



## The GCC Briefing

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Last week's most important news is **the visit of Kuwait's Foreign Minister Shaikh Al Khalid Al Sabah to Tehran**, allegedly with a message for President Hassan Rouhani.

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### **QATAR**

Qatar, well known as a supporter of rebels fighting Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, welcomed president Donald Trump's comments on Wednesday February 25th. Trump said he would make safe zones for refugees from violence in Syria. The foreign ministry director of information Ahmed al-Rumaihi said that Qatar: 'emphasised the need to provide safe havens in Syria and to impose no-fly zones to ensure the safety of civilians.' Moreover, Ahmed al-Rumaihi believes that negotiations in Kazakhstan would help maintain a truce between Syria's warring parties and create conditions for peace talks in Geneva.

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## OMAN

**Economics:** A fresh issue of Government development bonds worth OMR150 million was announced by the Central Bank of Oman (CBO). With a maturity period of 7 years it will carry a coupon rate of 5 per cent per annum. The issue will be open for subscription from February 5 to 12, while the auction will be held on February 14. The issue settlement date will be on February 20.

**Security:** Seven people disrupted traffic during street brawl. They were arrested immediately. The reason behind this scene is yet to be resolved.

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## KUWAIT

**Politics:** Foreign Minister Shaikh Al Khalid Al Sabah of Kuwait visited Tehran this week. The visit was aimed at 'breaking the ice' -- after years of animosity -- between the Gulf States and Iran, a Kuwaiti political analyst says. The Minister passed on a letter by Kuwait's Emir addressed to President Hassan Rouhani.

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## BAHRAIN

**Politics:** During the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Gulf Press Union, Bahrain's Prime Minister Prince Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa received its board members. He declared that Saudi Arabia became one of the strongest partners of Arab and Islamic nations due to its global status.

**Security:** Bahrain declined a statement of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights concerning the execution of three people. They were convicted by three courts of terrorism offences and were responsible for killing three and injuring 13. Among the dead of the terrorist bombing was a UAE Army Officer, First Lieutenant Tariq Al Shehi.

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## SAUDI ARABIA

**Security:** On Saturday, two suspects blew themselves up during a firefight with security forces in the Red Sea city of Jeddah in western Saudi Arabia.

**Security:** The Saudi Ministry of Labour announced that Hadaf Human Resources Development Fund was the latest victim of hackers who have been attacking the Kingdom's government companies.

**Economy:** Saudi Arabia's Shura Council proposed a plan to impose a six percent tax on expatriate workers' remittances. On Tuesday, 86 of the members were present at the session, only 32 voted to keep it on the agenda. On Sunday, the Ministry of Finance said there was not any intention to impose taxation on remittances by foreigners and Saudi Arabia committed to the principle of free movement of capital in line with international standards.

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