

13th World Urban Forum opens in Azerbaijan

The Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Jassem Mohamed Al-Budaiwi, took part on Sunday in the official opening of the 13th session of the World Urban Forum, held in the Azerbaijani capital Baku.

The event was inaugurated under the patronage of President Ilham Aliyev, following an official invitation from the head of state. The forum convenes under the theme "Housing the World: Safe and Resilient Cities and Communities," bringing together heads of state, ministers, senior officials, and private sector representatives from around the world.



In his remarks on the occasion, Al-Budaiwi said the GCC's participation reflects the bloc's strong commitment to advancing sustainable urban development and building safe, resilient cities capable of responding to future challenges.

He highlighted that GCC member states have made "qualitative leaps" in urban planning, housing, and smart infrastructure, driven by ambitious national visions aimed at improving quality of life and strengthening sustainability and innovation.

Al-Budaiwi also praised Azerbaijan for hosting and organizing the major international United Nations forum, describing it as an important global platform for exchanging expertise and shaping the future of urban development.

GCC chief tours Bahrain and Saudi pavilions at global urban forum



The Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Jassem Mohammed Al-Budaiwi, visited the pavilions of Bahrain and Saudi Arabia on the sidelines of the 13th World Urban Forum in Baku, Azerbaijan, the GCC General Secretariat said on Monday.

The visit was part of his participation in the international event, which brings together policymakers, experts and institutions to discuss urban development and sustainable city planning.

During the tour, Al-Budaiwi was briefed on initiatives, projects and programmes showcased in both pavilions, highlighting the rapid urban transformation underway in the two Gulf states.

The exhibits focused on sus-

tainable urban development, infrastructure expansion and efforts to enhance quality of life in line with long-term national development strategies.

Al-Budaiwi praised the content presented in both pavilions, commending the efforts of those involved in highlighting Gulf development experiences and showcasing achievements in urban and economic progress.

He said the progress seen across GCC states reflects the vision of Gulf leaders, who continue to prioritise the development of sustainable cities and more prosperous societies, according to the statement.

Oman Condemns Drone Attempt on Saudi Arabia

The Sultanate of Oman on Monday condemned an attempted drone attack targeting the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, denouncing the act as hostile and reaffirming its rejection of such practices.

In a statement issued by its Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

Oman expressed "condemnation and denunciation" of the attempted strike, reiterating its consistent stance against actions that threaten the security and stability of states.

The Sultanate voiced its support for Saudi Arabia and the measures it is taking to safe-



guard its security and maintain stability.

Oman also urged restraint and called for wisdom in addressing regional challenges, stressing the importance of dialogue and diplomatic and political channels as the preferred means to resolve disputes and tensions.

Albania, Qatar Strengthen Ties

Albanian President Bajram Begaj received Qatar's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs in the capital, Tirana, on Monday, where they discussed strengthening bilateral relations.

The Qatari envoy, Shaikh Sultan bin Saad Al-Murikhi, conveyed greetings from Qatar's Amir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, to President Begaj, along with wishes for continued health and prosperity for the Albanian leadership and people.

In return, President Begaj asked the minister to relay his greetings to the Qatari Amir, wishing Qatar further progress, development, and

prosperity.

The meeting reviewed bilateral cooperation between Albania and Qatar and explored ways to enhance ties across various fields, while also discussing issues of mutual concern, the statement added.

Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to expanding dialogue and cooperation between the two countries.



Pakistan PM Meets Envoys in Gulf

Focus placed on regional stability and economic cooperation

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chaired a high-level meeting on Monday with Pakistan's ambassadors posted in Iran and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, focusing on strengthening economic diplomacy, regional ties and investment cooperation, his office said.

The meeting at the Prime Minister's Office brought together senior officials, including Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema, Adviser to the Prime Minister Dr Syed Tauqir Shah, Special Assistant Syed Tariq Fatemi, and Foreign Secretary Amna Baloch.

During the session, Pakistan's envoys briefed the prime minister on the current state of bi-



lateral relations with their host countries. They also highlighted emerging opportunities and key challenges in areas such as trade, investment, remittances, and engagement with the Pakistani diaspora.

Sharif underscored the "historic, economic and strategic importance" of relations with Iran and GCC states in Pakistan's foreign policy framework.

He directed ambassadors to

adopt a more proactive approach to expanding cooperation in trade, investment, energy collaboration, and people-to-people exchanges, according to the statement.

The meeting also reviewed the broader regional and international situation, focusing particularly on efforts to promote peace, stability, and economic connectivity across the wider region.

Saudi envoy meets Ishaq Dar in Islamabad



The Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan, H.E. Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al-Malkiy called on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar in Islamabad on Monday.

During the meeting, both sides discussed the long-standing fraternal relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, focusing on expanding cooperation across multiple fields.

Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar reaffirmed Pakistan's strong commitment to further strengthening bilateral ties and deepening collaboration in areas of mutual interest.

The two leaders also exchanged views on recent regional developments and other matters of shared concern.

The Saudi ambassador appreciated Pakistan's continued role in promoting regional peace and stability, according to an official statement.

OIC condemns Israeli moves in East Jerusalem

Calls for urgent international intervention

The General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) warned against escalating Israeli measures targeting historic properties and Islamic endowments near the Al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied East Jerusalem.

In a statement, the OIC said the seizure of historic buildings and Palestinian-owned properties near the mosque forms part of broader policies aimed at altering the identity of the Old City in Jerusalem and imposing "new demographic and geographic realities" on the ground.

It said these actions are intended to undermine the historical and legal status of holy sites in the area and erase the cultural and civilizational heritage of Palestinians in occupied East Jerusalem.

The General Secretariat also strongly condemned an Israeli plan to convert a seized United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) facility in Jerusalem into a museum and the headquarters of the so-called Israeli Ministry of Security.

It said the building had been

forcibly taken in violation of international law, adding that the move represents an effort to weaken UNRWA's presence and mandate in the occupied territory.

The OIC stressed that Israel has no sovereignty over East Jerusalem, describing the measures as part of broader "racist policies" aimed at undermining the agency and advancing efforts to eliminate the Palestinian refugee issue.

It further argued that such actions violate international law, United Nations resolutions, and

the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice.

The organisation called on the international community to intervene urgently to halt what it described as ongoing violations in Jerusalem, and to ensure protection for UN agencies operating in the occupied Palestinian territory, particularly UNRWA, so they can continue their work without obstruction.

