

Gulf nations rap Qatari inaction at summit

TDI, agencies | Manama

The Gulf nations yesterday rapped Qatar for displaying a lackadaisical attitude at the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit which, experts said, earlier signalled a possible thaw in the regional dispute.

However, dampening hopes of reconciliation was Qatari Emir's decision to skip the summit and instead send a delegation which the Quartet found as not having "any authority or directive that could contribute to resolving its crisis."

Prime Minister Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani was also the most senior Qatari official to attend the gathering of Gulf leaders since the emir attended a 2017 summit held in Kuwait.

"Qatar adopted once more a terribly negative approach by sending a representative of the Emir," accused Bahrain's Foreign Minister Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa after the summit.

This attitude, Shaikh Khalid said, reflects Qatar's lack of seriousness to put an end to the crisis which began in June 2017. Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and non-GCC member Egypt imposed a political and economic boycott of Qatar in June 2017 over allegations that Doha backs terrorism



Foreign Minister deplors Qatar's lack of seriousness to end its crisis with Arab quartet



UAE State Minister for International Affairs, Dr Anwar Gargash



Saudi Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Adel Al Jubeir

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SHAIKH KHALID BIN AHMED AL KHALIFA

Shaikh Khalid further rejected Qatari foreign minister's statement that the "talks with Saudi had gone beyond the demands and are now looking into a perspective for the future" as not reflecting the summit views.

Reports earlier said that Riyadh has softened its stance on a list of 13 demands to lift the embargo, including that Doha cut links to the Muslim Brotherhood, close Al Jazeera TV, shutter a Turkish military base and reduce ties with Iran, with whom Qatar shares a giant gas field.

Rejecting claims, Shaikh Khalid said, "Our four countries are fully committed to their firm positions and legitimate demands based on the six principles adopted by the Cairo meeting on July 5, 2017."

The foreign Minister said these principles call for a "commitment to combating extremism and terrorism, an end to all acts of incitement and discouraging to hatred or violence

and full adherence to the 3013 Riyadh Agreement and its supplementary agreement of 2014."

He added: "The principles also call for commitment to all the outcomes of the May 2017 Arab-Islamic American Summit in Riyadh, non-interference in the internal affairs of countries, not supporting outlawed entities and the affirmation of the responsibility of all countries in confronting all forms of extremism and terrorism as a threat to international peace and security."

Misjudgment: Dr Gargash

In Abu Dhabi, the UAE State Minister for International Affairs, Dr Anwar Gargash, echoed Bahrain's view on the issue saying, "the Qatari crisis continues."

Dr Gargash described Emir's absence as "a misjudgment of the situation by his advisors."

On the possibilities of resolving the 2-1/2 year boycott, he said, "the onus lies with the one that caused the crisis, to reconsider erroneous policies that led to its isolation."

Settling the dispute should be "based on the primacy of the interest of the Council," he later wrote on his twitter handle.

"The responsibility begins with the one who triggered the crisis and who should review the wrong policies that led to his isolation. Commitment to covenants, restoring credibility and ending support to extremism and interference are the start of that treatment."

Not enough: Al Jubeir

Earlier, Saudi Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Adel Al Jubeir said that resolving the crisis depends on Qatar taking the steps needed for a change in the situation.

"The Qataris know what these steps are," he said in a speech at the Mediterranean Dialogues in Rome.

Al Jubeir stressed that the Qatari regime has adopted some changes in legal aspects related to supporting terrorism.

However, these steps are not enough to solve the crisis, and there is a lot to be done, he said. Meanwhile, Secretary-Gen-

eral Abdullatif bin Rashid al-Zayani after the 40th Summit held in Riyadh said that the Council will treat "any aggression against any country in the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council as an attack against the whole council."

His comments came after a closed-door meeting which stressed the need to boost military and security cooperation and pledged to create a financial and monetary bloc by 2025.

After the communique was read out, Kuwait's ruling emir Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah, who has long pressed to resolve the Qatar dispute, commended the call for unity.

Addressing King Salman, he said: "God willing, the coming meetings will be better than past meetings."

Unite against Iran: Saudi King

Saudi King Salman, who earlier afforded the Qatari prime minister a traditional welcome, called for regional unity to confront Iran and secure energy supplies and maritime channels.

During his opening speech, the Saudi King stressed that the Gulf countries must unite against the Iranian regime's aggression in the region.

"The Iranian regime has continued its aggressive policies in the region that undermine the stability of neighbouring countries," King Salman said.

Bahrain national football team get gifts worth more than BD4 million



Bahrain national team celebrate after the presentation ceremony of the 24th Arabian Gulf Cup earlier this week.

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Bahrain's national football team has been awarded more than BD 4 million so far for winning the title in the 24th Arabian Gulf Cup earlier this week.

This is according to a high-ranking official in Bahrain football who is closely linked to the national team.

The official said that following their historic victory, which has been celebrated by the entire Kingdom of Bahrain, the national team has been receiving all kinds of financial rewards as well as valuable gifts, such as cars, diamond rings, and others. These awards come either from companies, groups or individuals.

He added that there is no offi-

cial total for the amount awarded to the national team, but if it were all put together, it would come up to more than BD 4 million to date.

Bahrain received US\$3 million alone, around BD1.13 million, from the Gulf Cup's organising committee - US\$ 2 million was the grand prize for winning the tournament while the other US\$ 1 million was for participating.

This US \$1 million amount was given to all the national teams that competed.

Meanwhile, the Bahrain national team were also awarded more than BD1.6 million last night on a live telecast on Bahrain TV.

His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First

Deputy Prime Minister, awarded the team with BD200,000.

An additional BD100,000 each was also awarded by Supreme Council for Environment President HH Shaikh Abdulla bin Hamad Al Khalifa, His Majesty the King's Representative for Charity Works and Youth Affairs, National Security Advisor and Supreme Council for Youth and Sports Chairman HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, and Supreme Council of Youth and Sports First Deputy Chairman Bahrain Olympic Committee President HH Shaikh

Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa.

The national team were also awarded BD150,000 each from Aluminium Bahrain and Bahrain Petroleum Company; BD100,000 each from National Bank of Bahrain and Bank of Bahrain and Kuwait; BD50,000 each from Gulf Air, Batelco, Zain, Kuwait Finance House and Khalid Abdulrahim companies; and various other corporations and businesses.

The official added that there could be even more rewards coming to the national team in the coming days.



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