



GCC IN REVIEW

A Weekly Publication of the main news surrounding the GCC States

4 - 8 September 2017

Kingdom of Bahrain

Thursday, 7 September—Bahrain launched a security crackdown aimed at dismantling unsafe labour accommodation. This move serves the double purpose of renewing the Kingdom's infrastructure and preventing abandoned labour accommodations from being used as shelters by criminal and terrorist groups.

Friday, 8 September—Several Bahraini MP's announced their intention of travelling to Myanmar to meet the country's leaders, Aung San Suu Kyi and Htin Kyaw, to discuss possible cooperation between the Kingdom of Bahrain and Myanmar aimed at alleviating the suffering of the Muslim Rohingya minority.

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Monday, 4 September—Sheikh Abdulla Bin Ali Al Thani publicly praised the efforts of Kings Salman of Saudi Arabia for making possible to perform Hajj for Qatari nationals, despite intra-GCC tensions opposing Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Egypt and the UAE to Qatar. Such positive remarks were released during Sheikh Abdulla Bin Ali Al Thani's meeting with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Mina. The meeting was negatively commented on by Qatar's Foreign Minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani.

Tuesday, 5 September—Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister, Adel al-Jubeir, during a press conference in London, stated that Saudi authorities are currently considering prolonging the boycott for two

additional years if Qatar continues to support terror groups and does not meet the demands of the Anti-Terror Quartet.

Wednesday, 6 September—Saudi Arabia's main sovereign investment fund plans to study how robots can be used more effectively in government and business to facilitate the Kingdom's economic diversification programme. The Public Investment Fund (PIF) and Japan's Softbank Group announced their partnerships for projects involving companies, academics and government bodies.

Thursday, 7 September—During the latest telephone conversation between US President, Donald Trump, and King Salman of Saudi Arabia, the two leaders agreed to a visit to the White House early next year by the Saudi Ruler. The conversation also considered further ways to strengthen the US-KSA strategic relationship in the face of mounting Iranian pressure.

State of Kuwait

Thursday, 7 September—The Emir of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Ahmad al-Sabah, arrived in the US to hold talks with President Donald Trump on the three-month-old diplomatic crisis in the Arabian Gulf. Kuwait's Emir has been the most active mediator trying to resolve the diplomatic crisis between Qatar (on one side) and Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Bahrain and the UAE (on the other).

Friday, 8 September—Meeting with Kuwait's Sheikh Sabah Ahmad al-Sabah, US President Donald Trump, has offered to mediate in the ongoing dispute between Qatar and its neighbours. According to Qatari media the White House believes that good GCC relations favour the fight against terrorism.

State of Qatar

Tuesday, 5 September—France's foreign ministry confirmed the appointment of Bertrand Besancenot, France's former ambassador to Saudi Arabia, as special envoy to support mediation efforts in the rift between Qatar and its neighbours.

Wednesday, 6 September—Qatar's central bank was forced to raise yields in both its three-month six-month T-bill sale. This signals that the ongoing boycott against Qatar is deeply impacting the Qatari money market. Such continued pressure inevitably causes Qatar's government to reduce its capital spending on economic projects and infrastructure as well as on Qatar's economic diversification efforts.

Thursday, 7 September—The State of Qatar hired a public relations company to improve relations with Israel and the Jewish community worldwide.

Thursday, 7 September—The spokesman for the Qatari opposition, Khaled Al-Hail, presented a conference, to take place in London on 14 September, that will discuss democracy, human rights, press freedom and counter-terrorism in Qatar. Al-Hail criticised the current Qatari government for trying to destabilise the security of the Gulf and the region.

Sultanate of Oman

Tuesday, 5 September—Dr. Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Futaisi, Oman's Minister of Transport and Communications, took part in the official opening ceremony of Hamad Port under the auspices of Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Emir of Qatar in Umm Al Houl, south of Doha. The opening of the port is likely to benefit the investments carried out by the Omani government to develop the Sultanate's shipping sector.

Wednesday, 6 September—Oman's leader Sultan Qaboos bin Said has sent a cable of greetings to President Michel Temer of the Federative Republic of Brazil on the occasion of his country's National Day. In the course of the following telephone conversation the two leaders discussed ways to increase the trade volume between Oman and Brazil.

United Arab Emirates

Wednesday, 6 September—Hussain Ebrahim Al Hammadi, the UAE's Minister of Education, speaking at a symposium titled "Education, Extremism and Terrorism" at the Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research (ECSSR) in Abu Dhabi, stated that investing in state run education is key in order to keep at bay the spread of radicalism and extremism among young students.

Thursday, 7 September—The Emirates NBD Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) announced the sharpest improvement in the growth of the UAE non-oil private sector economy. The surge was driven by faster new order growth and output growth, signalling the positive outcome of the UAE's economic diversification programme.