



GCC IN REVIEW

A Weekly Publication of the main news surrounding the GCC States

24-28 July

Kingdom of Bahrain

Monday, 24 July—Bahrain unveiled its 2017-2018 budget pointing to further fiscal consolidation, which will weaken the traditional role of the public sector as a growth driver. In particular, Bahraini authorities aim to encourage private spending to develop the Kingdom's infrastructure.

Wednesday, 26 July—Bahrain's chief of terror crime prosecution, Advocate General Ahmed Al Hammadi, announced the beginning of the trial for 60 terror suspects accused of some of the worst attacks in Bahrain's history, arrested during the Al-Diraz security crackdown and linked, by Al Hammadi, to Shiite cleric Isa Qassim, and, by extension, Iran.

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Monday, 24 July—Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister, Adel al-Jubeir, said that his country was ready to open a new page with Qatar if the country committed to the list of demands made by the anti-terror quartet. Al-Jubeir made the same remarks on Friday during a meeting with his Italian counterpart, Angelino Alfano.

Tuesday, 25 July—Ahmed Asiri, spokesman for the Saudi-led Arab Coalition in Yemen, announced the beginning of the heaviest aerial bombardment against Houthi targets in Northern Yemen.



Tuesday, 25 July—Saudi Arabia approved the national programme on nuclear energy to reduce the Kingdom’s energy dependence on oil. This strategy is consistent with Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030 reform plan which promotes Saudi Arabia’s economic diversification.

Thursday, 27 July—Saudi Arabia’s King Salman contacted, by telephone, US President Donald Trump and urged for the opening of al-Aqsa Mosque to Muslims following restrictions implemented by Israeli authorities. According to Emirati media, the Saudi King asked Trump to pressure Israel to find an accommodating solution for all parties.

Thursday, 27 July—The Saudi-led coalition fighting in Yemen announced it intercepted a ballistic missile launched by Houthi militias at Makkah. The missile was intercepted 69 kilometers south of the holy site. Saudi authorities described the launch as “a desperate attempt by Yemeni rebels to disrupt Haj.”

State of Kuwait

Monday, 24 July—The Emir of Kuwait, Shaikh Sabah Al Ahmed Al Jaber Al Sabah, held talks with visiting Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, on the latest developments in the region. In particular, the two leaders discussed possible ways to increase Turkish contribution in easing tensions between Qatar and the anti-terror quartet.

State of Qatar

Tuesday, 25 July—Qatar was presented with an additional list of organisations and individuals, deemed as terrorists by the four boycotting countries. Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Egypt and the UAE urged Qatar to stop supporting and financing the newly listed entities.

Thursday, 27 July—The Doha based network, Al Jazeera, has denounced a threat by the Israeli Prime Minister to close the network's Jerusalem office, saying it will continue to cover events in the Palestinian territories professionally and objectively. The Israeli leader posted harsh comments about the Al Jazeera's coverage to his Facebook page, saying Al Jazeera journalists “contributed to incite violence during the Al-Aqsa protests.”

Friday, 28 July—Qatar's Foreign Minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, called on the United Nations to help resolve the Gulf crisis and accused the four boycotting countries of violating international law.

Sultanate of Oman

Thursday, 27 July—Oman's authorities announced the implementation of non-sponsored tourist visas for people from 67 countries as well as GCC residents employed in 116 professions. According to Salim Adi Al Mamari, Director General of Tourism Promotion at Oman's Ministry of Tourism, this move is in support of Oman's economic diversification strategy to ensure the growth of Oman's tourism sector in the coming years by providing tourists, investors, businessmen, researchers and students easier access to the country.

Friday, 28 July—Oman completed the legislative and technical systems that, according to Colonel Mansour bin Nasser Al Rahbi, Director of the Bayan System at the Directorate General of Custom, facilitates the work of importers-exporters and attracts domestic-foreign investments in Oman. The sultanate seeks through its commercial and industrial ports to be among the top ten countries in international logistics performance by 2040. The transport and communications sector is expected to become the second most important source of national income.

United Arab Emirates

Wednesday, 26 July—The UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Anwar al-Gargash, declared, that Qatar's "lack of sense of ownership, responsibility and accountability and self victimism" remained an obstacle to resolving current Gulf tensions. The UAE Minister has been among the most prominent critics of Doha's course of action.

Wednesday, 26 July— The Central Bank of the UAE issued a general statement to all banks and financial institutions to search for and freeze any accounts, deposits or investments belonging to persons and entities financed by Qatar and listed as terrorists by Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Egypt and the UAE.