



GCC IN REVIEW

A Weekly Publication of the main news surrounding the GCC States



5-9 November 2017

Kingdom of Bahrain

Sunday, 5 November—Bahrain has claimed the right to exercise sovereignty over the disputed Zubarah region currently administered by Doha. According to Bahrain’s state central news agency “The Kingdom of Bahrain has every right to claim what was cut off forcibly from its land and to dispute the legitimacy of the Qatari rule on the northern territory.”

Monday, 6 November—Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, paid a visit today to Khalifa Sports City Hall, which will host the International Mixed Martial Arts Federation events from November 12 to 19. Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, stressed how events of this kind are important for Bahrain’s international prestige.

Wednesday, 8 November—Noga Holding, the investment and business development arm of National Oil and Gas Authority, inaugurated a \$20million facility that will create around 100 jobs in the logistics sector. Bahrain’s Minister of Oil, Shaikh Mohamed bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, stated that the facility will support expanding operations, particularly in the chemical and petrochemical logistics market.

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State of Kuwait

Wednesday, 8 November—10 Kuwaiti MP's signed a motion that calls for the set up of a parliamentary committee to assess the country's readiness to face deteriorating security situations amid rising regional instability.

Thursday, 9 November—Kuwait's permanent delegation to the United Nations called on the entire international community to act rapidly to reach a world free of nuclear and weapons of mass destruction. Kuwait, among other GCC members, is particularly worried of Iran's ballistic and nuclear programmes.

Sultanate of Oman

Sunday, 5 November—Oman's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah, expressed his deep concern for the escalation of violence in Yemen, and for the use of ballistic missiles on Riyadh by Iran-backed Houthi militias.

Wednesday, 8 November—The Prime Minister of the Government of National Accord of Libya, Fayez Mustafa Al Sarraj started a three-day visit in Oman. Al Sarraj is expected to explore possible cooperation with Oman to ensure political stability and economic recovery in Libya.

State of Qatar

Wednesday, 8 November—Three Pillars Pte Ltd, an affiliate of the Qatar Foundation, has put up for sale its \$1.46bn stake in Indian telecoms carrier. Qatar Foundation and affiliates have been forced to liquidate their foreign holdings since the start of the boycott.

Thursday, 9 November—Qatar's Foreign Minister, Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani, met his Ghanaian counterpart, Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey, to discuss ways to increase trade.

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Monday, 6 November—Saudi air defences intercepted a ballistic missile from Yemen that was heading towards Riyadh. Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Salman, stated that Iran's supply of missiles to the Houthi militia in Yemen can be considered a "direct military aggression." Iran's President, Hassan Rouhani, described the missile launch, targeting Riyadh's civilian population, as an act of self defence against Saudi military intervention in Yemen.

Tuesday, 7 November—Saudi Arabia's Attorney General, Sheikh Saud al-Mojeb, said that the bank accounts of those arrested in the anti-corruption probe will be frozen and any assets related to the corruption cases will be registered as state property. Key figures such as princes

and ministers were arrested at the weekend in a move led by a newly formed anti-graft commission. The Crown Prince, Mohammed Bin Salman, views such important anti-corruption probe as a priority to ensure the success of the Saudi Vision 2030 plan.

Wednesday, 8 November—Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Salman, met with the President of the Republic of Yemen, Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi. During the meeting, they discussed current developments in Yemen and the efforts exerted in addressing the situation. Saudi Arabia is currently leading a military coalition which aims to restore the UN-recognised Hadi government in Yemen.

Wednesday, 8 November—Four people, including a child, were wounded by missiles fired by Iran-backed Houthi militia across the Saudi border with Yemen. The missiles landed in border town of Najran. The town has been repeatedly hit by missiles fired by Yemen's Shia militias.

Thursday, 9 November—Mohammed Al Qahtani, Vice-President of Saudi Arabia's oil giant Aramco, announced that the company's allocation for capital spending in its current financial year is almost 350 billion Saudi Riyals (\$93.31 billion) and would rise by about 10% the following year. The plans to increase investment come as Aramco prepares for its Initial Public Offering (IPO).

United Arab Emirates

Tuesday, 7 November—The United Arab Emirates' cabinet approved an expansionary federal budget for 2018 with spending projected at 51.4 billion Dirhams (\$14.0 billion). The rise of oil prices to a two-year high in recent weeks has given the government more money to spend in support of continued economic growth.

Thursday, 9 November—The UAE's Crown Prince, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed al-Nahyan, held bilateral talks with France's President, Emmanuel Macron. The French leader condemned Iran's ballistic missile programme and influence in the Middle East. He also warned regional countries against exacerbating rising tensions.

By Antonino Occhiuto