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C O U N T R Y
B U L L E T I N S
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The Last Thing to Read this Week

by

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Kingdom of Bahrain

Wednesday, 13 March—The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cyprus, Nikos Christodoulides, visited Bahrain and met with his Bahraini counterpart, Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al-Khalifa, as well as Bahrain's Deputy King, Prince Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa. They reviewed bilateral relations and ways to enhance cooperation and discussed regional and international issues of common concern.

Wednesday, 13 March—Bahrain's Crown Prince, Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa, received the United Kingdom's Defence Senior Advisor on the Middle East, Lieutenant General Sir John Lorimer, in the presence of the Bahrain Defence Force's Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Theyab bin Saqer Al-Noaimi, to discuss various security issues and bilateral strategic cooperation aimed at ensuring regional stability. Lt Gen Lotimer

also held talks with Bahrain's Prime Minister, Khalifa bin Salman Al-Khalifa, and Interior Minister, General Rashid bin Abdullah Al-Khalifa.

Thursday, 14 March—The United Nations' Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, appointed Ms Khawla Matar from Bahrain as a Deputy Special Envoy for Syria. Ms Matar has extensive experiences working in different positions at the United Nations.

Thursday, 14 March—A French business delegation led by the President of MEDEF International and the CEO of Fives, Frederic Sanchez, was received by Bahrain's Minister of Finance and National Economy, Salman bin Khalifa Al-Khalifa, in the presence of the Chair of the French Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Bahrain, Reem Jalali, to discuss opportunities for strengthening cooperation between French and Bahraini private sectors, with focus on trade and investments. From Bahrain the French delegation continued to Oman to explore



investment opportunities in the Sultanate's Special Economic Zone in Duqm.

Thursday, 14 March—The senior officials from Germany's Foreign Office, Dr Philipp Ackermann, the Director General for Africa, Latin America, Near and Middle East, and Dr Christian Buck, the Regional Director for the Near and Middle East and North Africa, met with Bahrain's Assistant Foreign Minister, Abdulla bin Faisal bin Jabur Al-Doseri, in Berlin to review the longstanding relations between Germany and Bahrain and to discuss ways to strengthen cooperation.

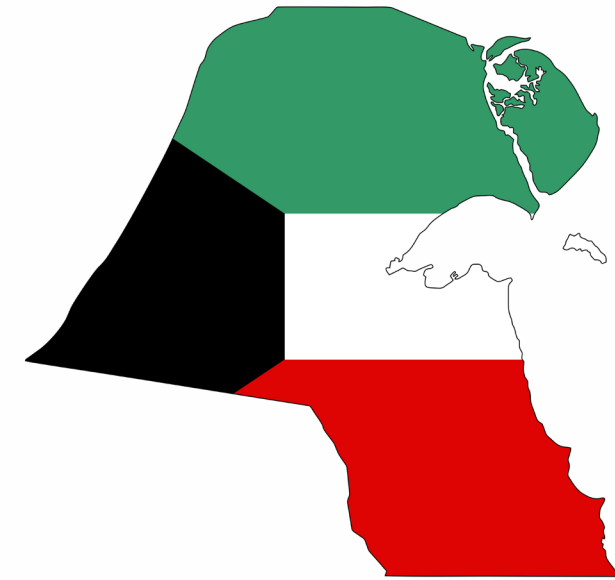


State of Kuwait

Tuesday, 12 March—The Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Dr Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani, and his accompanying delegation visited Kuwait, where they met with Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and other senior officials to discuss the strengthening of the GCC cooperation and review recent regional and international developments.

Thursday, 14 March—On the sidelines of the 3rd Conference on Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region, co-organised by the European Union and the United Nations in Brussels, the Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Sa-

Friday, 15 March—The Kuwaiti delegation, headed by Kuwait's Minister of Finance, Nayef Al-Hajraf, arrived in Athens, Greece to participate in the two-day Meeting of the Kuwait-Greece Ministerial Committee for Economic and Technical Cooperation. During the visit, Mr Al-Hajraf held separate talks with Greece's Deputy Prime Minister and Economy Minister, Yannis Dragasakis, and Greece's Finance Minister, Euclid Tsakalotos, focusing on the ways to strengthen bilateral economic cooperation and on the developments related to the financial reform in Greece.



bah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, held talks with the United Nations' Special Envoy for Syria, Geir Pedersen. The Foreign Minister of Kuwait also met separately with the Prime Minister of Lebanon, Saad Hariri, and the Foreign Minister of Jordan, Ayman Al-Safadi.

Friday, 15 March—The Kuwait's National Guard began joint military exercise 'Taawun4' (Cooperation 4) with the Bahrain's National Guard, held in Bahrain between 15-21 March, aimed at strengthening military coordination and combat readiness between the two Gulf countries, while also enhancing mutual exchange of expertise, particularly in counterterrorism.



Friday, 15 March—The United States' Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, will travel to Beirut, Jerusalem, and Kuwait City between 19-23 March. The visit to Kuwait comes as a compensation for the cancelled visit by the US delegation in January. The 3rd US-Kuwait Strategic Dialogue will focus on bilateral cooperation, particularly in trade and investments, defence, counterterrorism, and cybersecurity. Mr Pompeo will also discuss regional issues, such as Syria, Yemen, the Gulf Crisis and the Middle East Strategic Alliance (MESA) with Kuwait's senior officials.



Sultanate of Oman

Thursday, 14 March—The Secretary General of Oman's Foreign Ministry, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad bin Hamoud Al-Busaidi, and the Secretary General of France's Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, Maurice Gourdault-Montagne, held political consultations in Paris. They focused mainly on economic cooperation, particularly on opportunities in investments, trade and tourism, among other areas.

Thursday, 14 March—The Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO) and the United States' Navy concluded the 5-day joint naval drills 'Bright Lightning,' aimed at improving combat readiness and experience of the RAFO.

Thursday, 14 March—The Head of the Omani Authority for Partnership for Development (OAPD), Dr Dhafir bin Awadh Al-Shanfari, and Gerhard Unterganschnigg, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Steyr Arms, the Austrian small arms manufacturer, signed a deal to establish the Steyr Service and Maintenance Centre (SSMC). The Steyr company will provide training, expertise, equipment and tools to Oman for advanced maintenance of its weapons, contributing to the technical advancement of the Royal Army of Oman.





State of Qatar

Wednesday, 13 March—The state-owned energy major, Qatar Petroleum (QP), signed an agreement with Italy's oil giant, ENI, to acquire a 30% participating interest in the Tarfaya Offshore Shallow Petroleum Agreement, which comprises 12 exploration blocks offshore Morocco. On Monday, the two companies signed another partnership agreement, allowing the QP to acquire a 25.5% participating interest in the Block A5-A offshore Mozambique.





Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Sunday, 10 March—Saudi Arabia's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Adel Al-Jubeir, received the Counter-Terrorism Coordinator of the European Union, Gilles de Kerchove. On Wednesday, The Secretary General of the Muslim World League, Dr Mohammed bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, also held talks with the EU's Counter-Terrorism Coordinator in Riyadh, focusing mainly on ways to tackle extremism in the EU and Arab world.

Monday, 11 March—Saudi Arabia's King Salman received Lebanon's Prime Minister, Saad Hariri, in Riyadh. During the meeting, they discussed ways to strengthen bilateral relations and recent developments in Lebanon.

Thursday, 14 March—Saudi Arabia's Director General of Border Guards, Admiral Awad Eid Al-Balawi, led the Saudi delegation to Bahrain to attend the Joint Security Committee. Admiral Al-Balawi also held talks with Bahrain's Interior Minister, General Rashid bin Abdullah Al-Khalifa, about the reinforcement of coordination and cooperation between the Saudi Border Guards and Bahrain's Coast Guards to safeguard marine security and safety.

Friday, 15 March—A Saudi delegation, led by the Kingdom's Minister of Commerce and Investment, Majid bin Abdullah Al-Qassabi, travelled to Iraq to meet with several Iraqi officials, including the President, Barham Salih. They discussed opportunities for enhancing trade and investment relations, in preparation for the Saudi-Iraqi Coordination Council's meeting, which will be held in Iraq next month. Following the Saudi delegation's visit, Iraq's border crossing authority announced that the Arar border crossing between Iraq and Saudi Arabia should reopen after almost 30 years in October.

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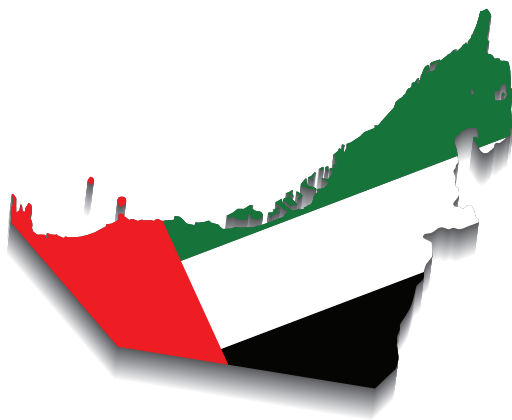
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United Arab Emirates

Tuesday, 12 March—The UAE and Oman were among the 10 new jurisdictions, added by the 28 EU Member states' Finance Ministers to the new expanded list of tax havens. The blacklist functions on the basis of naming and shaming mechanism, no sanctions have been put in place so far, and results in stricter controls on transactions with the European Union. The blacklisted jurisdiction can be removed from the list after their commitment to change their tax rules so they do not favour tax evasion. The EU has recently come under fire for its opaque methodology in selecting countries to add to such lists and for its neglect of EU territories (re: Isle of Mann) that are based on



providing tax sanctuaries.

Thursday, 14 March—The Special Olympics World Games Abu Dhabi 2019 hosted by the UAE between 14-21 March were officially inaugurated. The first ever Special Olympics World Games organised in the Middle East will host around 7000 athletes. The opening ceremony was attended by senior officials from the UAE, including Mohamed bin Zayed, the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, the region, including Bahrain's

King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa, and around the world.



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.

