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10 - 13 December



The Last Thing to Read this Week

by

NIKOLA ZUKALOVÁ



Kingdom of Bahrain



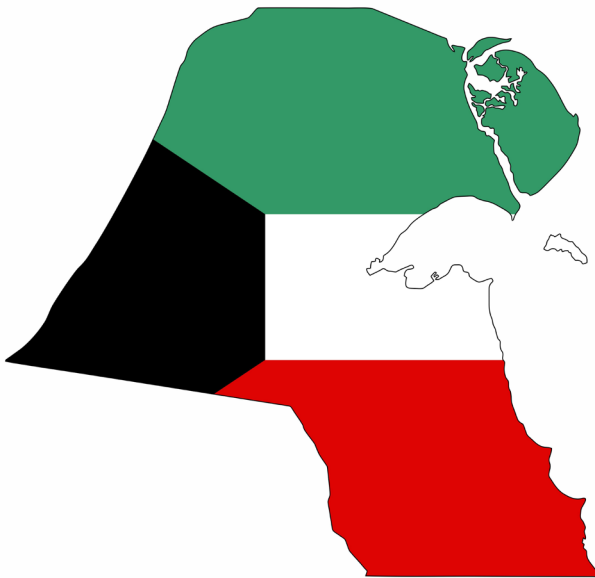
Wednesday, 12 December—Bahrain's King, Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa, opened the first session of the 5th legislative term of the National Assembly following the Parliamentary elections held earlier this month. During his speech, King Hamad named the main priorities of the Kingdom, highlighting the diversification of the economy and some necessary reforms, including in regards to the pension funds' sustainability. Later, King Hamad congratulated Fouzia Zainal on being elected as the first female chairwoman of Kingdom's National Assembly.

Tuesday, 11 December—The US delegation, led by the former New York City Mayor, Rudolph Giuliani, was received by King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa and other senior Bahraini officials, including the Crown Prince, Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa, and Foreign Minister, Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al-Khalifa. During the talks both sides praised the longstanding Bahrain-US relations and reiterated their continued interests to further enhance them.

Wednesday, 12 December—Bahrain's Crown Prince, Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa, received former Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway and President of the Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights, Kjell Magne Bondevik, to discuss ways of strengthening cooperation between the two Kingdoms and the work of the Norway-Bahrain Business Council, formed to promote trade cooperation between Manama and Oslo.



State of Kuwait



Wednesday, 12 December—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, received the Undersecretary-General of the UN Counterterrorism Office, Vladimir Ivanovich, and his delegation to discuss boosting coordination and enhancing regional and international cooperation to fight against terrorism as both sides already cooperate in sharing experience and information. During the meeting, Mr Ivanovich praised Kuwait's counterterrorism efforts.



Sultanate of Oman

Wednesday, 12 December—Muscat hosted the 84th session of the Executive Council of the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States (ABEGS) under the patronage of Oman's Minister of Education and the Head of the 25th General Conference, Dr Madiha bint Ahmed Al-Shibani.





State of Qatar



Wednesday, 12 December—Prime Minister and Interior Minister, Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al-Thani, and Iraq's Minister of Trade, Dr Mohammed Hashim Abdul Majeed Al-Ani, reviewed bilateral relations and ways how to enhance them, particularly in economy and trade. On Tuesday, the Iraqi Minister co-chaired the 6th session of the Joint Qatari-Iraqi Committee for Economic, Trade and Technical Cooperation, where Qatari Minister of Commerce and Industry, Ali bin Ahmed Al-Kuwari, called on Iraq to join Qatar, Iran and Turkey and sign the 2017 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Facilitating Transport and Transit Traffic to Strengthen Economic and Trade Cooperation. A number of MoUs were signed on the occasion, notably on establishing the Qatari-Iraqi Business Council.

Thursday, 13 December—Qatar and People's Republic of China held the 1st round of strategic dialogue in Beijing, during which they discussed cultural, economic, security and tourism. Both sides highlighted the need for strengthening their partnership and intensifying coordination of positions on regional issues as well as cooperation in international organisations. They announced an operational plan for cooperation on the Belt and Road Initiative and the exemption of visa requirements for the Qatari and Chinese citizens from 21 December. The next round of the strategic dialogue will be held in 2019 in Doha.



Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Sunday, 9 December—Riyadh hosted the 39th Summit of the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) attended by the Arab Gulf leaders, except Oman's Sultan Qaboos, who was represented by Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers, Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud Al-Said, and the Qatari Emir, who decided not to attend and sent Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Sultan bin Saad Al-Muraikhi, instead. Saudi Arabia's King Salman called for unity among the GCC members to face challenges posed by terrorism and Iran.

Wednesday, 12 December—During the Foreign Ministers' Meeting of the Arab and African Coastal States of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden held in Riyadh, the representatives from Egypt, Djibouti, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen discussed the establishment of a body for cooperation to ensure security and safety and protect maritime trade in the Red Sea and in the Gulf of Aden—both vital strategic shipping routes. The representatives were later received by King Salman. Experts should reportedly meet soon in Cairo to discuss the technicalities.

Wednesday, 12 December—King Salman received President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Arif Alvi. During the meeting they reviewed Saudi-Pakistani relations and discussed ways how to enhance them, along with the recent regional developments.

Thursday, 13 December—United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres, joined the last day of the UN-sponsored Yemen peace talks in Sweden and an-

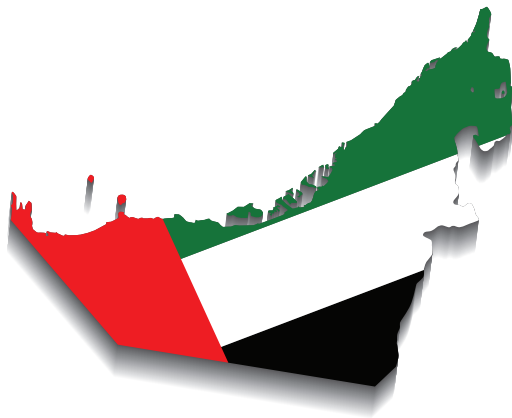
nounced the outcomes. The Yemeni warring parties have agreed on prisoners' exchange, reopening of the Sana'a airport and resuming the oil and gas exports. On Thursday, they shook hands on a cease-fire in Hodeidah and a withdrawal of troops from the Red Sea port. The next talks are scheduled for late January 2019.





United Arab Emirates

Tuesday, 11 December—Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, received Serbia's President, Aleksandar Vučić, to discuss cooperation and ways of boosting relations, particularly in economy, investments and development, as well as issues of mutual interest.



Wednesday, 12 December—Dubai hosted the 11th Arab Strategic Forum, where leading policy-makers, analysts and other important public figures gathered to discuss global economic, political and security developments and the future scenarios to provide an understanding of the economic and political outlook for the Arab region and the world. The forum was attended by Mohamed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, UAE's Vice President and Ruler of Dubai, and Mohamed bin Abdullah Al-Gergawi, Minister of Cabinet Affairs and the Future and Chairman of the Arab Strategy Forum, among other senior officials.



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.

