



# Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



## DPG WEST ASIA REVIEW



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**Delhi Policy Group**

Core 5A, 1st Floor, India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi- 110003

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## DPG WEST ASIA REVIEW Volume IV, Issue 48

### ABOUT US

Founded in 1994, the Delhi Policy Group (DPG) is among India's oldest think tanks with its primary focus on strategic and international issues of critical national interest. DPG is a non-partisan institution and is independently funded by a non-profit Trust. Over past decades, DPG has established itself in both domestic and international circles and is widely recognised today among the top security think tanks of India and of Asia's major powers.

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At a time of disruptive change in the global order, DPG aims to deliver research based, relevant, reliable and realist policy perspectives to an actively engaged public, both at home and abroad. DPG is deeply committed to the growth of India's national power and purpose, the security and prosperity of the people of India and India's contributions to the global public good. We remain firmly anchored within these foundational principles which have defined DPG since its inception.

### DPG WEST ASIA REVIEW

DPG West Asia Review contains major developments in West Asia of strategic relevance to India, compiled from open source media. To subscribe please [click here](#).

Your comments and feedback can be addressed to Sanket Joshi at [sanket@dpg.org.in](mailto:sanket@dpg.org.in).

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## Abstract

India and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have decided to resume Free Trade Agreement (FTA) talks. It is to be noted that, GCC countries contribute toward 35 percent of India's oil imports and 70 percent of gas imports. Meanwhile, underscoring the deepening strategic partnership between New Delhi and Cairo, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi has been invited to be the 'chief guest' at India's 74<sup>th</sup> Republic Day in January 2023.

To further enhance India-UAE partnership, External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar met his Emirati counterpart Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan in New Delhi on November 22. Two leaders had a comprehensive dialogue that included "trade", "investment", "education", and "food security". India and UAE are also in talks to conduct bilateral trade in their respective currencies. Dr. Jaishankar also met Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Ali Bagheri Kani on November 23. Their talks focused on "bilateral cooperation", "regional issues", and "JCPOA". India abstained from voting on United Nations Human Rights Council resolution calling for a fact-finding mission to be set up to investigate alleged human rights violations against protestors in Iran.

With JCPOA becoming increasingly unsalvageable, Iranian Supreme Leader Sayyid Ali Khamenei asserted that "negotiations with the U.S. will not solve our problems" adding that the U.S. "seeks ransom from Iran", which Tehran is not willing to pay nor willing to cross red lines on fundamental issues. Meanwhile, Israel Defence Forces Chief Lt. Gen. Aviv Kohavi following his meetings with the U.S. officials announced that the two countries would "significantly expand" their joint military activities in the Middle East to counter Iran.

Among other regional developments, Secretary of State Antony Blinken and his Qatari counterpart Mohammed Bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani met in Doha for the 5<sup>th</sup> US-Qatar Strategic Dialogue aimed at advancing cooperation on a range of bilateral, regional, and global issues. Meanwhile, the nationwide protests in China against President Xi Jinping's stringent zero-covid policy have sparked oil demand concerns leading to a fall in crude prices to around USD 74.12/barrel (WTI) and USD 81.20/barrel (Brent) on November 28.

Links to major developments in West Asia of strategic relevance to India, compiled from open-source media, can be found below.

## Bahrain

### [India, GCC Agree To Resume Talks on Free Trade Agreement](#)

November 25, 2022, Arab News

India and the Gulf Cooperation Council have decided to resume talks on a free trade agreement, India's trade minister and the GCC secretary-general announced, 14 years after the last round of negotiations.

### [GCC Countries Contribute Almost 35 Percent of India's Oil Imports: Union Minister Piyush Goyal](#)

November 25, 2022, Deccan Herald

Union Minister Piyush Goyal informed that the GCC countries contribute almost 35 percent of India's oil imports and 70 percent of India's gas imports.

## Egypt

### [India Invites Egypt's President Fattah El-Sisi For Republic Day 2023](#)

November 25, 2022, WION

As India increases its political and military ties with Cairo, New Delhi has extended an invitation to Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi to be the chief guest at Republic Day on January 26.

### [Egypt, Israel Seek To Boost Trade Exchange Following COP27](#)

November 22, 2022, AL-Monitor

Taking advantage of the 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27) hosted by Egypt in the Red Sea resort city of Sharm el-Sheikh, Israel and Egypt seem to be considering different ways to promote cooperation in technology and investments while increasing their trade exchange.

## Iraq

### [Oil Falls Over \\$2 A Barrel As China's Covid Protests Fuel Demand Fears](#)

November 28, 2022, Reuters

Oil futures fell more than \$2 a barrel on Monday (November 28), with WTI hitting an 11-month low, as protests in top importer China over strict COVID-19 curbs fuelled demand concerns.

### [Saudi Arabia and Iraq Reiterate Their Support for a Production Cut](#)

November 25, 2022, Oilprice.com

Following a bilateral meeting on Thursday (November 24), the energy ministers of Saudi Arabia and Iraq reiterated their support for the oil production cut agreed upon last month.

### [Iran Targets Kurds Sheltering In Iraq: 'We're Being Used as a Scapegoat'](#)

November 27, 2022, Financial Times

For decades, Iranian Kurdish opposition groups have found relative safety in neighbouring Iraq, where they set up bases and agitated for greater freedoms at home. Some even fought alongside US-backed Iraqi Kurdish security forces against ISIS militants.

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## Iran

### [External Affairs Minister Dr. Jaishankar Meets Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister](#)

November 24, 2022, India Today

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday (November 23) met Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Bagheri Kani here and the two leaders discussed bilateral cooperation and regional issues.

### [India Abstains From UN Vote Against Iran's Crackdown on Anti-Hijab Protesters](#)

November 26, 2022, Hindustan Times

India abstained from voting on a United Nations Human Rights Council resolution to set up a fact-finding mission to investigate the alleged Human Rights violation committed against protesters in Iran. India was one of 16 abstentions on the resolution, sponsored by Germany and the Netherlands.

### [Moscow, Tehran to Raise Volume of Russian Goods to India via INSTC](#)

November 28, 2022, The Economic Times

Close on the heels of Foreign Minister S Jaishankar's Moscow visit, Russia and Iran have agreed on the transit of 12 million tons of Russian goods via Tehran along the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), with both Moscow and Delhi seeking to increase trade volumes.

### [Iran's Supreme Leader Khamenei: Talks With The US Will Not Resolve Our Issues, US Wants Ransom](#)

November 27, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Talks between Iran and the United States will not resolve their ongoing issues or calm the protests sweeping throughout the Islamic Republic, according to Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.

### [Iran Boosts Uranium Enrichment in Response To IAEA Resolution](#)

November 22, 2022, AL Jazeera

Iran has increased its enrichment of uranium and use of advanced centrifuges at two nuclear sites in response to a censure resolution passed against it at the global nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

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[Iran Will Turn All-Out War By US, Israel, Regional Allies Into Their Graveyard: IRGC Chief](#)

November 27, 2022, Press TV (Iran)

The Chief Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has warned against seditious attempts by the United States, the Israeli regime, and their cohorts to sow discord and division in Iran through inciting riots, emphasizing that the Islamic Republic will decisively thwart the hostile plots.

[Iran Media Looks Beyond Nuclear Deal As Negotiations 'Fail'](#)

November 24, 2022, Iran International

With nuclear talks frozen and the US and Europe levying further sanctions, Iranian commentators are looking at life under permanent US 'maximum pressure.'

## Israel

### [26/11: A Shared Pain That Binds India, Israel Together](#)

November 27, 2022, The Pioneer

The 26/11 Mumbai attacks have forged a strong bond between India and Israel. Lauding the courage of India and the people of Mumbai, Israel has said that the enormous loss on that "horrible day" in November 2008 continues to be an emotional moment for a lot of Israelis who feel that the 26/11 terror strike "is a shared pain" that binds India and Israel together.

### [Jerusalem Bombings: Teenager Killed, 19 Others Injured](#)

November 23, 2022, The Jerusalem Post

At least one person was killed and 19 wounded in two explosions in bus stops at separate entrances to Jerusalem on Wednesday morning (November 23), in what police are treating as a coordinated double terror attack.

### [IDF Chief Says Joint Activities With US in Mideast To Be 'Significantly Expanded'](#)

November 24, 2022, The Times of Israel

Israel Defense Forces chief Aviv Kohavi said joint activities with the US military in the Middle East would be "significantly expanded" in the near future, following a five-day trip to the US.

### [IDF Chief Presses US To Step Up Joint Plans To Counter Iran Militarily](#)

November 22, 2022, The Times of Israel

Israel Defense Forces chief Aviv Kohavi told American defence officials in Washington that the two militaries must accelerate joint plans for offensive actions against Iran, the Israeli military said.

### [Israeli Arms Exports Mark Significant Increase In 2021](#)

November 27, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Figures published by the Israeli Defense Ministry's International Defense Cooperation Directorate showed that the Israeli military and security exports "surged by 30 percent" in 2021.

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[Israel Gives Dozens of Countries Intel On Iran's Arms Transfers To Russia – Report](#)

November 26, 2022, The Times of Israel

Israel has provided intelligence to dozens of Western countries and NATO about Iran's weapons transfers to Moscow to support its war on Ukraine and has been lobbying allies to put pressure on Tehran, according to a new report.

[Arab League: Situation in Palestine on Verge of Explosion](#)

November 25, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Secretary-General of the Arab League, Ahmed Aboul Gheit, warned that the Israeli violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory are escalating in a manner that could lead the situation to explode right before the international community's sight, which seems to have abandoned its responsibility to achieve the vision of a two-state solution through negotiations.

[Benjamin Netanyahu Signs Coalition Deal with Israeli Far-right](#)

November 25, 2022, NBC NEWS

Israeli Prime Minister-designate Benjamin Netanyahu's conservative Likud party signed its first coalition deal with Itamar Ben-Gvir's far-right Jewish Power party, Likud said in a statement.

[Israel's Netanyahu Agrees To Legalise West Bank Settler Outposts](#)

November 17, 2022, AL Jazeera

Benjamin Netanyahu has pledged to legalise dozens of illegal settler outposts in the occupied West Bank, after a meeting with far-right, controversial politician Itamar Ben-Gvir.

## Jordan

### [Jordan to Receive \\$845 Million in Aid From US](#)

November 27, 2022, AL Arabiya

The US will provide Jordan with more than \$845 million in annual financial support, officials in Amman said Sunday (November 27), as the country remains heavily dependent on foreign aid.

## Kuwait

### [Putin's War Leaves West More Reliant Than Ever On Asian Fuel](#)

November 28, 2022, The Japan Times

The war in Ukraine is strengthening the role of Asia and the Middle East as the world's main providers of fuels like diesel and gasoline that are crucial to the global economy.

## Lebanon

### [Islamic State: Lebanon's Economic Collapse Drives Recruitment](#)

November 18, 2022, BBC

"Normally people join IS from European countries because of an ideology, or personal reasons. But for the people who join from here [Lebanon], it's because of the poverty".

### [Lebanon Fails For 7th Time To Elect New President Amid Political Deadlock](#)

November 24, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Lebanese lawmakers failed for the seventh time to elect a new president as the country grapples with a deepening political and economic crisis.

## Oman

### [US Turns To Oman To Mediate Hostage Release in Syria](#)

November 26, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Oman has stepped up its mediation efforts in hopes of releasing US hostages held in Syria through effective mediation at the request of the US.

## Qatar

### [India Seeks Consular Access To Eight Former Navy Officers Detained in Qatar: MEA](#)

November 25, 2022, Mint

To bring back eight former Indian Navy officers who have been detained in Doha since August 30, the embassy has been pursuing the matter with the Qatar authorities.

### [Remarks by Secretary Antony J. Blinken and Qatari Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammed Bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani at a Joint Press Meet in Doha](#)

November 22, 2022, U.S. Department of State

### [Qatar Signs Deal To Supply Gas To China For 27 Years](#)

November 21, 2022, CNN

QatarEnergy chief Saad al-Kaabi said the firm signed a 27-year sales and purchase agreement with China's Sinopec, the longest in the history of liquefied natural gas (LNG) deals.

## Saudi Arabia

### [Saudi Arabia and South Korea 'Drastically' Deepen Ties After Crown Prince Visit](#)

November 27, 2022, Middle East Eye

Saudi Arabia signed new multi-billion dollar deals with South Korea last week, in the kingdom's latest bid to boost ties with one of its main oil consumers and the fourth largest economy in Asia.

### [Israeli PM-designate Netanyahu Salutes Saudi Arabia's Football Victory over Argentina](#)

November 23, 2022, The Times of Israel

Israeli PM-designate Benjamin Netanyahu and Hadash-Ta'al MK Ahmad Tibi, who disagree on nearly everything else, were among several Israeli lawmakers who publicly rejoiced over Saudi Arabia's shock FIFA World Cup victory over Argentina.

### [Russia Drafts Decree Banning Oil Sales To Price-Cap Participants](#)

November 26, 2022, The Economic Times

The Kremlin is drafting a presidential decree that will prohibit Russian companies and any traders buying the nation's oil from selling it to anyone that participates in a price cap.

## Syria

### [Rockets Target US Syria Base In Latest Strike: Centcom](#)

November 26, 2022, Arab News

Two rockets targeted a US patrol base in northeastern Syria, the third such attack in nine days, US Central Command said.

### [Turkish President Erdogan Vows to Create 'Safe Zone' in Syria](#)

November 26, 2022, DAWN

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan vowed to protect Turkey's southern border with a "safe zone" in Syria after Ankara launched a barrage of air strikes against Kurdish fighters.

## Türkiye

### [Pakistan PM Invites Turkey To Join China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: Report](#)

November 26, 2022, Hindustan Times

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has invited Turkey to join the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), amid India's continued opposition to the projects in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

## UAE

### [EAM Jaishankar, UAE Counterpart Review Progress in Relations](#)

November 23, 2022, The Indian Express

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Tuesday (November 22) met with his UAE counterpart, Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and noted that bilateral trade has shown appreciable growth under the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), which came into force on May 1, 2022.

### [India, UAE In Talks For Rupee-Dirham Bilateral Trade; PM Modi's Bid To Internationalize Currency](#)

November 25, 2022, Hindustan Times

India and the UAE are in talks to conduct bilateral trade in their own currencies. The central banks of both countries are working on standard operating procedures and modalities to facilitate trade in rupees and dirhams.

### [Bucking Regional Denial, UAE To Include Holocaust In School Curricula](#)

November 22, 2022, The Times of Israel

The United Arab Emirates is taking major steps to combat a regional culture of Holocaust denial in the wake of the 2020 Abraham Accords that normalized its relations with Israel.

## Yemen

### [Yemen FM: Houthis Must Be Classified as 'Terrorist Group'](#)

November 27, 2022, Arab News

The Houthis must be classified as a terrorist group, Yemen's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ahmed Awad bin Mubarak told the US Ambassador to Yemen, Steven Fagin.

### [Saudi Arabia Sponsors \\$1bn Economic Reform In Yemen](#)

November 27, 2022, Arab News

Under the sponsorship of Saudi Arabia, the Arab Monetary Fund has signed a \$1 billion agreement with the Yemeni government to revitalize its flagging economy.



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