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B U L L E T I N S

23 - 28 December



The Last Thing to Read this Week

by

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Kingdom of Bahrain

Sunday, 23 December—Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa, on his visit to the UAE, met with Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, the Vice President, Prime Minister and the Ruler of Dubai, and Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince and Deputy Supreme Commander of UAE's Armed Forces. During the meeting they reviewed their bilateral relations and ways to continue to develop them.

Monday, 24 December—Bahrain's Ministry of Foreign Affairs summoned a diplomat from the Iraqi Embassy in response to the participation of former Vice President of Iraq, Noori Al-Maliki, at the inauguration of the 14 February Youth Coalition office in Baghdad, which is blacklisted as a terrorist organisation by Bahrain, and Maliki's hostile statements, which Bahrain stressed, represented unacceptable interference in the Kingdom's internal affairs.

Thursday, 27 December—The Royal Bahrain Naval Force concluded joint military maritime drills with a contingent from Pakistan's Navy.

Thursday, 27 December—Bahrain's Crown Prince, Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa, received the Vice President of Public Affairs of Huawei Technologies, Mark Xueman, in the presence of Transportation and Telecommunication's Minister, Kamal bin Ahmed Mohammed.

Thursday, 27 December—14 Bahrainis were convicted by the High Criminal Court of the establishment, joining and funding of a terrorist group. The cell, linked to the 14 February movement, blacklisted as a terrorist group, carried out terrorist assaults, illegal demonstrations, rioting, and handling of explosive devices in relation to attacking policemen and police station in Sitra. Punishments included one life sentence, several-years in jail for most of the offenders, nine revoked citizenships and some fines.



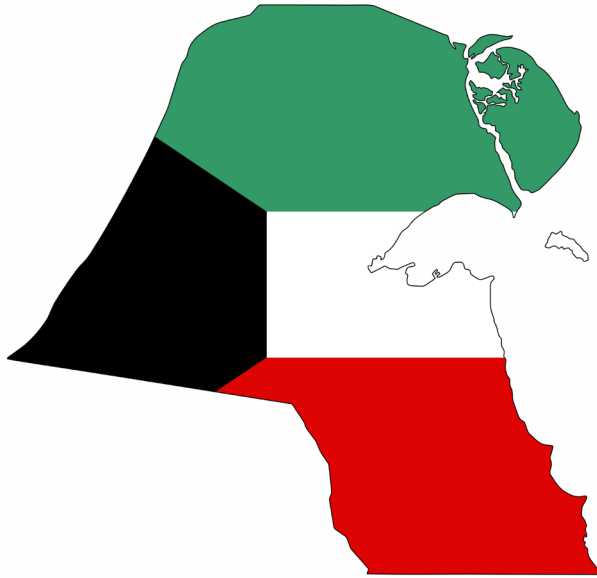


Crown Prince Salman emphasised the importance of the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for Bahrain's economic growth, pointing to Bahrain's Vision 2030 commitment to enable private sector investment and innovation.



State of Kuwait

Sunday, 23 December—Bahrain's Minister of Finance and National Economy, Salman bin Khalifa Al-Khalifa, arrived in Kuwait to promote enhanced economic cooperation and was received by Kuwait's Emir, Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Crown Prince, Nawaf Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and Prime Minister, Jabir Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, as well as Kuwait's Minister of Finance, Dr Nayef bin Falah Al-Hajraf. During the meetings the officials reviewed bilateral relations and ways to boost economic and development cooperation between Kuwait and Bahrain.



Tuesday, 25 December—Following the resignations of several Ministers, Kuwait sworn in new Cabinet members. Dr Khaled Al-Fadhel was appointed as Kuwait's Oil Minister and Minister of Electricity and Water; Dr Fahad Al-Afasi is now Justice Minister and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs; Saad Al-Kharaz became Minister of Social Affairs; Fahad Al-Shaala was appointed Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs; and Miriam Al-Aqeel became new Minister of State for Economic Affairs. Moreover, Khalid Al-Roudhan, is now Commerce and Industry Minister and Minister of State for Services Affairs; while Dr Jenan Ramadan became Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Housing Affairs.

Thursday, 27 December—Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister, Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah received Saudi Arabia's Deputy Interior Minister, Dr Nasser bin Abdulaziz Al-Daoud, to discuss issues of mutual concern, with particular focus on strengthening security cooperation.



Sultanate of Oman

Monday, 24 December—Tethys Oil, a Swedish oil company, entered into an agreement to acquire a 2% stake in Block 53 onshore Oman, which holds Oman's largest producing oilfield Mukhaizna, from the Total E&P Oman, a subsidiary of the French oil giant Total SA. The deal is now subject to government's approval.

Wednesday, 26 December—Omani delegation, led by Chairman of the State Council, Dr Yahya bin Mahfoudh Al-Mantheri, arrived in Khartoum, where they met with Dr Oman Suleiman Waneis, Chairman of Sudan's Council of States, to discuss strengthening of parliamentary cooperation between Oman and Sudan as well as Sudan's Foreign Minister, Al-Dardiri Mohamed Ahmed to review relations between Oman and Sudan and ways to develop them.





State of Qatar

Monday, 24 December—Australia surpassed Qatar as the world's largest exporter of liquified natural gas (LNG).

Monday, 24 December—Qatar's Armed Forces' Chief of Staff, Lieutenant-General Ghanem bin Shaheen Al-Ghanem, met with the United Kingdom's Defence Attaché to Qatar, Colonel Simon Blake to review bilateral military relations.

Wednesday, 26 December—In January 2019, Qatar will launch a new luxury ferry service connecting Doha with Oman and Kuwait in just 20-25 hours. The Grand Ferry can carry hundreds of cars and passengers and possibly some cargo in the future. Its owner, Faisal Mohamed Al-Sulaiti, admitted the possibility to later expand the service to other destinations to meet demand.





Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Sunday, 23 December—A Saudi delegation, led by Turki bin Mohammed bin Fahd Al-Saud, King Salman's Advisor commenced an official two-day visit to Chechnya. During the meeting with Chechnya's President, Ramzan Kadyrov, they reviewed bilateral relations, discussed issues of common interest and explored ways how to implement bilateral agreements. They also discussed cooperation on implementing investment projects in various fields, including tourism, transport, agriculture and healthcare. Mr Kadyrov highlighted his interest to develop closer ties with the Kingdom.

Monday, 24 December—Saudi Arabia's King Salman received Dr Ahmed Al-Tayeb, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar in Egypt. Al-Tayeb lauded Saudi Arabia's service to Muslims and Islam and highlighted the need for strengthening cooperation between Egypt

and the Kingdom to unite all Muslims to face the current challenges. On Tuesday, Egypt's President, Abdul Fattah Al-Sisi, received the Chairman of the Saudi Shura Council, Dr Abdullah bin Mohammed bin Ibrahim Al-Sheikh, in Cairo, to review the Saudi-Egyptian strategic alliance and discuss strengthening cooperation.

Thursday, 27 December—Saudi Arabia's King Salman issued royal decrees or-

dering Cabinet's reshuffle, restructuring some bodies, notably the Council of Political and Security Affairs, and the Council of Economic and Development Affairs, and appointing new governors. For instance, Ibrahim Al-Assaf replaced Adel Al-Jubeir as Foreign Minister; Abdullah bin Bandar bin Abdulaziz, became Minister of National Guard; Turki Al-Shabanah, is the new Minister of Media. Moreover, Khaled Al-Harbi became head of Public Security; Musaed Al-Aiban is





the new National Security Adviser; and Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki Al-Faisal, new Chair of the General Sports Authority, replaced Turki Al-Asheikh, who was in turn appointed as Chair of the General Entertainment Authority.

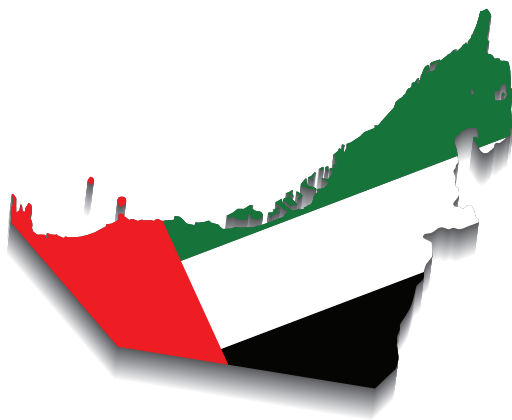
Friday, 28 December—Royal Saudi Naval Forces prepare for ‘Red Wave 1,’ the joint military naval drills with Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Sudan, Yemen and observers from Somalia, which will begin in early January. The exercises aim to enhance maritime security for the countries adjacent to the Red Sea, exchange combat experiences and strengthen military cooperation among those states.

Friday, 28 December—Italy’s Prime Minister, Giuseppe Conte, announced that his government will discontinue arms sales to Saudi Arabia.



United Arab Emirates

Tuesday, 25 December—In addition to the visit of Bahrain's King Hamad, Bahrain's Minister of Finance and National Economy, Salman bin Khalifa Al-Khalifa, arrived in the UAE. He was received by the Deputy Ruler of Dubai and UAE's Minister of Finance, Hamdan bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, and promoted strengthening of cooperation, particularly in economy, and identifying new opportunities for cooperation, with focus on investments and trade. Later, the Bahraini Minister also met with the UAE's Minister of State for Financial Affairs, Obaid bin Humaid Al-Tayer, to review bilateral economic and trade relations and explore new opportunities.



Wednesday, 26 December—A few days after the peace talks between the United States and the Afghan Taliban were held in the UAE in the presence of Saudi Arabia's and Pakistani officials, the Taliban met with Iranian representatives. The meeting between Iran and Taliban was for the first time publicly confirmed by Tehran, which has been suspected of providing military training, financial support and weapons to the Taliban.

Thursday, 27 December—The UAE reopened its embassy in Damascus after 7 years in a bid to normalise ties with Syria and prevent 'non-Arab interference.' This step demonstrates the warming of ties between Syria and Arab states as they step up efforts to find a political solution to the Syrian war, while curbing Iran's growing influence in the country.



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.

