

EURO-GULF MONITOR

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WEEK IN BRIEF

1. White House Senior Advisor, Jared Kushner, headed to Saudi Arabia and Qatar to discuss the Gulf crisis.
2. Bahrain and Israel signed three Memoranda of Understanding in tourism, innovation and technology transfer, and technical cooperation.
3. Saudi Arabia discussed water security and GERD project with Egypt.
4. Kuwait agreed with Japan on storing 3.14 million barrels of crude oil in the Asian country.
5. The UAE started issuing tourist visas to Israeli citizens.



ROUND & ABOUT THE GULF

KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

Tuesday, 1 December – The first (virtual) US-Bahrain Strategic Dialogue was launched. The event, co-hosted by US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, and the Kingdom's Foreign Minister, Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani, covered cooperation in defence, security, economy, development and trade. The two countries agreed to establish five bilateral working groups to cooperate in several fields.

STATE OF KUWAIT

Wednesday, 2 December – The Kuwait Petroleum Corp (KPC) inked a deal with Japan on storing 3.14 million barrels of crude oil in the Asian country. The KPC will leverage on refiner Eneos' Kiire's base in southern Japan as a base for exporting in Asia, while Japan will be given priority to obtain oil supplies in emergency cases.

SULTANATE OF OMAN

Wednesday, 2 December – Oman eased COVID-19 restrictions, allowing reopening of some economic activities. Oman's Supreme Committee tasked with tackling the pandemic's effects decreed the reopening of cinemas, parks, beaches and touristic attractions, among others.

STATE OF QATAR

Tuesday, 1 December – Qatar signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) worth about US\$1.6 billion with several private companies, including the Chinese transport companies Yutong and Hager, to transform its public transportation into an eco-friendly system. The deals aim to implement the country's electric vehicle strategy.

KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

Sunday, 29 November – The Saudi Pharmaceutical Industries & Medical Appliances Corporation (SPIMACO) signed a deal with German pharmaceutical company, CureVac, to provide and distribute the COVID-19 vaccine in the Kingdom. The arrangement included the possibility of extending distribution to Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and the UAE.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Sunday, 30 November – The UAE established a new national cybersecurity council, which will be tasked to develop laws and policies to enhance the country's cybersecurity and create a framework to deal with cyber-crimes and cyber-incidents.

Thursday, 3 December – The UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs started issuing tourist visas to Israeli citizens.



- Thursday, 3 December–Bahrain’s Council of Representatives held a meeting with the Group of Friends of the Kingdom of Bahrain in the European Parliament. The aim of the consultation was enhancing parliamentary diplomacy and strengthening cooperation between the EU and the Kingdom. The meeting also focused on tackling the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and human rights protection.



- Friday, 4 December–Qatar’s Minister of Commerce and Industry, Ali bin Ahmed Al-Kuwari, held a meeting with representatives from the EU countries and the World Trade Organization (WTO). They discussed Qatari-EU relations, particularly in trade and economy. During the meeting, Qatar’s Minister announced that the trade volume between Qatar and the EU totalled US\$7 billion in the first nine months of 2020, constituting 12.3% of Qatar’s global trade.



- Thursday, 3 December–Kuwait and Spain discussed cooperation in economy, healthcare, military and defence. Kuwait’s Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs, Waleed Al-Khubaizi, held a virtual meeting with Spanish Foreign Ministry Director for the Middle East and the Mediterranean, Eva Martínez Sanchez, on the occasion of the 59th anniversary of establishing diplomatic ties.

KEY OFFICIAL VISITS



- Sunday, 29 November–During the week, Bahrain’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abdellatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani, toured Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman and the UAE, meeting with his counterparts and examining opportunities for enhancing bilateral cooperation.



- Monday, 30 November–The White House Senior Advisor, Jared Kushner, headed to Saudi Arabia and Qatar to discuss the Gulf crisis, normalisation with Israel and regional tensions with Iran. Kushner met with Saudi Arabia’s Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Salman Al-Saud, in the city of NEOM, and with Qatar’s Emir, Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, in Doha.



- Tuesday, 1 December–The second official Bahraini delegation to Israel arrived in Tel Aviv, led by the Kingdom’s Minister of Industry, Commerce and Tourism, Zayed bin Rashid Al-Zayani. Bahraini’s Minister held separate meetings with Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, and Foreign Minister, Gabi Ashkenazi, discussing regional stability and peace. Bahrain and Israel signed three Memoranda of Understanding in tourism, innovation and technology transfer, and technical cooperation.



- Wednesday, 2 December–Egypt’s Foreign Minister, Sameh Shoukry, travelled to Riyadh as part of the Saudi-Egyptian Political Consultation Committee. During the session, they discussed water security and freedom of navigation in the Arabian Gulf, the Bab El-Mandab strait and the Red Sea, as well as security challenges posed by the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) project.

