

Minister hails “strongest ever UK-Gulf ties” on first visit to the region

The UK and Gulf states are working in partnership to tackle coronavirus and save lives, Middle East Minister James Cleverly said following a visit to the region.

During his three day visit to Qatar and Oman, the Minister championed the UK’s strong and historic ties between the respective Governments as well as their leadership in preventing the spread of the deadly disease. At a meeting with His Excellency Qais Al-Yousef, Minister of Trade for Oman, the Minister set out the UK’s high ambition to grow our trade and investment with the Gulf, already our third largest trading partner outside the EU.

At a meeting with His Excellency Soltan bin Saad Soltan Al-Muraikhi, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar, Minister Cleverly thanked Qatar for its help in repatriating British Nationals throughout the pandemic.

In Qatar, he also visited the Education City Stadium for the Fifa World Cup 2022, offering the UK’s full support to ensuring a safe tournament for fans travelling from all around the world.

Minister for the Middle East, James Cleverly, said:

The UK and the Gulf are working in partnership to stop the spread of coronavirus and save lives, demonstrating our strongest ever UK-Gulf ties.

On my visit to Oman and Qatar, I have seen the true strength of the bilateral relationships between our great countries. From co-operation on security, to strengthening our trade links, to sharing our unique development expertise, our ties are helping to improve our mutual prosperity.

In Muscat, Minister Cleverly met Houthi representative Mohammed Abdul Salam. He urged the Houthis to work constructively with UN Special Envoy to Yemen, Martin Griffiths, and agree to his peace proposals to end the conflict and alleviate the suffering of those in need.

He also raised concerns about restrictions in northern Houthi-controlled areas which are preventing aid from reaching millions of those most in need and called for safe, rapid, and unhindered access for aid workers and supplies, particularly given the risk of famine this year.

The Minister also met His Excellency Akbar Al Baker, the CEO of Qatar Airways, to discuss new regional routes into the UK, which are helping to drive economic growth in the UK beyond London.