



# Arab Gulf Country Bulletins



**26 - 31 May 2019**

by

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# Kingdom of Bahrain

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Monday, 27 May—King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa held a phone call with Jordan's King Abdullah II ibn Al-Hussein. They affirmed strong bilateral relations and stressed keenness on expanding joint cooperation in all fields. Bahrain will host in June the economic conference 'Peace to Prosperity' on Palestine between 25-26 June to discuss the Middle East Peace Plan, which will focus on encouraging investments in the Palestinian territories, omitting political aspects of the deal. Jordan's King has

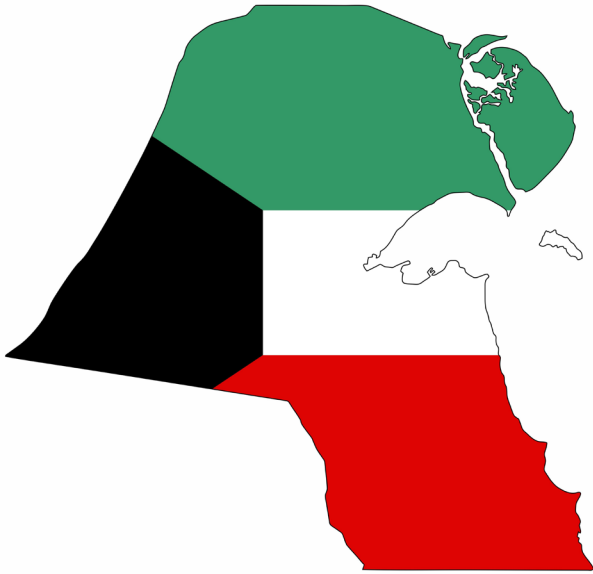
not yet confirmed his participation. So far, the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Qatar have confirmed their participation.

Thursday, 30 May—Bahrain's National Assembly passed the state budget for 2019-2020, which aims to pursue responsible fiscal policy in line with the Fiscal Balance Programme and to further reduce the budget deficit to 4.7% of GDP in 2019 and 3.9% in 2020, while ensuring economic growth, job creation and services for citizens. Bahrain's budget deficit in 2018 was lower than the projected 9.8% by a third, at 6.2%.



# State of Kuwait

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Thursday, 30 May—During the emergency summit of the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries in Makkah, Kuwait's Emir Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah called on the other leaders to overcome their differences and to restore the GCC unity to tackle together the challenges to regional stability and security, citing the conflicts in Yemen, Syria, and Libya and uncertain situations in Sudan and Algeria as issues in need

of resolution. He stated that 'wisdom should prevail and dialogue should be the only way' to avoid another war in the region and suggested to communicate with Iran and explain clearly that 'many factors and wrong practices' have led to the heightened tensions.



# Sultanate of Oman

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Monday, 27 May—Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister, Abbas Araqchi, toured three Gulf countries, Oman, Kuwait and Qatar, to explore channels of communications with the United States and to convey a message from Iran's Foreign Minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif, on the regional situation and challenges. In Oman, he met with Yousef bin Alawi, Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs, and Badr Al-Busaidi, Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In Qatar

he held talks with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, and in Kuwait Araqchi met with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Sabah Al Khalid Al Sabah. Araqchi said that Iran was ready to create regional mechanisms to engage in dialogue and constructive cooperation with the Arab Gulf countries.



# State of Qatar

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Sunday, 26 May—Qatar Sports Investments, a state-owned authority, has been reportedly in talks to purchase a stake in the English football club Leeds United. The deal would allow Qatar to enter English football for the first time and expand its stakes in European football clubs as it has already controlled France's Paris Saint-Germain.

Wednesday, 29 May—Qatar's Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Abdullah bin Nasser Al-Thani, arrived in Saudi Arabia to participate at the three

summits—the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Arab League emergency summits, and the regular 14th Summit of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)—held in Makkah between 30-31 May, amid the heightening regional tensions. The visit marked the highest-ranking Qatari official's visit to the Kingdom since the commencement of the 2017 Gulf Crisis.



# Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

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Tuesday, 28 May—The United Nations' (UN) Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice unanimously ratified resolutions by Saudi Arabia targeting terrorism, child exploitation and cybercrime during its 28th session at the UN headquarters in Vienna. Saudi Arabia called on the member states to exchange experiences on raising awareness and reporting cases

of child sexual abuse and exploitation, to provide assistance in capacity-building, awareness-raising, exchange experiences and techniques to combat cybercrime, and to enhance coordination and cooperation between states and organisations at regional and international levels to fight terrorism and assist in the prosecution of terrorism cases.

Monday, 27 May—The Arab Coalition Spokesman, Colonel Turki Al-Maliki, said that the Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen have stepped up their efforts to attack oil tankers in the Red Sea, which, if successful, would have significant environmental and economic impact. He stated that there have been 226 ballistic missiles launched by the Houthis toward Saudi Arabia since 26 March 2015 and confirmed they have documented information on the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps' (IRGC) supply of rockets, boats and drones to the Houthis in Yemen.



Thursday, 30 May—Mecca hosted two emergency summits of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and of the Arab League leaders in a bid to coordinate positions and joint response to regional challenges. The six Gulf countries' leaders and the GCC Secretary General condemned the recent drone and missile attacks by the Houthis in Yemen on the member states and Iran's regional destabilising efforts, highlighting the collective security mechanism and united stance against Iran's hostile acts. During the Arab League emergency summit, the leaders issued a communiqué, condemning notably: the recent attacks on Saudi Arabia's and the UAE's ships, the Iranian conduct in Syria, the use of Iranian ballistic missiles by the Yemen-based Houthis against Saudi Arabia, interference in Bahrain's internal affairs and support of local terrorist groups, and Iran's occupation of three UAE islands. The Arab leaders called on the international community to take a tougher stance on Iran in relation to the hostile regional activities.

Friday, 31 May—The 14th regular Summit of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), titled 'Hand in Hand toward the Future,' conveyed in Makkah. On the top of the agenda are pressing political issues, such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, rising anti-Muslim tendencies around the world, violent extremism, Iran's proxy forces in the Middle East and the Houthi attacks against Saudi Arabia.



# United Arab Emirates

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Sunday, 26 May—The UAE's Minister of Infrastructure Development, Dr Abdullah bin Mohammed Belhaif Al-Nuaimi, participated in the Annual Summit of the International Transport Forum 2019, held in Leipzig, Germany, which was attended by around 65 ministers and 1,000 participants from over 70 countries. On the sidelines, the UAE's Minister held talks with

Chris Grayling, the United Kingdom's Secretary of State for Transport, on possible opportunities for partnership between the two countries and ways to develop cooperation in key sectors, such as investment, trade, aviation and transport.

Wednesday, 29 May— The Defence Cooperation Agreement signed earlier this year between the UAE and the United States became effective. The agreement aims to enhance bilateral military coordination, further strengthen their military, political, and economic partnership and foster closer collaboration in defence and security to maintain security in the Gulf. The Agreement came into force as the US National Security Adviser, John Bolton, was visiting Abu Dhabi, where he held talks with the Crown Prince and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, on joint coordination efforts to counter violence, extremism and terrorism.



Thursday, 30 May—The multinational UAE-based telecommunications services provider, Etisalat, launched the first 5G network in the Middle East and North Africa. The network is accessible on 5G devices in most of Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah and Ajman Emirates, providing a higher speed of up to 1 Gigabits per second with latency down to 1 millisecond, which is around 20 times faster than the 4G network.



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