



CBN02 | 2018
08

EGIC
Euro-Gulf
Information
Centre

Arab Gulf

C O U N T R Y

B U L L E T I N S

August 26 - 30



The Last Thing to Read this Week

by

ANTONINO OCCHIUTO



Kingdom of Bahrain



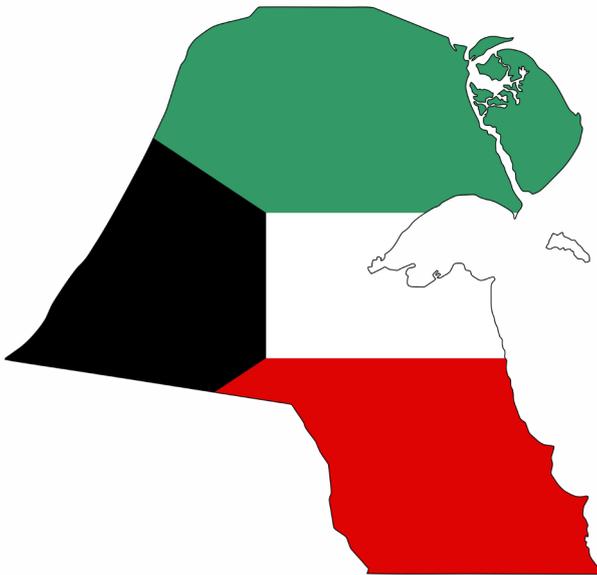
Monday, 27 August—Bahrain's Transport Ministry unveiled plans to issue an international tender for its first metro project. The Ministry seeks the participation of private partners to finance a scheme that may cost as much as \$2 billion. Bahrain is currently developing a number of projects with the aim of increasing its non-oil Gross Domestic Product, improve its infrastructure and create jobs.

Wednesday, 29 August—Bahrain's Sovereign Wealth Fund has renewed a land lease deal with logistics company Trafco Group. The agreement will see the fund's real estate investment arm, Edamah, provide land from its portfolio for Trafco projects which aim to advance the Kingdom's food security and economic diversification agenda.



State of Kuwait

Sunday, 26 August—Kuwait's Government has cancelled the contracts of 3,140 foreigners working in the public sector as part of the state policy to replace expatriates with Kuwaitis in government offices. Kuwait's economy continues to be heavily reliant on expatriate workers.



Wednesday, 29 August—Kuwait announced the beginning of construction works on an 111-km long railway project connecting Kuwait with the rest of the Arab Gulf region. The project is expected to create a new rail connection between Kuwait City and Nuwaiseb on the border with Saudi Arabia, and to link Kuwait City to Boubyan Port. The estimated cost of the first phase is \$3billion (USD).



Sultanate of Oman

Tuesday, 28 August—Oman's Ministry of Transport and Communications announced the opening of a new passenger terminal at Oman's Duqm International Airport. The terminal building spans 8,660sqm and has a capacity for 500,000 passengers annually. The project is part of a series of airport upgrades as tourism in the Sultanate is booming.

Wednesday, 29 August—Lt. Gen Ahmed bin Harith Al-Nabhani, Chief of Staff of the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF), organised a preparatory seminar on the Omani-British Joint Exercise, under the name Swift Sword 3, which comes as the United Kingdom plans to increase its military presence in the country.





State of Qatar



Tuesday, 28 August—According to Forbes, Qatar and Iran are planning to set up a joint shipping line to promote bilateral trade. Qatar-Iran trade has been on the surge since June 2017, when Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Egypt and the UAE severed ties with Doha and closed all land, sea and air borders with the country because of Qatar's relationship to an assortment of nefarious groups around the Gulf.

Wednesday, 29 August—According to the Wall Street Journal, Qatar has invested \$16.3 million (USD) lobbying the US in 2017, compared to only \$4.2 million (USD) in 2016. This increase is related to attempts to lobby influential members of the Republican Party, such as Mike Huckabee and Alan Dershowitz, allegedly capable of influencing President Donald Trump in foreign policy decision making, especially with regards to the intra-GCC crisis.

Thursday, 30 August—The Chief of Staff of Qatar's Armed Forces, Major General Ghanem bin Shaheen Al-Ghanem, received the deputy Turkish Military Attaché to Qatar, Colonel Mohamed Tulga. They discussed Turkish efforts to ensure the defence of Qatar from external threats. Turkey has recently opened a military base in Qatar. Ankara plans to expand the base to host up to 60.000 soldiers.



Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Monday, 27 August—Saudi Arabia's Education Minister, Dr. Ahmed bin Mohamed Al-Issa, inaugurated the International Forum for Teachers. The Forum will be attended by 800 teachers from throughout Saudi Arabia, in addition to 100 teachers from 30 other countries. This initiative aims to foster cooperation between education departments internationally and takes place in the context of the recently launched de-radicalisation campaign in the Kingdom's schools.

Tuesday, 28 August—Saudi Arabia's air defences intercepted yet another ballistic missile fired towards the city of Najran by Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels. The Houthis routinely target the Kingdom since the Saudi-led Arab coalition intervened militarily in Yemen against the Houthi insurgents' group.

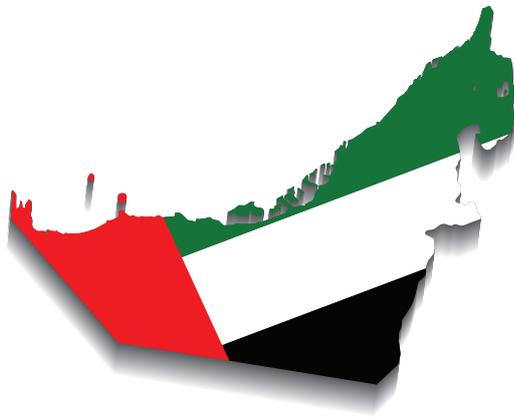
Wednesday, 29 August—Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF), formed a new advisory board that includes 11 executives from across the technology, finance and business spheres worldwide. The board, which includes Masayoshi Son, the CEO of Japan's SoftBank Group, and Siemens's President, Joe Kaeserthat, will provide strategic guidance to implement the objectives related to the country's Vision 2030 diversification programme.





United Arab Emirates

Wednesday, 29 August—The UAE and Japan have agreed on October 29 to be the date in which the KhalifaSat, the first satellite developed in space technology laboratories in the UAE entirely by Emirati engineers, will be launched from the Tanegashima Space Centre in Japan. Once in orbit, the KhalifaSat should provide detailed high-quality imagery for a variety of uses.





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.

