



Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



DPG WEST ASIA REVIEW



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Delhi Policy Group

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ABOUT US

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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.

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Contents

| | |
|--------------------|----|
| Abstract | 1 |
| Bahrain | 3 |
| Egypt | 4 |
| Iraq | 5 |
| Iran | 6 |
| Israel | 8 |
| Jordan | 9 |
| Kuwait | 10 |
| Lebanon | 11 |
| Oman | 12 |
| Qatar | 13 |
| Saudi Arabia | 14 |
| Syria | 16 |
| Türkiye | 17 |
| UAE | 18 |
| Yemen | 20 |

Abstract

External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar will inaugurate 'India Global Forum' in UAE on December 12. This five-day forum brings together political, business, and cultural personalities from the two countries to discuss India's global aspirations and priorities during its G-20 Presidency.

India's Department of Commerce has sought details from the Agriculture Ministry and Embassy in Tehran as to why Iran has stopped importing rice and tea from India. In another development, G7 "Price Cap" and ambiguity in the insurance rates for tankers carrying Russian crude have slowed down their movement, particularly off the coast of Turkey. This is unlikely to impact the movement of Russian crude to India. Meanwhile, Russia has offered to collaborate with India on leasing and building large-capacity ships.

Chinese President Xi Jinping attended 'China-Arab States Summit' and 'China-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Summit in Riyadh, on December 9. Xinhua commentary asserted that the two summits have taken China-Arab and China-GCC relations to "new heights" by "strengthening mutually beneficial cooperation", "promoting common security and development", and "advancing dialogue among civilisations".

China and Saudi Arabia are aligned on several major policy issues, including the digital economy, space research, infrastructure, Iran's nuclear program, Yemen war, and the Ukraine conflict. To further internationalise the Chinese Yuan, President Xi Jinping emphasised the use of the Yuan in importing oil and gas from the Gulf. Non-interference in domestic affairs remains a shared principle between China and Saudi Arabia.

Concerned with these developments, John Kirby - White House National Security Council spokesman warned that China's attempts at spreading its influence around the world was "not conducive to preserving the international rules-based order". Reiterating that "the U.S. is not asking nations to choose between the U.S. and China", John Kirby reminded that "Washington was well poised to lead the strategic competition with Beijing". On its part, Saudi Arabia maintained that it remains "open to everyone" and will not abandon cooperation with the U.S. in pursuit of relations with China. The U.S. also expressed concerns over an emerging full-fledged "defence partnership" between Iran and Russia.

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has called on Israel to surrender its nuclear weapons and implement UN resolutions on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

Among other regional developments, owing to high crude prices, Saudi Arabia's GDP grew by 8.8 percent year-on-year in the third quarter of 2022. While, UAE, in collaboration with Japanese startup iSpace and SpaceX has launched the Arab world's first mission (Rashid Rover) to the moon.

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

Bahrain

[President Xi Jinping Meets with King of Bahrain Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa](#)

December 10, 2022, Ministry of Foreign Affairs - People's Republic of China

President Xi Jinping pointed out that China supports Bahrain in safeguarding its national sovereignty, security, and stability and thanked Bahrain for its long-term and firm support to China on issues concerning China's core interests.

[Bahraini FM: Palestinian Statehood Bedrock of Abraham Accords Success](#)

December 4, 2022, The Jerusalem Post

The Abraham Accords will ultimately only succeed if a two-state resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is achieved, Bahrain's Foreign Minister Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani said at a special briefing in Manama during President Isaac Herzog's state visit.

Egypt

[Chinese President Xi Jinping Meets with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi](#)

December 9, 2022, Ministry of Foreign Affairs - People's Republic of China

President Xi Jinping pointed out that as the regional and international environments are undergoing profound and complex changes, the strategic and overarching importance of China-Egypt relations has become all the more evident.

[Egypt Urges Israel to Refrain From Violence Against Palestinians](#)

December 9, 2022, Haaretz

The statement by Egypt's Foreign Affairs Ministry warned Israel that the current situation in Palestinian territories could 'deteriorate towards further bloodshed'.

[Russian President Putin Floats The Possibility That Russia May Abandon 'No First Use' Nuclear Doctrine](#)

December 10, 2022, Egypt Independent

Russian President Vladimir Putin, for the second time this week, floated the possibility that Russia may formally change its military doctrine of not being the first to use nuclear weapons in a conflict, days after he warned of the "increasing" threat of nuclear war.

Iraq

[Xi Jinping Meets with Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' Sabbar al-Sudani](#)

December 9, 2022, Ministry of Foreign Affairs - People's Republic of China

China appreciates that Iraq has always firmly supported China on issues concerning core interests, and China will continue to firmly support Iraq in safeguarding national sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity and back all factions in Iraq to strengthen unity and cooperation. China is ready to work hand in hand with Iraq to keep deepening the China-Iraq strategic partnership.

[Oil Drops In Volatile Trade, Records Biggest Weekly Slump In Months](#)

December 9, 2022, Reuters

Oil prices settled lower in volatile trading on Friday (December 9), with both benchmarks recording their biggest weekly declines in months, as growing recession fears negated any supply woes after weak economic data from China, Europe, and the United States.

[Russia Is Selling Crude Oil To Asia Above The \\$60 Price Cap](#)

December 9, 2022, Oilprice.com

Russia's ESPO grade, the crude from Russia's Far East is selling in Asia above the \$60 price cap as it appears that Russia is currently handling the short Russian Far East-China route with Russian tankers and insurance.

[Russia Offers To Help India Overcome Crude Price Cap: Reports](#)

December 11, 2022, The Times of India

Russia is said to have offered to help India overcome the oil price cap which has been imposed by Western nations on Moscow.

Iran

[Indian Government Seeks Info From The Embassy On Iran's Bar On Rice, Tea Imports](#)

December 7, 2022, Business Standard

The department of commerce has urged the agriculture ministry as well as the diplomatic mission in Tehran to apprise it of details as to why Iranian buyers have stopped the import of rice and tea from India, a senior government official said.

[US Warns of Expanding Iran, Russia Defence 'Partnership'](#)

December 9, 2022, AL Jazeera

The United States has accused Russia of providing advanced military assistance to Iran, including air defence systems, as it warned of deepening defence ties between Moscow and Tehran, with Russia using Iranian drones to hit targets in Ukraine.

[Iran To Potentially Receive Russian Su-35 Fighter Within Year](#)

December 10, 2022, Mehr News Agency

Russia and Iran were considering setting up a drone assembly line in Russia for the Ukraine conflict, while Russia was training Iranian pilots on the Sukhoi Su-35 fighter, with Iran potentially receiving deliveries of the plane within the year, White House official John Kirby claimed.

[Iran Summons Chinese Ambassador Over Islands Dispute Statement With UAE](#)

December 11, 2022, AL Jazeera

Iran called in China's ambassador after Beijing issued a controversial joint statement with Arab states dealing, among other things, with three disputed islands.

[Australia Sanctions Iran's Morality Police, Russia Over Human Rights Violations](#)

December 10, 2022, Hindustan Times

Australia's Foreign Minister Penny Wong said the government would place targeted sanctions on Russia and Iran in response to what it said were "egregious" human rights violations.

[Iran Conducts First Execution Over Anti-Government Protests](#)

December 8, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Iran has executed a protestor for the first time since the nationwide protests began almost three months ago, as the threat of mass executions of other protestors increasingly looms.

Israel

[Report: Israel Warns Lebanon Will Bomb Beirut Airport If It's Used For Iran Weapon Shipments](#)

December 10, 2022, The Times of Israel

Israel has warned Lebanon that it could bomb Beirut's international airport, according to one report, after an earlier report claimed Iran had recently transferred weaponry to Hezbollah terror group via civilian flights.

[UN: Israel Must Take 'Immediate Steps' To Give Up Nuclear Weapons](#)

December 8, 2022, Middle East Monitor

The UN General Assembly has called on Israel to take "immediate steps" to surrender its nuclear weapons and implement UN resolutions fully on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

[President Herzog Grants Netanyahu 10 More Days to Form Coalition, Adds a Warning](#)

December 9, 2022, The Times of Israel

Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu now has until December 21 to finalize his right, far-right, ultra-Orthodox coalition; It 'must work for the entire public,' maintain a bond with Jewish Diaspora, says President Herzog.

[IDF Cyber Defence Unit Holds Drill With US Cyber Command](#)

December 9, 2022, The Times of Israel

The drill included training for "several real-world scenarios... with an emphasis on the Middle East," the Israel Defence Forces said.

[US Opposes UN 'Blacklist' of Israeli Settlements in West Bank, Says It Poses 'Genuine Threat' To Firms](#)

December 10, 2022, The Times of Israel

The US declared that it opposes the United Nations database of companies that operate in West Bank settlements, saying it has not cooperated with the office responsible and will not be doing so in the future.

Jordan

[How Israel, Jordan and Palestine Can Cooperate To Slow Dead Sea's Demise](#)

December 5, 2022, Arab News

Water levels have been falling over the past half-century, endangering the salt lake's very existence. Joint efforts to revive the Jordan River and a canal to the Mediterranean Sea are among potential solutions to slow the Dead Sea's demise.

Kuwait

[President Xi Jinping Meets with Crown Prince of Kuwait Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah](#)

December 9, 2022, Ministry of Foreign Affairs - People's Republic of China

Noting that China supports Kuwait in safeguarding national sovereignty and territorial integrity, President Xi Jinping commended Kuwait for adhering to the one-China principle and supporting China on issues concerning core interests including Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Xinjiang. China will continue to be a reliable partner of Kuwait and work together with Kuwait to create a better future for China-Kuwait relations.

Lebanon

[President Xi Jinping Meets Lebanese PM on Ties](#)

December 9, 2022, Xinhua

Chinese President Xi Jinping met Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati in Riyadh. During the meeting, Xi said that China and Lebanon enjoy traditional friendship and have always supported each other.

Oman

[Oman's Energy Minister Says Oil Producers Are Uneasy Over Russia Cap](#)

December 8, 2022, Bloomberg

Oman's energy minister said there's widespread unease among oil-reliant economies over the cap that the Group of Seven nations has imposed on the price of Russian barrels.

[Xi Says China To Deepen Friendship and Cooperation With Oman](#)

December 10, 2022, CGTN

Xi pointed out that China and Oman have a long history of friendship since the two countries were linked by the Maritime Silk Road in ancient times. Xi said China is willing to consolidate mutual trust, deepen friendship and cooperation, and make new progress in the China-Oman strategic partnership under new conditions.

Qatar

[President Xi Says China Ready to Improve Cooperation with Qatar in Energy, Finance, and Investment](#)

December 9, 2022, Xinhua

China is ready to expand cooperation with Qatar in traditional energy such as natural gas and renewable energy such as photovoltaic and wind energy, and raise the level of bilateral cooperation in finance and investment, Chinese President Xi Jinping said when meeting with Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani.

[US Journalist Dies At FIFA Match In Qatar; Brother Says, 'He Was Killed'](#)

December 10, 2022, Mint

A US journalist, who was briefly detained in Qatar while wearing a rainbow shirt in support of the LGBTQ community, died.

Saudi Arabia

[China and Saudi Arabia Pledge To Widen Ties To 'all Fields' and Work Together On Iran Nuclear Programme](#)

December 9, 2022, South China Morning Post

China and Saudi Arabia pledged to further expand their cooperation to areas such as technology, security and Iran in a joint declaration during President Xi Jinping's visit to the kingdom.

[China-Arab Summit Opens Up New Prospects For Building Community With Shared Future](#)

December 10, 2022, Xinhua

Observers view President Xi's visit to the Middle East as an opportunity to bring China-Arab relations and China-GCC relations to new heights, to strengthen future cooperation, promote common security and development, and to further advance dialogue among civilizations.

[China's President Xi Calls For Oil Trade In Yuan At Gulf Summit In Riyadh](#)

December 9, 2022, Reuters

President Xi Jinping told Gulf Arab leaders that China would work to buy oil and gas in yuan, a move that would support Beijing's goal to establish its currency internationally and weaken the U.S. dollar's grip on world trade.

[5 Key Takeaways from Xi's trip to Saudi Arabia](#)

December 10, 2022, CNN

[US Warns of China Influence in the Middle East](#)

December 8, 2022, Middle East Monitor

The White House responded to Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Saudi Arabia by warning that Beijing's attempt to spread influence worldwide is "not conducive" to international order.

[Saudi Arabia Will Not Abandon Cooperation With The U.S. In Pursuit of Ties With China, FM Says](#)

December 11, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Following the China-Arab and China-Gulf summits held in Riyadh this week, in the presence of Chinese President Xi Jinping, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal

bin Farhan stated that the kingdom is "open to everyone" and that it believes in cooperation "with everyone" to achieve mutual interests.

[Saudi Arabia Seeks Drugs From India](#)

December 10, 2022, Mint

In what will add heft to India's credentials as 'pharmacy of the world', Saudi Arabia has reached out to the Indian Drug Manufacturers' Association (IDMA) to help achieve drug security for the Gulf nation. The move bears significance as Saudi Arabia is traditionally a major energy supplier to India.

[Saudi Arabia's GDP Grows 8.8 Percent Year-on-Year in Third Quarter](#)

December 11, 2022, Reuters

Saudi Arabia's economy grew by 8.8% in the third quarter of 2022 compared to the same period a year earlier, mainly due to a sharp increase in oil-related activity.

Syria

[Two ISIL Rebels Killed in US Helicopter Raid in Syria: CENTCOM](#)

December 11, 2022, AL Jazeera

United States forces have killed two members of the ISIL (ISIS) terror group in eastern Syria in a helicopter raid, the US military said in a statement without specifying the location of the overnight operation.

Türkiye

[EU Sanctions, Russian Oil Price Cap Cause Tanker Bottleneck As Crude Moves Through Turkey](#)

December 7, 2022, CNBC

New Turkish insurance rules on oil tankers carrying Russian crude continue to slow down the movement of tankers off the coast of Turkey and between Russia's Black Sea ports and the Mediterranean.

[India Faces No Immediate Impact of Oil Tanker Pileup in Turkey: Officials](#)

December 8, 2022, Business Standard

An oil tanker pileup off the coast of Turkey is not expected to impact the flow of Russian crude to India for now, senior government officials said.

[Erdogan, Putin Discuss Syria Border Corridor, Gas Hub By Phone](#)

December 11, 2022, AL Jazeera

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has held a phone conversation with his Russian counterpart, President Vladimir Putin, in which he called for a 30-kilometre (19-mile) security corridor at the Turkish border with Syria, according to his office.

[Turkey: 2022 Was Year of Normalisation With Regional Countries](#)

December 8, 2022, Middle East Monitor

A Spokesman for the Turkish Presidency has said that the government led by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan decided to make 2022 a year for normalising relations with regional countries after assessing the situation since mid-2021 as part of the new regional dynamic.

UAE

[UAE Launches Arab World's First Mission To The Moon](#)

December 11, 2022, Middle East Monitor

The UAE in collaboration with Japanese startup iSpace and Elon Musk's SpaceX have successfully launched the Arab world's first mission to the Moon using the first ever Arab-built lunar spacecraft, the Rashid Rover from Cape Canaveral, Florida.

[External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar to Inaugurate India Global Forum 2022 in UAE](#)

December 12, 2022, Business Standard

External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar will inaugurate the India Global Forum UAE 2022 on December 12. This is the first major international event following India's ascendancy to the G20 Presidency.

[UAE Remittances: Pakistan, India, Philippines, Qatar Major Recipients In 2022](#)

December 11, 2022, Khaleej Times

Remittances from the UAE have seen very healthy double-digit growth in 2022 to traditional markets such as the Indian subcontinent and Africa due to the dirham's appreciation against foreign currencies.

[UAE Official Says European Ties With Gulf 'Should Not Be Transactional'](#)

December 11, 2022, Middle East Monitor

A senior United Arab Emirates official said it was encouraging to see greater European outreach to Gulf Arab states in the face of the Ukraine conflict and energy crunch, but that engagement should not be "transactional".

[Abu Dhabi Seeks Indian Investments, Invites Start-Ups To Establish Hubs](#)

December 4, 2022, The Hindu Business Line

In its bid to diversify Abu Dhabi's business activity beyond hydrocarbons, the UAE's capital city is seeking more investments from India which will not only benefit the local economy but also allow Indian firms to use it as a platform to grow their footprints around the world.

[UAE Wealth Fund ADIA to Invest USD 400 Million in India's Lenskart](#)

December 12, 2022, Reuters

Sovereign wealth fund Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA) is in advanced talks to invest \$350 million to \$400 million in India's Lenskart LENS.NS, valuing the eyewear retailer at \$4.5 billion.

[UAE, Israel Ratify Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement](#)

December 11, 2022, Reuters

The governments of the United Arab Emirates and Israel ratified their comprehensive economic partnership agreement, UAE minister of state for foreign trade, Thani Al Zeyoudi, said.

Yemen

[Yemen War Has Killed or Maimed Over 11,000 Children: UN](#)

December 12, 2022, The Economic Times

More than 11,000 children are known to have been killed or maimed in Yemen's civil war since it escalated nearly eight years ago, the United Nations said.



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