



THE GCC BRIEFING

A Weekly Publication of the main news surrounding the GCC States

17 - 23 April 2017

SAUDI ARABIA

Politics: The Trump administration is working to entrance its relations with Saudi Arabia. On Wednesday, Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud met with the Secretary of Defense of the United States of America, James Mattis, at Al-Yamamah Palace in Riyadh. The main aim of the meeting was to discuss ways of enhancing the strategic partnership relations between Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the US, mostly in the fields of defense and Iran's activities in the region.

Society: A woman was sentenced to six years in jail with her two accomplices, both Syrian men, who were of attempting to leave the Kingdom clandestinely, with her children, to join the Daesh terror group.

Environment: Over the next 10 years, Saudi Arabia will develop 30 solar and wind projects as a part of the kingdom's \$50 billion program to increase power generation. By 2023, the world's largest exporter of crude oil will generate 10% of Saudia Arabia's renewable energy.

OMAN

Politics: Tobias Ellwood, the United Kingdom State Secretary for Middle East and Africa and head of the British side in the Omani-British Joint Action group, honoured the efforts exerted by Sultan Qaboos bin Said in containing crises in region. Which helped to maintain its security and stability in the region.

Economy: On Wednesday, nine major agreements to develop an industrial zone in Duqm were signed by a Chinese firm with the Special Economic Zone Authority in Duqm. In the next five years, Chinese companies are expected to invest around \$10 billion. According to an official, the development of major projects include a pipe manufacturing unit, a power plant and a tourism complex.

UAE

Politics: On Thursday, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. (Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces) traveled to Kremlin to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Discussion was held mainly about combating terrorism, the Syrian and Libyan crises, and the geopolitical situation in the Middle East. Steps to promote peace were on the top of the agenda.

Economy: On Wednesday, Emirate Airlines' president made a decision to temporarily cut 25 of the 126 weekly flights operating into the US from Dubai, due to the fall in demand, which is attributed to the US travel ban on some Muslim states.

QATAR

Politics: In 2015, a Qatari hunting party was kidnapped in southern Iraq during a hunting trip. On Friday, in Baghdad, Qatari delegation handed all 26 hunters over to the Qatari envoy.

BAHRAIN

Politics: On 19 and 20 April, the GCC countries held their fourth meeting. The ministers discussed a strategy to combat extremism and violence and promote moderation.

Society: Bahrain Prime Minister, Khalifa bin Salman Al-Khalifa became the first Arab leader to be awarded the Development Pioneering Work Shield . This recognition is due to his role one of the key architects of modern Bahrain's development and progress.

KUWAIT

Politics: Opposition leader and ex-MP, Musallem Al-Barrack was released from prison. Al Barrack was sentenced to two years in jail for undermining of Sheikh Amir Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Environment: On Thursday, a member of the Kuwaiti Parliament, Hamdan Al-Azmi, proposed to protect water resources in GCC countries and minimise dependence on desalinated water. Waters in the gulf are extremely contaminated, because of over usage of fertilizers and pesticides. The proposal concerns implementation of guidelines by the World Bank.