



Delhi Policy Group

DPG WEST ASIA REVIEW



Volume I, Issue 4 | December 16, 2019



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Volume 1, Issue 4

ABOUT US

Founded in 1994, the Delhi Policy Group is among India's oldest independent think tanks with its primary focus on international and strategic issues of critical national interest. Over the past decades, the Delhi Policy Group has established itself in both domestic and international circles, particularly in the area of national security.

In keeping with India's increasing global profile as a leading power and the accompanying dynamism of India's foreign and security policy, the Delhi Policy Group has expanded its focus areas to include India's broader regional and global role; India's initiatives to strengthen its strategic periphery; India's political, security and connectivity challenges and policies across the Indo-Pacific; and the strategic partnerships that advance India's rise. To support these goals, the DPG undertakes research, publishes policy reports and organises conferences on strategic and geo-political, geo-economic, and defence and security issues.

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](#).

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Delhi Policy Group

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Bahrain

[Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan to attend Bahrain's national day as guest of honour](#)

December 15, 2019, Gulf News

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan will visit the Kingdom of Bahrain on December 16 to attend its National Day as guest of honour.

[Jerusalem's chief rabbi makes history in Bahrain](#)

December 10, 2019, Ynetnews

Jerusalem's Chief Rabbi Shlomo Amar made history on Monday when he met with Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa on a visit to Manama.

[Qatar not serious to end Gulf crisis: Bahraini minister](#)

December 11, 2019, Gulf News

Bahraini Foreign Minister Khalid Bin Ahmad Al Khalifa has said that Qatar is not serious about ending a long-standing rift with the Saudi-led bloc, damping expectations for an imminent end to the crisis.

[Lebanon's Hezbollah slams Bahrain for hosting forum allowing Israeli participation](#)

December 12, 2019, China.org.in

Lebanon's Hezbollah slammed Bahrain on Wednesday for hosting a religious forum that allowed the participation of Israel, the National News Agency reported. In a statement, the Lebanese Shiite political party criticized the Gulf country for disregarding the Lebanese and Palestinian "martyrs" killed by Israeli attacks in the past years.

Egypt

[Libyan Embassy in Egypt closes indefinitely](#)

December 15, 2019, Middle East Monitor

The Libyan Embassy in Egypt on Sunday closed indefinitely, citing "security reasons". In a statement, the embassy said it has suspended its activities until "further notice".

[Egypt's El-Sissi Says Militias Hold Libyan Government 'Hostage'](#)

December 15, 2019, Voice of America

Libya's U.N.-supported government is held hostage by "armed and terrorist militias" in the capital, Tripoli, Egypt's leader said Sunday. President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi said in televised comments that the Government of National Accord "is not able to have a free and real will because they have been taken hostage by armed and terrorist militias there."

[China's direct investment in Egypt up 66 percent in first 3 quarters](#)

December 11, 2019, Xinhua Net

China's direct investment in Egypt in the first three quarters of 2019 rose by 66 percent to 74.9 million U.S. dollars, a senior Chinese diplomat told a press conference on Tuesday at Egypt's under-construction new administrative capital city, east of Cairo.

[Egypt Urges Decisive Action Against States Backing 'Terror'](#)

December 11, 2019, Voice of America

Egypt's president called for "decisive" and "collective" action against countries supporting "terrorism" in an apparent reference to Turkey and Qatar, who back the Muslim Brotherhood group, which is outlawed in Egypt.

[Egypt to Hamas: Deal of the century replaced with long-term truce](#)

December 9, 2019, Middle East Monitor

Egyptian intelligence officials have told Hamas Chief Ismail Haniyeh that the US' peace plan for the Middle East dubbed the "deal of the century" has been completely cancelled, Al-Araby Al-Jadeed reported. According to informed Egyptian sources, Hamas received confirmation from Egypt that a long-term truce between Israel and the Palestinians has replaced the deal.

[Egypt attempts to gain written guarantees from Ethiopia over Renaissance Dam](#)

December 9, 2019, Middle East Monitor

The Egyptian foreign minister and the minister of water resources will attempt to gain a written understanding that Ethiopia will not take a decision on the management and operation of the Renaissance Dam without consulting all the relevant parties, sources have told Al-Araby Al-Jadeed.

[Pompeo meets with Egyptian FM over regional issues, bilateral ties](#)

December 10, 2019, Xinhua Net

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo met with Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry here on Monday over bilateral ties and regional issues. Pompeo and Shoukry discussed "the importance of the strong strategic partnership between the United States and Egypt" and exchanged views on regional issues, including the situation in Libya, the U.S. State Department said in a statement.

[Egyptian government sets 5 conditions for granting Egyptian nationality to foreigners](#)

December 11, 2019, Egypt Today

The cabinet approved establishment of a special unit to look into citizenship by investment applications.

Iraq

[Mass grave containing remains of 643 civilians discovered in Iraq](#)

December 15, 2019, The Independent

A mass grave containing the remains of 643 civilians has reportedly been discovered near a former ISIS battleground in Iraq, with those inside believed to have been members of a Sunni tribe reportedly targeted by Iraqi militias.

[UN: Targeted Killings Continue Against Iraq Protesters](#)

December 12, 2019, Voice of America

Deliberate killings, abduction and arbitrary detention are among abuses that continue against Iraqi anti-government demonstrators by unknown groups, according to a U.N. report released Wednesday.

[Anniversary of Victory over ISIS Unites Iraq Politicians, Protesters](#)

December 11, 2019, Asharq Al-Awsat

For the first time in nearly two months, Iraqi politicians and protesters shared a celebration. Three years ago, in 2017, former Iraqi Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi declared military victory over ISIS. To celebrate the anniversary, Iraq's outgoing Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi announced December 10 would be a national holiday.

[Iraq protesters form 'mini-state' in Baghdad's Tahrir Square](#)

December 12, 2019, France 24

With border guards, clean-up crews and hospitals, Iraqi protesters have created a mini-state in Baghdad's Tahrir Square, offering the kinds of services they say their government has failed to provide.

[UN highlights 'serious human rights violations' in third report on Iraq protests](#)

December 11, 2019, Kurdistan 24 News

Serious human rights violations are continuing amid ongoing anti-government protests in Iraq, the United Nations Assistance Mission to Iraq (UNAMI) said on Wednesday. In its third report on the updates of Iraqi protests, UNAMI revealed ongoing "violations of the rights to life, physical integrity, liberty, and security" of demonstrators across central and southern provinces in Iraq.

[Iran-backed attacks in Iraq risks uncontrollable escalation - U.S. official](#)

December 11, 2019, Reuters

A senior U.S. military official said attacks by Iranian-backed groups on bases hosting U.S. forces in Iraq were gathering pace and becoming more sophisticated, pushing all sides closer to an uncontrollable escalation.

[Iraq summons ambassadors of 4 countries over "interference in internal affairs"](#)

December 10, 2019, Xinhua Net

The Iraqi Foreign Ministry said it has summoned the ambassadors of France, Britain, Germany and Canada over a statement considered by the ministry as "interference in Iraq's internal affairs."

[US suspects Iran is behind increasingly sophisticated rocket attacks on US bases in Iraq](#)

December 9, 2019, CNN International

The US government believes that Iran is behind a series of increasingly sophisticated rocket attacks on joint US-Iraq military facilities in Iraq, US officials told CNN.

[Rockets hit Iraq military complex housing US forces: army](#)

December 9, 2019, Gulf News

Several rockets slammed into an Iraqi military complex that hosts US forces next to Baghdad International Airport on Monday, wounding six Iraqi troops, the military said.

Iran

[Israel and Russia coordinate arms sale preventing deals with Iran](#)

December 13, 2019, Middle East Monitor

Ariel Bulshtein, adviser to the prime minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, has announced that Israel has refused to sell weapons to Georgia, at Russia's request. He also stated a month and a half ago that Israel had refrained from selling weapons to Ukraine at the request of Russia, in exchange for halting an arms deal between Russia and Iran.

[Pompeo warns of 'decisive US response' if Iran harms US troops or allies](#)

December 13, 2019, Military Times

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo warned Iran and its leaders of a "decisive U.S. response" if the regime or its militias harm American troops or allies in the region.

[Malaysia PM says US sanctions on Iran violate international law](#)

December 14, 2019, Al Jazeera

Sanctions imposed by the United States on Iran violate the United Nations' charter and international law, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad has said in a conference in Qatar.

[Talks between Saudi Arabia and Qatar good for the region: Iran foreign minister](#)

December 15, 2019, Reuters

Talks between Saudi Arabia and Qatar to heal their two-year rift are a good development for the whole Gulf region, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said in Doha.

[Iran's IRGC: The Persian Gulf belongs to us](#)

December 15, 2019, The Jerusalem Post

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps naval commander Admiral Alireza Tangsiri said the Persian Gulf belongs to Iran. "We have the right to question any vessels entering the Straits of Hormuz and Iranian territorial waters."

[Iran says it foiled 'massive' cyber attack on infrastructure](#)

December 11, 2019, Times of Israel

Iran's telecommunications minister announced on Wednesday that the country defused a massive cyber attack on unspecified "electronic infrastructure" but provided no specifics on the purported attack.

[GCC 40th summit: Saudi king calls for Gulf Arab unity to confront Iran](#)

December 10, 2019, Gulf News

Saudi Arabia's King Salman opened a Gulf Arab summit on Tuesday by calling for regional unity to confront Iran and secure energy supplies and maritime channels. "Our region today is passing through circumstances and challenges that require concerted efforts to confront them as the Iranian regime continues its aggressive actions that threaten security and stability" he said.

[Former US Vice President Dick Cheney warns disengagement in Mideast benefits Iran, Russia](#)

December 9, 2019, Gulf News

Former US Vice President Dick Cheney warned that "American disengagement" in the Middle East will benefit only Iran and Russia, indirectly criticising President Donald Trump's pledges to pull forces out of the region.

[US unveils new sanctions on Iran](#)

December 11, 2019, CNN International

The US announced a fresh round of sanctions against Iran on Wednesday, targeting an Iranian shipping network they say is smuggling "lethal aid" to Yemen and three agents of an Iranian airline company.

[UN says unable to verify Iranian weapons used in Saudi oil attack](#)

December 11, 2019, Al Jazeera

The United Nations is "unable to independently corroborate" that missiles and drones used in the attacks on Saudi oil facilities in September "are of Iranian origin," Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told the Security Council on Tuesday.

[Iran ready for big prisoner exchange with Washington but 'ball is in US' court' – Zarif](#)

December 9, 2019, Russia Today

Tehran is open to exchanging more prisoners with the US, but it is now time for Washington to make a move on it, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said, after a recent swap left more room for optimism.

[Japan weighing visit by Iran's President Rouhani](#)

December 9, 2019, Arab News

Japan is weighing inviting Iran's President Hassan Rouhani for a state visit, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said Monday, as local media reported the trip was likely to happen this month. Japan has been trying to forge a possible mediator role as tensions rise between its ally Washington and Tehran.

Israel

[Israeli delegation to travel to India next week to share their experience in cyber front](#)

December 13, 2019, Outlook India

An Israeli delegation will be travelling to India next week to share their "know-how" and experience in the cyber front with the Indian counterparts. According to a statement by the Israel Embassy in India, it will be a first-of-its-kind delegation, which is being led by Israel's National Cyber Directorate in collaboration with the Israeli Ministry of Economy and Israel Export Institute.

[India among few countries with no record of anti-Semitism: Indian envoy to the US](#)

December 13, 2019, The Hindu

India is one of the few countries with no record of anti-Semitism as its society is known for openness and compassion, the Indian envoy to the U.S. has said.

[Israel eyes next year's Dubai expo as 'portal' to Arab world](#)

December 15, 2019, Times of Israel

With the world's largest trade fair opening in an Arab country for the first time next year, Israel is stepping up preparations, hoping to boost nascent ties with regional neighbours.

[Netanyahu: Hezbollah, Lebanon will pay heavily for any attack on Israel](#)

December 15, 2019, Ynet News

"If Hezbollah dares attack Israel, the organization and the State of Lebanon, which allows attacks from its territory against us, will pay a heavy price," Netanyahu told ministers at the start of the weekly cabinet meeting in Jerusalem.

[Israel's acting PM Netanyahu says Brazil will move its embassy to Jerusalem in 2020](#)

December 15, 2019, Euro News

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Sunday that Brazil will follow the United States and move its embassy to Jerusalem next year.

[Indicted Netanyahu to quit ministries, remain Israel PM: Lawyers](#)

December 12, 2019, Al Jazeera

Israel's embattled Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, facing criminal charges and a new general election, will resign from all other ministerial positions he holds but remain the premier, his lawyers said on Thursday.

[Israel applauds Isro after PSLV-C48 launches its student satellite](#)

December 11, 2019, Times of India

Israel has applauded the successful launch of Isro's PSLV-C48 rocket that put an experimental satellite built by students of its country into the polar orbit on Wednesday afternoon.

[Israel threatens to take military action against Iran](#)

December 11, 2019, Middle East Monitor

Israeli foreign minister, Yisrael Katz, threatened on Tuesday to take military action against Iran, in order to undermine its efforts to obtain nuclear weapons.

[Israeli Army Fears New Election Will Kill Opportunity for Gaza Deal](#)

December 12, 2019, Haaretz

A month after the latest escalation in Gaza, the Israel Defense Forces fears that the opportunity created for a long-term agreement with Hamas will again be missed.

[Israel Heads to Record Third Election, Extending Deadlock](#)

December 11, 2019, The New York Times

Having failed to form a government after two elections, Israel barrelled toward a record third-extending the political deadlock that has paralyzed the country for nearly an year and assuring at least three more months of bitter, divisive campaigning and government dysfunction.

[Hamas, Jihad Denying Striking 'Long-Term' Truce with Israel](#)

December 11, 2019, Asharq Al-Awsat

The Palestinian Hamas and Jihad movements denied that they had held discussions about striking a "long-term" truce with Israel in the Gaza Strip. Hamas rejected media claims that such a deal was in the works, labelling them as "fabrications" and "lies".

[Palestinians in Hebron strike against Israel's planned new settlement](#)

December 9, 2019, Middle East Eye

Palestinians in Hebron staged a general strike on Monday, protesting against Israel's plans to build a new illegal settlement in the flashpoint West Bank city. The strike was accompanied by some sporadic protests, which Israeli forces cracked down on with tear gas, leaving two Palestinians needing medical treatment

[Chinese envoy rails against US 'bullying' Israel over investments](#)

December 9, 2019, The Jerusalem Post

The US is using "bullying tactics" to curb Chinese investments in Israel, Beijing's Special Envoy for the Middle East Zhai Jun said Monday during a tour of the region.

[Erdogan bashes Israel, calls on Muslims to unite against the West](#)

December 9, 2019, The Jerusalem Post

In a speech to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Turkey's president Recep Tayyip Erdogan slammed Israel and called for Islamic unity among the "brothers and sisters" to confront the West and conspiracies against Islamic countries. Turkey's ruler insinuated that Turkey was a victim of "terrorist attacks" because of its "principled stance" against "oppression in Jerusalem."

[Ex-IDF chief and former Pentagon head say US-Israel defense pact not needed](#)

December 9, 2019, Times of Israel

A former US secretary of defense and an ex-IDF chief of staff on Monday rejected a proposed America-Israeli mutual defense pact, saying such a measure was unnecessary. In recent months, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has raised the prospect of a defense treaty between Jerusalem and Washington on several occasions.

[Russian Su-35 jets scrambled to stop Israel over Syria - reports](#)

December 9, 2019, The Jerusalem Post

Iranian and Russian media reported that Russian Sukhoi Su-35 warplanes were scrambled from Russia's Khmeimim air base in northern Syria to intercept an alleged Israeli attack near the Tiyas Military Airbase, also known as the T-4 Airbase earlier this month.

[Israel's Plan To Bypass The World's Most Critical Oil Chokepoint](#)

December 9, 2019, Oilprice.com

Israel pitched to India this weekend its idea of a new transportation corridor in the Middle East bypassing the most critical oil chokepoint in the world, which is very close to Iran, the Strait of Hormuz. During the Mediterranean Dialogues in Rome on Saturday, Israel's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Intelligence, Yisrael Katz, met India's Minister of External Affairs, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, to discuss bilateral trade and presented Israel's "Tracks for Regional Peace" initiative.

Jordan

[Jordan, Japan discuss strategic partnership](#)

December 16, 2019, Xinhua Net

King Abdullah II of Jordan on Sunday met Japanese Defense Minister Taro Kono to discuss the strategic partnership between the two countries and means of enhancing cooperation, especially in defense.

[Jordan jails man for plotting gun attack on Israeli embassy](#)

December 9, 2019, Times of Israel

A Jordanian court on Monday sentenced a man to eight years in prison for allegedly plotting to attack the Israeli embassy in Amman last year. The state security court ruled that Khaled Abu Raya "threatened to carry out terrorist acts."

[Jordan's king receives invitation to attend G20 summit](#)

December 10, 2019, China.org.in

King Abdullah II of Jordan has received an invitation from Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud to attend the G20 summit as a guest of honour.

Kuwait

[Kuwait hands one more Muslim Brotherhood member over to Egypt](#)

December 15, 2019, Arab Times

One of the members of the Muslim Brotherhood, identified only as Islam, has been deported to Cairo, despite the interference of a number of current and former deputies to keep him behind bars in Kuwait or be deported to Turkey or any country other than Egypt. The response from security sources made it clear that Kuwait is committed to the security agreement concluded with Egypt and that the issue of security and stability is a "red line", with no mediation and no settlements.

[Kuwait to begin 'importing' electric cars in 2020](#)

December 12, 2019, Arab Times

Kuwait is expected to start importing electric powered cars starting from the beginning of next year after completing the regulations and controls prepared by the relevant committee, which includes the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research and the ministries of Electricity and Water and Interior, and the Public Authority for Industry (PAI) and General Customs Department and other relevant authorities

[Tata Motors launches Prima, Ultra trucks in Kuwait](#)

December 12, 2019, Business Insider India

Tata Motors on Thursday said it has launched its new generation range of Prima and ultra trucks in Kuwait.

[US replaces Kuwait as India's 6th biggest oil supplier; Iraq remains on top](#)

December 11, 2019, Business Standard

The United States has surpassed Kuwait to become India's sixth largest oil supplier as it supplied 70 per cent more crude to the world's third largest energy consumer during April-September.

[5th Gulf Defense and Aerospace exhibition opens in Kuwait](#)

December 11, 2019, Xinhua Net

The 5th Gulf Defense and Aerospace (GDA) exhibition opened on Tuesday in Kuwait's Hawalli Governorate. More than 200 companies from 32 countries and regions showcased the latest technology in defense industries.

Lebanon

[Lebanon protests: 40 injured as violence flares again in Beirut](#)

December 15, 2019, The Guardian

Lebanese security forces have fired rubber bullets, tear gas and used water cannons to disperse anti-government protesters from the centre of Beirut. The violence, which started on Saturday and lasted into the early hours of Sunday, was some of the worst since the demonstrations began two months ago.

[As Lebanon talks to IMF, Fitch warns of possible debt default](#)

December 12, 2019,

Ratings agency Fitch cut Lebanon's credit rating for a third time in a year on Thursday, warning it now expects the crisis-hit country to restructure or default on its debt.

[Lebanon impasse deepens as financial strains grow](#)

December 9, 2019, Reuters

Lebanon's political impasse has deepened after a tentative deal on a new prime minister unravelled, leaving the country rudderless as it grapples with the worst economic crisis since the 1975-90 civil war.

[France to host int'l meeting on Lebanon on Dec. 11: ministry](#)

December 10, 2019, Xinhua Net

France will host an international working meeting on Lebanon on Dec. 11 to help the protest-hit country quickly create a "credible" government able to restore stability and bring its economy back on track, the French foreign ministry announced on Monday.

Oman

[Indian delegation explores investment opportunities in Oman](#)

December 14, 2019, Times of Oman

A high profile Indian delegation chaired by Saurabhbhai Patel, the Energy Minister of Gujarat, visited the headquarters of the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates – Madayn at the Knowledge Oasis, Muscat. The delegation was received by Hilal bin Hamad Al Hasani, Chief Executive Officer of Madayn.

[Indian firms' investment in Oman pegged at \\$7.5 billion](#)

December 14, 2019, Times of Oman

There are more than 3,000 Indian companies currently running in Oman, having invested about \$7.5 billion (about OMR 3 billion) in their operations in the country.

[China remains Oman's largest oil importer in November](#)

December 12, 2019, Xinhua Net

An official Omani report said on Wednesday that China remained Oman's largest oil importer in November as 92.99 percent of Oman's oil exports were taken by China.

[Global meet on non-communicable diseases concludes in Oman](#)

December 12, 2019, Times of Oman

The World Health Organisation's (WHO) global meeting on non-communicable diseases and mental health concluded at the Kempinski Hotel in Muscat on Thursday.

[Oman's crude production tops 29mn barrels for the month of November](#)

December 11, 2019, Times of Oman

Oman's crude oil and condensates production stood at 29.15 million barrels during November 2019, with a daily average of 971,704 barrels.

Qatar

[Qatar vows support for Libya's UN-recognized gov't](#)

December 15, 2019, Anadolu Agency

Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani reiterated support for Libya's UN-recognised government. Speaking during a meeting with head of Libya's Government of National Accord (GNA), Fayez al-Sarraj in Doha, Tamim said his country was ready to provide support to GNA in the security and economic fields, Sarraj's office said in a statement.

[Qatar's \\$320 Billion Wealth Fund Seeks to Catch Up on Technology](#)

December 15, 2019, Bloomberg News

Qatar's sovereign wealth fund is seeking to increase investments in technology companies, unfazed by recent declines in the sector, its chief executive officer said.

[Qatar sees 'small progress' in resolving Gulf dispute](#)

December 15, 2019, Al Jazeera

Some progress has been made in resolving a bitter dispute between Qatar and its neighbours, the Gulf state's foreign minister said, just days after its prime minister visited Saudi Arabia.

[Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim skips Gulf summit in Saudi Arabia](#)

December 10, 2019, Al Jazeera

Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani will not attend the Gulf summit in Riyadh on Tuesday, dampening hopes of reconciliation between Doha and a Saudi-led bloc that imposed a punishing blockade 30 months ago.

[Qatar, Malaysia eye stronger ties](#)

December 13, 2019, Xinhua Net

Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani on Thursday met the visiting Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, with the two sides agreeing to boost cooperation, the Qatari royal court said in a statement.

Saudi Arabia

[Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan calls for diplomatic solution to Middle East disputes](#)

December 15, 2019, Gulf News

Pakistan would continue to facilitate all efforts with a view to precluding conflict, defusing tensions and preserving peace for the benefit of the Middle East and the world," Imran said in the bilateral meeting held in Saudi capital.

[Defense spending bill stripped of proposals that would have been tough on Saudi Arabia, sources say](#)

December 14, 2019, CNN International

When an annual defense spending bill was passed by the House of Representatives this week, it was stripped of multiple measures to compel tougher consequences on Saudi Arabia for human rights abuses, three congressional sources familiar with the legislation told CNN.

[Saudi Aramco hits Crown Prince's \\$2 trillion goal despite valuation doubts](#)

December 12, 2019, Reuters

Saudi Aramco (2222.SE) hit the \$2 trillion target sought by de-facto Saudi leader Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on Thursday as its shares racked up a second day of gains, despite some scepticism about the state-owned oil firm's value.

[Pakistani PM's visit to Saudi Arabia aims to assuage Riyadh's reservations](#)

December 13, 2019, Dawn News

Prime Minister Imran Khan will visit Saudi Arabia on Saturday to reassure the kingdom's leadership that ties between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia remain firm despite Islamabad's engagement with other Muslim countries.

[Pakistan FM in Riyadh to defuse Saudi-Iran tensions](#)

December 12, 2019, Khaleej Times

Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi held talks with his Saudi counterpart in Riyadh in what appears to be a visit linked to Islamabad's efforts to seek de-escalation in rising tensions in the Persian Gulf region.

[40th GCC Summit: Efforts still on to resolve Gulf dispute](#)

December 10, 2019, Gulf News

This year's Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit, held in Saudi Arabia for the second year in a row, was convened amid serious efforts to defuse a 2-1/2 year dispute between Qatar and a Saudi-led quartet. Qatar's prime minister attended the gathering, in the most concrete sign yet of a possible thaw in a regional dispute, but the meeting ended without public mention of the row.

[Saudi Arabia unveils SR1.02 trillion budget in privatization push](#)

December 9, 2019, Arab News

Saudi Arabia is set to spend SR1.02 trillion (\$272 billion) next year as the Kingdom embarks on a major privatisation push amid a widening budget deficit.

[Congress Challenges U.S. Support for Saudi Arabia After Deadly Shooting](#)

December 9, 2019, The Wall Street Journal

The deadly attack at a U.S. Navy base in Florida last week is renewing congressional scrutiny of the Trump administration's relationship with Saudi Arabia.

[Saudi Arabia plans for lower 2020 oil revenues on OPEC cuts, global trade disputes](#)

December 9, 2019, S&P Global

After three years of record budgets to spur growth, Saudi Arabia said Monday it plans to scale back government spending through 2022, forecasting lower oil revenues and a lesser reliance on its lifeblood industry as its ambitious economic reforms take hold.

[Intel: Pentagon looks to continue Saudi air force training despite shooting](#)

December 9, 2019, Al-Monitor

The Pentagon awarded a \$15 million contract to a Virginia-based company to provide English-language training to Saudi Arabia's air force at an air base in Riyadh, just hours after a Saudi national killed three people at a naval installation in Florida on Thursday.

[Saudi Arabia signs agreement with Iran on upcoming Haj season](#)

December 10, 2019, Middle East Monitor

Saudi Arabia and Iran signed on Monday an agreement regarding arrangements for the next Haj season of 1441 AH, after talks between the two sides.

[Saudi Arabia wants to be part of India's goal of becoming a \\$5 trillion economy](#)

December 10, 2019, The Hindu Business Line

Saudi Arabia has given licence to 30 Indian companies in the first quarter, of the total 267 foreign investors, according to Saud Al-Sati, Ambassador, Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia in India.

Syria

[Japan pledges \\$14 million in aid for northeast Syria](#)

December 14, 2019, Ahval

Japan has said it will provide \$14 million in emergency aid in response to the humanitarian crisis in north-eastern Syria, where Turkey has launched an offensive targeting Kurdish forces.

[US increases protection over oil fields in Syria](#)

December 15, 2019, Daily Sabah

U.S. has increased its effort to secure oil fields in the Syrian provinces of al-Hassakah and Deir el-Zour, currently under the control of the PKK's Syrian affiliate the People's Protection Units (YPG), with additional military deployments from Iraq.

[US Military Leaders, Congress Spar Over Syria Pullout](#)

December 11, 2019, Voice of America

U.S. lawmakers and military leaders sparred over the U.S. decision in October to pull troops out of northern Syria amid the threat of a Turkish offensive.

[Russia, Turkey and Iran agree on counterterrorism efforts in Syria](#)

December 12, 2019, CGTN

Russia, Turkey and Iran are concerned about the increased presence of terrorist groups in Syria's Idlib province, the three countries said after talks in Kazakhstan on Wednesday, pledging to coordinate actions aimed at eliminating the militants.

[4,000 square km cleared from terrorists in N. Syria](#)

December 9, 2019, Anadolu Agency

With Operation Peace Spring, Turkey aimed to preserve the territorial integrity of Syria, Turkish vice president said on Monday. "More than 4,000 square-kilometre area has been cleared from the terrorists (Kurds) Fuat Oktay told the lawmakers during his 2020 budget speech in the Turkish parliament.

[Russian Forces Enter Former Islamic State Stronghold in Syria After U.S. Pullback](#)

December 9, 2019, The Moscow Times

Russian forces have entered Raqqa, the former de facto capital of the Islamic State caliphate, in one of the starkest examples yet of how Moscow has filled the

vacuum created by President Donald Trump's decision to pull U.S. forces from northern Syria.

[Iran is building tunnels in Syria near Iraq border for weapons](#)

December 10, 2019, The Jerusalem Post

Iran has begun building tunnels at its Imam Ali base in Syria, which is a key part of Iran's infrastructure that links Iran via Iraq to Syria and Lebanon.

[Syria's president: OPCW 'faked' report on chlorine gas attack](#)

December 10, 2019, Al Jazeera

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has accused the global chemical weapons watchdog of faking and falsifying a report over an attack near the capital Damascus last year "just because the Americans wanted them to do so".

Turkey

[Turkey: S-400 system 'vital'; will retaliate to any US sanctions](#)

December 15, 2019, Al Jazeera

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu has repeated a retaliation threat against any US sanctions over Ankara's purchase of a Russian missile defence system.

[Turkey may shut US nuclear weapons base over sanctions threat](#)

December 15, 2019, Sky News

Turkey's leader says his country could close two military installations where American troops are stationed "if necessary". One of the sites, Incirlik air base, is where some US nuclear warheads are kept. The other installation is the Kurecik radar station.

[EU Leaders Set to Reject Turkey-Libya Maritime Border Deal](#)

December 12, 2019, The New York Times

European Union leaders are set to reject a maritime border agreement between Turkey and Libya as invalid and insist that the pact interferes with the rights of other Mediterranean Sea countries, according to a draft summit statement.

[U.S. Senate passes resolution recognizing Armenian genocide, angering Turkey](#)

December 13, 2019, Reuters

The U.S. Senate on Thursday unanimously passed a resolution that recognises as a genocide the mass killings of Armenians a century ago, a historic move that infuriated Turkey and dealt a blow to already problematic ties between Ankara and Washington.

[Turkey won't rule out force to halt drilling in Cypriot waters](#)

December 11, 2019, Times of Israel

Turkey could use its military forces to halt any exploratory gas drilling in waters off Cyprus that it claims as its own, Turkey's foreign minister warned Wednesday.

[Turkey plans to speed up fighter jet project with Britain](#)

December 11, 2019, The Guardian

Turkey plans to speed up its collaboration with Britain for the building of a new generation of fighter jet engines for the Turkish air force, the foreign minister, Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, has said.

[U.S. Senate committee approves Turkey sanctions bill](#)

December 12, 2019, Reuters

A U.S. Senate committee backed legislation on Wednesday to impose sanctions on Turkey after its offensive in Syria and purchase of a Russian S-400 missile system, the latest move in the chamber to push Republican President Donald Trump to take a harder line against Ankara.

[Erdogan: Turkey, Libya could conduct exploration in Mediterranean](#)

December 10, 2019, Al Jazeera

Turkey and Libya could carry out joint exploration operations in the eastern Mediterranean after they signed a deal on maritime boundaries, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has said.

[Erdogan: Turkey Ready to Send Troops to Libya If Asked](#)

December 10, 2019, Voice of America

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said he is ready to deploy soldiers to Libya following the announcement of a security agreement with the Libyan government. Ankara has been actively seeking to project its influence across the Mediterranean as a scramble intensifies for the region's energy resources.

[US: Lawmakers to limit transfer of F-35s to Turkey](#)

December 10, 2019, Anadolu Agency

National Defense Authorization Act proposes allocation of \$440M fund for Pentagon to purchase F-35 jets ordered by Turkey.

[Turkey Begins Controversial Resettlement of Displaced Syrians in its New 'Safe Zone'](#)

December 10, 2019, CNS News

Despite a lack of support from its NATO allies, Turkey has begun to move some of the three million Syrian refugees it is currently housing back into north-eastern Syria, in a strip of formerly Kurdish-held territory which was the target of its recent military offensive.

[China Displaces Turkey as Top Jailer of Journalists in 2019](#)

December 11, 2019, The New York Times

China nudged past Turkey as the leading jailer of journalists this year, a press advocacy group reported in its annual survey, partly because of severe repression in China's Xinjiang region and Turkey's eradication of "virtually all independent reporting," which has left many reporters unemployed, driven into exile or intimidated into self-censorship.

UAE

[UAE to Launch 50-Year Development Strategy Based on Knowledge Economy](#)

December 15, 2019, Asharq Al-Awsat

The United Arab Emirates declared that 2020 will be the launchpad of preparations for the next 50 years, ahead of its milestone Golden Jubilee in 2021. The country is targeting the post-oil stage via a knowledge economy.

[UAE to launch new low-cost airline with Europe's Wizz Air](#)

December 12, 2019, Khaleej Times

The UAE will be getting its seventh airline, Wizz Air Abu Dhabi, which would result in intensified competition in European routes in the near future and in the Subcontinent, Middle East and Africa routes over the long run.

[UAE lobbies to lift arms restrictions](#)

December 13, 2019, The Daily Star

The United Arab Emirates has lobbied several European countries to ease restrictions on weapons exports following a series of strikes in the Gulf this year, according to three diplomats and two other people with knowledge of the discussions.

[Reliance Industries plans to develop chemical facility in Ruwais with Adnoc](#)

December 10, 2019, Livemint

In what may further bolster India's robust ties with West Asian energy producers, Mukesh Ambani-promoted Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) plans to develop an Ethylene Dichloride facility in Ruwais with Abu Dhabi National Oil Co (Adnoc), the state-run oil company of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the companies said in a joint statement on Tuesday.

[White House veterans helped UAE build secret surveillance unit](#)

December 11, 2019, Al Jazeera

In the years after 9/11, former United States counterterrorism czar Richard Clarke warned Congress that the country needed more expansive spying powers to prevent another catastrophe. Five years after leaving government, he shopped the same idea to an enthusiastic partner: an Arab monarchy with deep pockets i.e. UAE.

[UAE Economic Forum 2019 kicks off on Wednesday](#)

December 10, 2019, Gulf News

The inaugural 'UAE Economic Forum,' will be held on December 11-12. The two-day Forum, which has 'The UAE Enterprising Economy: Resilience, Growth & Prosperity' as its theme, is a collaborative initiative between the Ministry of Economy and all economic departments across the UAE.

Yemen

[Amnesty calls for investigation into 'EU violation of humanitarian law in Yemen'](#)

December 13, 2019, Middle East Monitor

Amnesty International yesterday demanded an investigation into what it described as “the role of the European arms companies in violating international humanitarian law in Yemen.”

[Saudi-backed Yemen government and separatists miss Riyadh Agreement deadline](#)

December 10, 2019, Middle East Monitor

Exiled Yemeni President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi's government and the Southern Transitional Council (STC) have failed to establish a power-sharing administration in line with the Riyadh Agreement, hampering any signs of peace in the troubled south of the country.

[China looks to boost its influence in Yemen](#)

December 10, 2019, Al-Monitor

China's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Zhang Jun laid out Beijing's vision for Yemen's post-conflict future. In an official statement, Zhang Jun called upon the international community to provide “tailored assistance” to improve the living conditions of the Yemeni people and highlighted Yemen as a case for China's position that development is an effective pathway to peace and stability for countries facing internal conflicts.



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