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## The GCC Briefing

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### Saudi Arabia

**News:** For the first time in the history of Saudi Arabia a female has been given a post at the Saudi Arabia Stock Exchange. Sarah Al Suhaimi became chairperson of the largest bourse of the Middle East- Saudi Arabia's Tadawul. Al Suhaimi will lead the stock at a critical time, as she will have to supervise the IPO of the national oil company ARAMCO. While the country is progressing slowly in gender equality it is a significant step in a country where some 33% of women are unemployed.

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### Kuwait

**Security:** Following an incident of an Indian nurse from Kottayam in Kerala, who was stabbed in Kuwait City, India's Foreign Minister wants to strengthen the security of Indian people in Kuwait. Minister Sushma Swaraj said, 'our [India's] embassy has taken up the matter at the highest level in Kuwait to ensure safety and security of Indian nationals there.' This comes at a time when Kuwait's Parliament is discussing a proposal to cut the presence of South Asian and other foreign labourers in the country, stemming a concern of rising xenophobia in the Emirate.

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### Oman

**Politics:** Iranian President, Hassan Rouhani, paid a visit to Oman as part of his drive to thaw Iran-Gulf Arab relations. And, Rouhani sought-out Oman to play mediator with the new US Administration. In the past, Muscat had helped by hosting Iranian-US negotiations.

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## Bahrain

**Security:** Manama, 20 people were arrested by Bahrain's security authorities—in connection to terrorism. One of those arrested has confirmed that he killed First-Lt Hisham Al Hamadi, an off-duty officer who was shot to death in Bill Al Qadeem on 29 January. Two others were involved in secret bomb-making in a storehouse.

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## United Arab Emirates (UAE)

**Politics: Abu Dhabi,** This week at IDEX 2017, an UAE-based defence company International Golden Group (IGG) signed several deals over pipelines, planning to expand their operations in Ajman. This year, they are also planning to expand to the wider region. The cooperation agreement with Saudi Arabia is helping the group promote their companies. IGG would invest more heavily in UGVs.

**Environment:** A strategic environmental roadmap for 2016-2020 was set for Abu Dhabi. The Emirates has focused its attention to nine key environmental objectives, which they are currently facing. These targets are related to the quality of air, fisheries, climate change, groundwater, water quality in the sea, land quality, natural environment, forest cultivation. The document describes clear indications and ways to reach successful results. Dubai is also heading towards smarter city and green economy. It has been confirmed at the World Government Summit this week. The transport authorities of Dubai made a deal with Tesla Company to buy 200 electric-powered cars.

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## Qatar

**Economics:** Ras Laffan is famous for production and export of liquefied natural gas, as well as an industrial process by which gas is cooled down to -162 degrees Celsius. This way, gas can be transmitted around the world with less effort. In 2016, global demand for LNG reached 265 million tonnes, the Royal Dutch Shell published this month. It also says that Qatar is involved in 30 per cent of the LNG market. Qatar owns gas reserves for another 137 years. Saad al-Kaabi commented, ‘We will remain for a long time the leader in LNG.’