

## GCC marks 45 years of regional unity and integration

Gulf bloc says cooperation has strengthened stability, economic growth and development across member states

The six-member Gulf Cooperation Council will on Monday mark the 45th anniversary of its founding, celebrating decades of political coordination, economic integration and regional cooperation among Gulf Arab states.

The council was established on May 25, 1981, during a summit in Abu Dhabi, bringing together Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman under a framework aimed at strengthening coordination and unity across political, economic and social sectors.

Officials said the anniversary reflects the vision of the bloc's founding leaders, who sought to unite Gulf states in response to regional and international challenges while promoting security, stability and development.

Over the past four and a half



operation and scientific research across member states.

GCC officials say Gulf citizens have benefited directly from the integration process through eased movement, employment, investment, education and healthcare access across the six countries.

The anniversary comes amid continued regional and global economic changes, with Gulf states increasingly presenting collective action as a strategic necessity to address security concerns and economic transformation.

According to GCC officials, GCC countries have also recorded progress on several United Nations sustainable development indicators, particularly in healthcare, education and basic services.

decades, the GCC has expanded cooperation through initiatives including the Gulf common market, the customs union and joint projects in infrastructure, electricity connectivity, education, healthcare and digital transformation.

The bloc has also increased coordination in defence, security and foreign policy, while encouraging private-sector co-

## Bangladesh envoy delivers message to Kuwait

Kuwaiti Foreign Minister, Shaikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a written message from Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman concerning bilateral relations and ways to strengthen cooperation between the two countries, Kuwaiti state media reported.

The message was delivered by Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Shaikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah during a meeting with Bangladesh envoy Humayun Kabir, alongside Bangladesh Minister of State for Civil Aviation and Tourism Emdadul Haque and State Minister Intiaz Ahmed.



During the meeting, both sides reviewed bilateral relations and discussed frameworks to further enhance cooperation across various sectors.

The talks also covered the latest regional and international developments, with both sides exchanging views on issues of common interest.

## Oman and EU eye stronger cooperation

Oman's Foreign Minister, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, held talks on Sunday with former European Council President and ex-Prime Minister of Belgium, Charles Michel, discussing regional and international developments, the Omani foreign ministry said.

During the meeting, both sides reviewed a range of geopolitical issues and exchanged views on ongoing tensions across several regions. The discussions underscored the importance of supporting diplomatic and political efforts aimed at de-escalation and restoring stability and peace.

According to the statement, both officials stressed adhering to unified international standards, respecting state sovereignty, and complying with international law as guiding principles for addressing global crises.

Michel praised Oman's "modern renaissance" and its "balanced and wise" foreign policy, highlighting Muscat's approach

to managing regional challenges through dialogue and neutrality. He also commended the Sultanate's consistent commitment to peace, friendship, and diplomatic engagement with all partners.

He further expressed appreciation for the discussions held during his first visit to Oman, noting the warm reception and the country's openness to tourism and business. Michel also pointed to Oman's strategic geographical position and its attractiveness as a logistics and trade hub linking East and West as well as North and South.

The talks additionally covered



ered Omani-Belgian relations and broader ties between Oman and the European Union, with both sides exploring opportunities to further develop cooperation across political, economic, and diplomatic fields.

## Jordan, Venezuela sign four deals

Agreements cover agriculture, diplomacy, and economic cooperation framework

Jordan and Venezuela agreed on Sunday to deepen bilateral cooperation across multiple sectors, signing four agreements and outlining further steps to expand economic and political ties built over more than seven decades, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi said.

Safadi said the long-standing relationship between Amman and Caracas offers "significant opportunities" for enhanced cooperation that would benefit both countries, following extensive talks with Venezuelan Foreign Minister Yván Gil.

The discussions focused on advancing practical measures to broaden ties and establish new frameworks for collaboration, including signing four memoranda of understanding covering agriculture, political consultations, diplomatic training, and the creation of a joint economic cooperation committee.

Safadi said the agreements mark an important step toward institutionalising bilateral engagement, including launching regular political consultations



between the two governments.

Both sides are also working on additional accords covering the avoidance of double taxation, investment protection, and visa exemptions, aimed at creating a more conducive environment for cooperation in sectors such as agriculture, energy, investment, culture, and information technology.

The minister added that Jordan and Venezuela are exploring the establishment of a joint council bringing together private sector representatives from both countries to strengthen trade and investment links.

Safadi described the visit as

the beginning of a broader phase of cooperation, stressing that there is "strong political will" on both sides to advance relations and achieve shared economic gains.

He also praised Venezuela's support for the two-state solution, while noting that discussions included wider regional developments and ongoing efforts to restore stability and security.

Both ministers underscored the importance of coordinated international efforts to support regional peace initiatives and reinforce stability, according to Safadi.

## Saudia receives first Airbus A321XLR in Middle East and Africa

New long-range narrow-body jet supports expansion plans and upgraded passenger experience

Saudi Arabia's national carrier Saudia has received its first Airbus A321XLR aircraft, becoming the first airline in the Middle East and Africa to take delivery of the extra long-range narrow-body jet.

The delivery marks a milestone in the airline's fleet expansion programme as it seeks to strengthen international connectivity while improving operational efficiency and sustainability performance.

With a range of up to 8,700 kilometres and the ability to operate flights lasting up to nine hours, the A321XLR will allow Saudia to serve longer international routes using a narrow-body aircraft. The airline said the aircraft would help it better match passenger demand while maintaining onboard comfort and service standards.



The aircraft is also the first in the fleet to feature key elements of "The New Saudia Experience," the carrier's upgraded onboard product focused on comfort, connectivity, entertainment, dining and service consistency.

The cabin includes 24 Business Class suites designed to provide greater privacy and comfort, along with 120 economy-class seats equipped with redesigned interiors, 13-inch en-

tertainment screens and charging ports.

Saudia said the aircraft would also offer high-speed inflight internet connectivity to support browsing, streaming, virtual meetings and access to entertainment platforms during flights.

Business Class passengers will additionally have access to the airline's inflight chef service, offering personalised dining with a selection of Saudi and international cuisine.

## Arab, Islamic nations condemn Somaliland 'embassy' move in Jerusalem

Qatar and 15 other Arab and Islamic countries on Sunday condemned the self-declared Somaliland region's illegal move to open an alleged embassy in occupied Jerusalem, warning that the step violated international law and undermined the status of the holy city.

In a joint statement issued from Doha, the foreign ministers of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Turkey, Pakistan, Indonesia, Djibouti, Somalia, Palestine, Oman, Sudan, Yemen, Lebanon, Mauritania and Algeria said they "strongly condemn" the reported opening of a Somaliland representation office in Jerusalem.

The ministers described the



move as "illegal and unacceptable", saying it constituted a "flagrant violation" of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions concerning the status of Jerusalem.

The statement said the move directly undermined the legal and historical status of the occupied city and rejected any unilateral actions aimed at imposing what it called an illegal reality in Jerusalem or granting legitimacy to entities or

arrangements that contravene international law.

The ministers reiterated that East Jerusalem remains occupied Palestinian territory since 1967 and stressed that any measures seeking to alter the city's legal or historical status were "null and void" and carried no legal effect.

The countries also reaffirmed their support for the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Somalia, rejecting any unilateral actions that could undermine Somali sovereignty or threaten the unity of its territory.

Somaliland declared independence from Somalia in 1991 but has not gained widespread international recognition.