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The last week's most important news in the areas of politics, economics and the security of GCC states is **a major EU-GCC business meeting that took place in Riyadh.**

A major EU-GCC business forum took place in Riyadh focusing on key areas for economic development: transport, infrastructure and sustainable urban development. The EU representative, Violeta Bulc, discussed investment opportunities and scope of cooperation within the framework of the Vision 2030 with the Saudi officials. The two parties also agreed to work in such spheres as road safety, urban mobility, emerging technologies and emissions control. The EU is to sign the memorandum of understanding with the GCC which would provide the latter the full support in terms of experience and regulatory provisions to build and operate the Gulf railway. \$250 billion will be spent to link the six GCC states by railway. The construction of the 2.117 km-long railway network is expected to be finished by 2021. The prospects of GCC-EU free trade agreement was discussed as well.

Saudi Arabia

Security: Saudi security neutralised two of the ‘most-wanted’ Daesh terrorists. The armed men were killed in a shootout with the police in Riyadh. One of them, Al-Sayari, was made bombs and explosive belts. He was also involved in a terrorist attack on a mosque of Saudi Special Forces in Asir.

Security: A maritime anti-piracy code was expanded at the conference in Jeddah. The Djibouti Code of Conduct, aimed at reducing piracy in the western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden, was expanded to include fight against human trafficking, cross-border organised crime, disposal of toxic waste in the sea, illegal fishing, maritime terrorism, offenses concerning wildlife and crude oil. The three GCC states – Saudi Arabia, Oman and the UAE – approved a series of amendments, being the signatories of the code.

Economy: Saudi Arabia cut oil output to its lowest in 2 years. The output fell below 10 million barrels per day to uproot a global glut and maintain prices.

Society: The Kingdom’s humanitarian aid for displaced people entered Syria. The King Salman Centre for Relief and Humanitarian Aid sent 25 trucks full of food baskets, winter clothing and personal hygiene products in order to provide the displaced people from Aleppo with some comfort and protect their health.

United Arab Emirates

Politics: Five UAE’s diplomats were killed in Afghanistan attack. The bombing in Kandahar injured 17 people and killed 11 others, including the UAE Ambassador to Afghanistan who, along with the other diplomats, was expected to launch the UAE-backed projects as a part of the humanitarian, educational and development programme to Afghanistan.

Security: The UAE is willing to establish a military post in Somaliland. The Emirati representatives submitted a formal request to establish a defence base in the self-governing province that has not managed to gain an international recognition as a sovereign nation. For the Emiratis the base in the Horn of Africa would serve as a strategically important geopolitical asset in their fight against Yemen’s Houthi armed political opposition faction.

Security: UAE citizens will not be the subjects to the latest counterterrorism measures. The EU ambassador to the UAE, Patrizio Fondi, stated that they will not be covered by new counterterrorism procedures at airports, land borders and sea ports. According to Fondi, Emirates' citizens will only have to show their passports while travelling across Europe, as European and American citizens do, because of Europe's confidence in the UAE and its citizens.

Economy: The UAE is to invest \$163 billion in renewables. The investment into related projects is expected to generate half of the nation's power needs from renewable by 2050.

Bahrain

Politics: Bahraini court upheld death sentences against three people convicted of terrorism. Seven others were sentenced to life imprisonment while eight others were stripped of their nationalities. Bahrain is facing a renewed spate of terrorist activities against it.

Kuwait

Politics: Kuwaiti Parliamentarians called for the phased deportation of up to one million expats. In order to balance the country's population they suggested to deport expats over the next 5 to 10 years.

Economy: Kuwait reduced its oil production to 2.707 million barrels per day. It was done to meet the targeted amount under the OPEC output cut agreement.

Society: Kuwait distributed food baskets to 25.000 displaced Iraqis in Irbil. Over 3.500 food packages were provided to approximately 25.000 people displaced from Mosul.

Qatar

Politics: Qatar is negotiating a prisoner swap between Hamas and Israel. Qatar is mediating discussions between the two parties in order to sign an agreement which would include the release of the bodies of IDF soldiers Oron Shaul and Hadar Goldin, as well as Israeli civilians Avraham Mengistu and Juma Ibrahim Abu Anima. Hamas official stated that the organisation will not even discuss the issue unless Israel first releases dozens of Palestinians that it is holding.