

UAE and Saudi form new group separate from GCC

The UAE on Tuesday announced it has formed a new economic and partnership group with Saudi Arabia, separate from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), a move that could undermine the council amid a diplomatic crisis with Qatar.

The Emirati Foreign Ministry announcement, just hours ahead of a GCC meeting in Kuwait, said the new “joint cooperation committee” was approved by the UAE’s ruler and President, Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nayhan.

Saudi Arabia did not immediately comment on the new partnership.

It wasn’t immediately clear how the development could affect the six-member GCC meeting, which is expected to focus on the Qatar issue. Half of the GCC members are boycotting Doha.

The Emirati Ministry said the new “committee is assigned to cooperate and coordinate between the UAE and Saudi Arabia in all military, political, economic, trade and cultural fields, as well as others, in the interest of the two countries.”

The UAE and Saudi Arabia have cultivated even-closer ties in recent years. Emirati troops are deeply involved in the Saudi-led war in Yemen. Abu Dhabi’s powerful Crown Prince, Mohammad bin Zayed al-Nayhan, also is believed to have a closer relationship with Saudi Arabia’s young Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

The Emirati announcement did not say whether any other Gulf Arab countries would be invited to join the new group.

Source: xaam.in