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# Arab Gulf

C O U N T R Y  
B U L L E T I N S  
June 10 - 14



The Last Thing to Read this Week

*by*

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## Kingdom of Bahrain

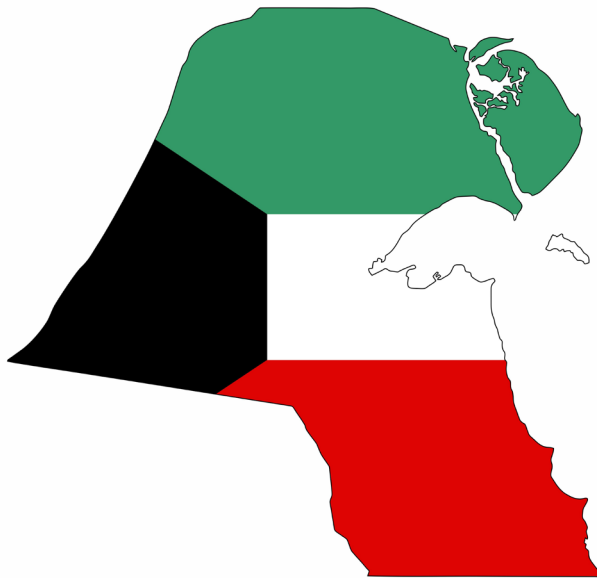


Monday, 11 June–Bahrain’s King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa passed a law preventing members of banned political parties, felons and convicts from running in parliamentary elections scheduled for autumn. The law is an amendment to the Political Rights Law and set to prevent individuals who would ‘intentionally harm or disrupt’ the parliamentary process from being elected.

Tuesday, 12 June–The Central Bank of Bahrain has granted the operator of Palmex, a Dubai-based cryptocurrency exchange, a regulatory sandbox license, creating a virtual safe space for investors to ‘trial and refine innovative products, services, platforms and business models’ in a controlled environment. Palmex has many international trading partners, including bitcoin and Dubaicoins DBIX. Palmex is powered by Arabiachain, a Dubai-based venture company.



## State of Kuwait



Tuesday, 12 June–The Emir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah held talks with King Abdullah of Jordan, discussing bilateral partnership and regional developments. The King expressed appreciation of Kuwait's support of Jordan in all aspects, and especially the State's willingness to support Jordan's economy. Both reiterated the importance of finding political solutions for regional crises and combatting terror through a holistic approach.

Thursday, 14 June–The Dutch 'Deerns Group' was awarded a contract to implement various technical facilities in and around Kuwait International Airport. The group specialises in conceptual design consultancy, engineering and constructions services, and will execute the \$35.3 million project over the course of five years in cooperation with local partner Al-Nabhan Engineering Consultancy.



## Sultanate of Oman

Tuesday, 12 June–Oman is set to introduce relaxed visa regulations for Indian citizens, which will grant unsponsored tourist visa on arrival to Indians holding valid entry visas for the United States, Canada, Australia, United Kingdom, Japan and Schengen countries, or reside there. The regulations will extend to the spouse and children of the person concerned, even if they do not hold such a visa themselves. The announcement comes after massive visa changes were introduced in May, which will help specialists in specific fields who seek to work in the Sultanate.

Thursday, 14 June–Oman will send satellites into orbit by 2019, according to Dr. Ahmed bin Mohammed bin Salim al Futaisi, Minister of Transport and Communications. The Sultanate will initially send two medium-sized satellites, one being a cubesat, designed to detect light pollution. The Oman Astronomical Society (OAS) is heading the project and will be responsible for supervision.





## State of Qatar



Monday, 11 June–Qatar announced it would be taking the UAE to the UN International Court of Justice (ICJ) over what it calls human rights violations brought about by the UAE-initiated blockade of Qatar, in the ongoing Arab Gulf crisis. The accusations include the violation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), which includes discrimination on the basis of nationality. Both countries are signatories. The move comes in context of Qatar attempting to secure international allies and portray the country as the victim of the crisis. Qatar has not made attempts to alter its behavior of financing terrorism and interfering in the domestic affairs of its Gulf neighbours.

Wednesday, 13 June–Qatar ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), joining

fellow GCC members Bahrain and Kuwait, Amnesty International reports. Whereas the step is positive, Amnesty criticises that the move, seen in context of effort to improve Qatar's image ahead of hosting the World Cup 2022, came with multiple 'reservations'. Qatar, i.e., did not fully recognise equal rights for women, and announced it would interpret 'punishment' according to the Islamic Sharia. The reservations also included several discriminatory measures regard-

ing the rights of migrant workers. Wednesday, 13 June–Qatar announced it would donate \$500 million to Jordan, announced during a meeting between King Abdullah of Jordan and Qatar's Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani in Amman.



## Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Sunday, 10 June–Saudi Arabia's King Salman met with Jordan's King Abdullah, as well as Kuwait's Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Vice President of the UAE, Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, for a summit on the economic situation of Jordan in Makkah. The summit resulted in a \$2.5 billion, five-year aid program, to help the Jordanian economy, which has been strained since the 2011 Arab Spring and the effects of the Syrian war, as well as the country hosting a large number of refugees from Iraq, Syria and Palestine.

Sunday, 10 June–Saudi Arabia intercepted a missile fired from Yemen, aimed at the southern city of Jizan. On Saturday, three civilians were killed in Jizan after a Houthi missile, fired from Yemen, hit the city. The Iran-backed Houthis regularly attack Saudi targets from Yemen.

Wednesday, 13 June–Saudi Arabia will introduce a national strategy for people with disabilities, as well as develop a national program for diagnosis and

Thursday, 14 June–The Saudi Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Salman (MbS), will meet Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow, for the opening match of the FIFA Football World Cup between the two countries. On the sidelines, the pair is set to discuss OPEC matters and the increase of oil output in efforts to stabilise the global oil prices. Saudi Arabia's Energy Minister, Khalid Al-Falih, met with his counterpart, Alexander Novak, on Wednesday and Thursday, to discuss the same is-



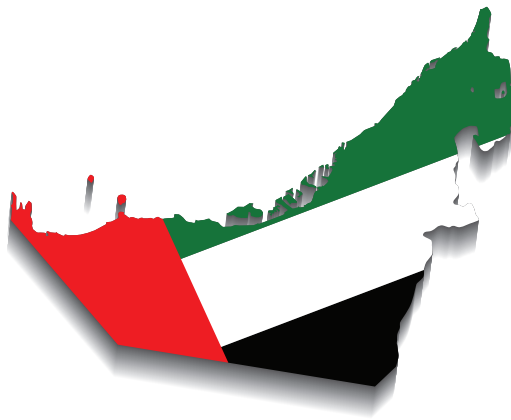
classification of disabilities. The announcement was made by the Saudi Minister of Labour and Social Development, Tamim Al-Rammah, at the 11th session of the UN Conference of States Parties to the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The system will include 23 initiatives, aimed to provide social protection and encourage the complete integration of people with disabilities into society as well as the job market.



sues. The discussions come as US sanctions are set to hit Iran and the crumbling Venezuelan petroleum industry threaten the stability of oil prices.



## United Arab Emirates



Thursday, 14 June– The Arab Coalition in Yemen has begun the mission to liberate the strategic port city of Hodeidah from the Iran-backed Houthi rebels. The operation began on Wednesday, and reportedly focused on the area around the airport and southern parts of the governorate. After the first day of fighting, four UAE soldiers were reported dead, as well as at least 20 Houthi rebels. Saudi Arabia and the UAE also developed a five-point action plan to secure minimal humanitarian impact of the operation, including the establishment of a shipping lane from several Gulf cities to Hodeidah, and the distribution of food and aid supplies to civilians, as well as medication and staff to hospitals. Hodeidah is the largest port still operating in Yemen and crucial for the supply of humanitarian aid to the country.

Thursday, 14 June–The UAE and Russia have reached an agreement for mutual visa requirement exemptions. The move comes as the countries increase bilateral cooperation, including in areas of tourism, investment and trade.



*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.*

