strengthen bilateral ties and witnessed the signing of two agreements—on cooperation in air services and on avoiding double taxation and preventing income tax evasion—and a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in tourism. Albania's Prime Minister also discussed development cooperation and investment opportunities with the Chair of the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage, Ahmed Al-Khateeb.

Wednesday, 6 February—Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Salman, met with the newly appointed Secretary General of the United Nations' World Tourism Organization, Zurab Pololikashvili. Tourism is one of the key focuses of the Vision 2030 to diversify the Kingdom's economy.

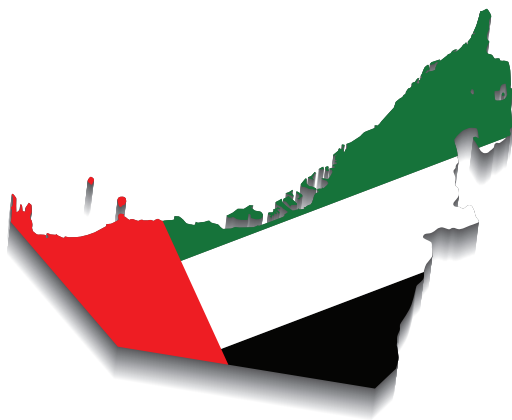
Friday, 8 February—Saudi Arabia's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Adel Al-Jubeir, met with the US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, in Washington, DC on the sidelines of the Ministerial Meeting of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. During the meeting they discussed strategic partnership between Saudi Arabia and the United States and the latest regional developments. Mr Al-Jubeir also met with Ministers of several European countries, including Poland, Germany, France, Sweden and the Netherlands.





United Arab Emirates

Sunday, 3 February—Pope Francis arrived in Abu Dhabi for the first visit ever to the Arabian Peninsula by head of the Catholic Church. During the two-day visit the Pontiff met with the UAE leaders as well as the Grand Imam of the Al-Azhar in Egypt, Ahmed El-Tayeb, and promoted interfaith dialogue and religious tolerance, while also calling for more rights for Christian minorities in the Middle East. On the occasion, Pope Francis and El-Tayeb signed the Human Fraternity Declaration, which promotes religious diversity and interfaith cooperation and condemns wars, injustice, persecution and torture.



Wednesday, 6 February—The Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, Mohamed bin Zayed, met with Eritrea's President, Isaias Afwerki, to discuss the strengthening of ties and enhancing cooperation between Eritrea and the UAE. The UAE helped negotiate peace between Eritrea and Ethiopia signed in September 2018, which ended two decades of hostilities between the two countries.

Wednesday, 6 February—The state-owned Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) awarded the contract for Construction of Artificial Islands for Ghasha Concession Development at its sour gas offshore fields to the Emirati-based National Marine Dredging Company. The mega-project, which will include 10 new islands and 2 causeways among others, will cost over \$1.36 billion and should be finished in 38 months.



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.

