



Arab Gulf Country Bulletins



28 April - 03 May 2019

by

Nikola Zúkalová



Kingdom of Bahrain

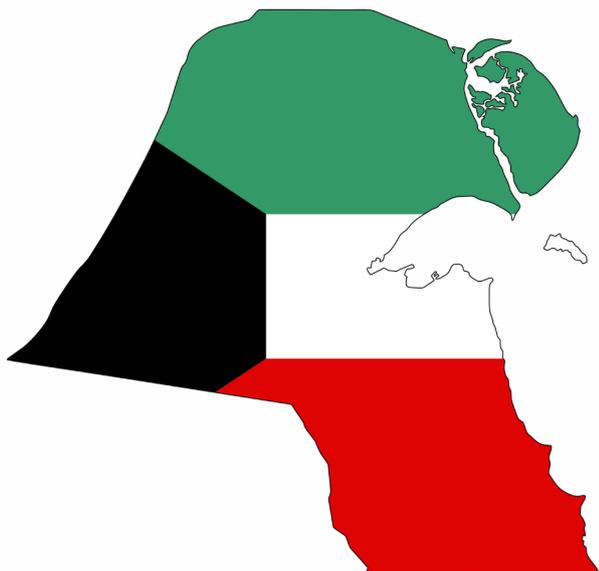


Monday, 29 April—Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa and his accompanying delegation, comprised of a number of ministers and businessmen, arrived in France for an official visit. During the meeting with King Hamad, the French President, Emmanuel Macron, highlighted the importance of his country's partnership with Bahrain. The two leaders discussed mainly Syria, Iran and the Gulf countries, as well as the fight against terrorism, particularly radicalisation and financing. President

Macron also confirmed France's desire to strengthen cultural, academic and scientific cooperation with Bahrain. The visit strengthened particularly bilateral economic ties, resulting in the signing of 12 agreements and Memoranda of Understanding between Bahraini and French companies and official institutions. The inked deals were worth \$2 billion (€1.79 billion), increasing the total value of bilateral business agreements to \$4.63 billion (€4.15 billion).



State of Kuwait



Monday, 29 April—Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah, accompanied by a high-level delegation, arrived in Paris, where he was received by his French counterpart, Florence Barley. The next day, Kuwait's first Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister held talks with French President, Emmanuel Macron, at the Elysée Palace. They discussed the latest developments

in the regional and international arenas, particularly the fight against terrorism and the situation in the Near and Middle East. They also discussed prospects for deepening bilateral cooperation in cultural, health and environmental fields.

Wednesday, 1 May—Kuwait's Emir Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah inaugurated the Sheikh Jaber Causeway, the world's fourth longest bridge. The 37.5 km bridge, built by the South Korean construction giant, Hyundai Engineering & Construction, connects the capital Kuwait City to Subiyah area, where a \$100 billion (USD) mega-city is under construction. The ceremony was attended by South Korea's Prime Minister, Lee Nak-yeon, President of the French Senate, Gerard Larcher, among other state officials.



Sultanate of Oman



Wednesday, 1 May—Muscat hosted the 8th Consultative Meeting of the Supreme Military Committee of the Chiefs of Staff of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries' Armed Forces with the participation of all six member states, the GCC Joint Military Commander, Colonel General Eid Awad Al-Shalawi, and the GCC Assistant Secretary General for Military Affairs, Major General Ahmed Ali Al-Ali. The Meeting focused notably on topics related to the promotion and

development of the GCC joint military cooperation.

Tuesday, 30 April—Georgios Katrougalos, Greece's Minister of Foreign Affairs, who is currently touring three Gulf countries (Oman, Bahrain, Qatar) with his accompanying delegation, met with Oman's Minister of Commerce and Industry, Ali bin Masoud bin Ali Al-Sunaidy, Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs, Yousef bin Alawi bin Abdullah, and other high-level officials. The aim of the visits is to strengthen and deepen bilateral relations and cooperation, particularly with regard to economy and investments, energy, infrastructure, pharmaceuticals and tourism, and focus on the developments in the region and the Eastern Mediterranean.



State of Qatar



Sunday, 28 April—Maria Elisabetta Alberti Casellati, President of Italy's Senate, was on an official visit in Doha, where she met with Qatar's high-level officials, notably Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al-Thani, and President of the Shoura Council, Ahmad bin Abdullah Al-Mahmoud, as well as with members of the Association of Qatari Women Entrepreneurs, such as the CEO of Qatar Foundation, Hind bint Hamad Al-Thani. Together with Qatar's Minister

of Industry and Trade, Ali bin Ahmed Al-Kuwari, President Casellati also inaugurated the Project Qatar Fair in Doha, in which 20 Italian companies participate.

Thursday, 2 May—Doha hosted the 16th Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) Foreign Ministers' Meeting between 30 April and 1 May, with the attendance of the member states, such as Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and Saudi Arabia. The Meeting resulted in the Doha Declaration, which stresses the importance of enhancing relations and cooperation among all countries of the Asian continent in six main areas, such as food, energy and water security, communication, science, technology and innovation. The Meeting also welcomed Palestine's accession to the ACD. During the event, Qatar's Foreign Minister, Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, objected to the



recent United States' decision to end all waivers on exports of Iranian oil effective from 1 May 2019, saying it harms the oil consuming nations.



Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



Monday, 29 April—The state-controlled mining firm Saudi Arabian Mining Company (Ma'aden) awarded an engineering, procurement and construction services contract for the construction of a greenfield mineral concentrator and gold processing plant to a consortium of Finland-based Outotec and Larsen & Toubro (L&T) in the world's largest gold mine, the

Mansourah & Massarah Gold Project, in the Central region of Saudi Arabia. The processing plant mines will be capable of processing up to 4 million tonnes of gold ore per year and the production is expected to begin in 2022. As the Kingdom strives to decrease its reliance on oil, the Saudi government plans to significantly increase the mining industry's contribution to national economy by 2030.

Tuesday, 30 April—Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud received Algeria's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sabri Boukadoum, in the presence of several Saudi officials, notably Interior Minister, Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud bin Naif, Foreign Minister, Ibrahim Al-Assaf, and Minister of State and Cabinet's Member, Dr Musaed bin Mohammed Al-Aiban. They discussed the latest regional and international events and King Salman wished Algeria security and prosperity.



Thursday, 2 May—Saudi Arabia will reportedly issue \$3-5 billion in international Islamic bonds (sukuk) in the second half of the year to help with financing of the national budget's deficit.



United Arab Emirates



Tuesday, 30 April—Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, received a phone call from Germany's Chancellor, Angela Merkel. They highlighted the importance of strengthening cooperation, communication, and dialogue for security and stability. They discussed

bilateral relations and cooperation and means to enhance them, notably in politics, economy, technology and culture, along with the latest regional and international developments. Mohamed bin Zayed also accepted Merkel's invitation to visit Germany.

Wednesday, 1 May—The UAE's Ministry of Finance signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) to establish an International Technology Centre (ITC) in the UAE. The ITC will be located in the IBRD's office in Abu Dhabi and should provide a platform for experience and best practices exchange in legislation and formulation of financial policy to encourage the adoption of FinTech and Digital Economy in the Middle East and North Africa.



Thursday, 2 May—The UAE's Federal Authority for Identity and Citizenship announced an implementation of the decision to issue 5-year residency visas for entrepreneurs to facilitate doing business in the country. To be eligible for the visa, entrepreneurs should have a business worth at minimum \$136,000 (Dh500,000) or an approval of an accredited business in the UAE and have insurance coverage for the entire period of the residency.

Thursday, 2 May—The Commander of the UAE Ground Forces, Major General Saleh Mohammed Saleh Majran Al-Amiri, received the Chief of Staff of the French Army, General Jean-Pierre Bosser, and his accompanying delegation. They reviewed military cooperation between the UAE Armed Forces and French Army and discussed ways to enhance it, along with several issues of mutual concern. Gen Bosser also was awarded the Emirates Military Order (First Class) during the meeting with UAE's Minister of State for Defence Affairs, Mohammed bin Ahmed Al-Bowardi, where they focused on ways to strengthen bilateral defence relations.



Subscribe to our Newsletter



or visit www.egic.info

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.

