



Delhi Policy Group

DPG WEST ASIA REVIEW



Volume II, Issue 9 | March 2, 2020



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Volume 2, Issue 9

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

[Coronavirus: Bahrain Extends Suspension Of Flights From Dubai, Sharjah](#)

February 27, 2020, Khaleej Times

The Civil Aviation Affairs (CAA) in the Kingdom of Bahrain has announced that it has reduced the number of incoming regional flights and has extended the suspension of all flights arriving from Dubai International Airport and Sharjah International Airport for an additional 48 hours. This decision has been taken in order to safeguard the health of the Kingdom's citizens and residents.

[Bahrain Reports 26 Cases Of Coronavirus, Kuwait Has Two More](#)

February 26, 2020, Gulf Today

Bahrain announced on Wednesday that the number of coronavirus infections has risen to 26 after 3 new cases were confirmed, according to the state news agency (BNA).

Egypt

[Egypt Says 1,443 People Tested For Coronavirus So Far](#)

March 02, 2020, India Today

Egypt's health minister on Sunday said that 1,443 people had been tested so far for the new coronavirus, only one of whom tested positive and was cleared after being given appropriate medical care.

[Egypt's Al-Azhar Institute Expresses Concern Over Violence Against Muslims In India](#)

February 29, 2020, Egypt Independent

Egypt's Al-Azhar institute, the Islamic world's top Sunni religious institution, expressed deep concern on Saturday over escalating violence in India including attacks on mosques and other places of worship which have left over 40 people dead.

[Egypt Seeks To Establish Arab Security Front Against Turkey](#)

March 2, 2020, Middle East Monitor

Egyptian intelligence chief Abbas Kamel has started an official tour around a number of Arab countries, with the aim to sign security agreements on "countering the growing influence of the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in the region.

[Former Egypt President Hosni Mubarak dies at 91](#)

February 25, 2020, The Tribune

Hosni Mubarak, the Egyptian leader who for nearly 30 years was the resolute face of stability in the Mideast before being forced by the military to resign after 18-day nationwide protests that were part of the Arab world's 2011 pro-democracy upheaval, died on Tuesday, the country's state-run TV said.

[Egypt Fatwa Bans Chants In Support Of Al-aqsa In Saudi](#)

February 27, 2020, Middle East Monitor

Egypt's Islamic institution Dar Al-Ifta has issued a fatwa prohibiting public prayers and chants in support of Al-Aqsa in Saudi Arabia because it devalues Makkah and Medina.

Iraq

[US Targets Iranian-backed Militia Active In Iraq - State Dept.](#)

February 26, 2020, Middle East Monitor

The United States on Wednesday blacklisted a senior member of Iranian-backed Kataib Hezbollah militia, punishing it for its attacks targeting US forces, most recently for killing an American contractor in an Iraqi military base near the northern city of Kirkuk.

[2 Rockets Hit Green Zone In Iraq's Baghdad](#)

March 02, 2020, Xinhua Net

At least two rockets fired overnight at the heavily fortified Green Zone in central Baghdad, an Interior Ministry official said on Sunday.

[Iraq's Allawi Withdraws His Candidacy For Prime Minister As Vacuum Looms](#)

March 02, 2020, France 24

Iraqi Prime Minister-designate Mohammed Allawi withdrew his candidacy for the post on Sunday, accusing political parties of obstructing him, deepening a domestic crisis and threatening an unprecedented power vacuum.

[Iraq Fails To Form New Government, Prolonging Crisis](#)

February 27, 2020, Reuters

Iraqi politicians failed on Thursday to agree on a new government, prolonging deadlock that has failed to resolve unprecedented mass unrest and has stalled the country's recovery from years of war.

[Iraq Reports First Coronavirus Case In Baghdad, Sixth Overall](#)

February 27, 2020, Reuters

Iraq reported the first case of coronavirus in the capital Baghdad on Thursday, its sixth in total.

[Iraq Bans Public Gatherings On Virus Fear; Travel Ban Totals 9 Countries](#)

February 27, 2020, Jakarta Post

Iraq banned all public gatherings and barred entry by travellers from Kuwait and Bahrain, the health minister said on Wednesday, banning travel to or from a total of nine countries as fears grew over the spread of the coronavirus. Iraqi citizens are now banned from travelling to China, Iran, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Singapore, Italy, Bahrain, and Kuwait

Iran

[President Trump Says It Is Time To Pass War Against ISIS To Iran, Iraq, Syria, Russia](#)

February 25, 2020, Newsweek

President Donald Trump said Tuesday that it is time for the United States to pass the fight against the Islamic State militant group (ISIS) on to Russia, Iran, Iraq and Syria, and to instead focus on maintaining control of oil resources in the region.

[Coronavirus and the Tragedy of Iran](#)

March 01, 2020, The Wall Street Journal

Nowhere other than in China is the coronavirus epidemic more severe than in Iran, where authorities confirmed Sunday that at least 54 people, including an 81-year-old former ambassador, have died from Covid-19.

[India To Evacuate Stranded Citizens From Coronavirus-hit Iran](#)

March 01, 2020, Hindustan Times

Iran has asked India to take immediate steps to evacuate Indians from the Islamic country which has seen the highest number of casualties due to coronavirus outbreak outside China, where the disease originated. The communication was made in a note verbale issued by the Iranian embassy in Delhi on Saturday.

[U.S. Maintains Pressure on Iran, Stalling Diplomacy While Expecting Attacks](#)

February 27, 2020, The New York Times

Nearly two months after the death of Iran's most important general, the Trump administration insists its "maximum pressure" campaign is working. Many allies are skeptical.

[Coronavirus Scare Jolts India To Extend Flying Ban To Iran After China](#)

February 28, 2020, Live Mint

In wake of the widening spread of the coronavirus, India has extended a flying ban to Iran, which will be the second such country after China, a senior government official said on Thursday.

[Iran Vice-president Masoumeh Ebtekar Infected With Coronavirus](#)

February 27, 2020, India Today

Iran Vice-President Masoumeh Ebtekar has been infected by the new strain of coronavirus COVID-19. The coronavirus epidemic in Iran has cost 26 lives, the health ministry announced Thursday.

[WHO Says Coronavirus Entered Iran 'undetected,' Warns Outbreak Could be Worse Than is Known](#)

February 27, 2020, CNBC

The new coronavirus that is rapidly spreading around the world entered Iran "unseen and undetected," world health officials said. Iran, which had just two cases a week ago, confirmed 245 infections as of Thursday morning, but the outbreak could be even more widespread in the country than is currently known, said Dr. Mike Ryan, executive director of the World Health Organization's emergencies program.

[Trump Administration Eases Humanitarian Trade Restrictions On Iran Amid Coronavirus Fears](#)

February 27, 2020, Al-Monitor

The Donald Trump administration slightly eased sanctions on Iran today to allow for trade in medical supplies and food as Tehran struggles to respond to the coronavirus outbreak throughout the country. The Treasury Department issued a general license exemption for trade in humanitarian goods through Iran's central bank.

Israel

[India Now At Par With US and Israel After Surgical Strike And Balakot Ops: Amit Shah](#)

March 01, 2020, Hindustan Times

After the surgical strike and Balakot air strike, India has joined the list of countries along with the United States and Israel, who can strike in enemy territory and avenge the death of soldiers, Union home minister Amit Shah said in Kolkata on Sunday.

[UN Delegation On Palestine Arrives In India To Seek Support On Peaceful Resolution Of Conflict](#)

March 02, 2020, The Hindu

A UN delegation on Palestine will visit New Delhi to seek India's political and diplomatic support for a peaceful resolution to the long-standing conflict between Israel and Palestine. India, which shares good relations with both Palestine and Israel, believes in a two-state solution in which both Israel and a future Palestinian state coexist peacefully.

[Israelis Vote In Unprecedented Third General Election In A Year](#)

March 02, 2020, BBC News

Israelis are voting in an unprecedented third general election in less than a year, with the prime minister fighting for his political survival.

[Netanyahu On Sanders: Forces Are Seeking To Break US-Israel Alliance](#)

March 02, 2020, The Jerusalem Post

"We were all reminded a few days ago that there are forces who seek to break our alliance," Netanyahu said via video link. "Last year, those who came to AIPAC were accused of dual loyalty. This year, AIPAC was accused of providing a platform for bigotry."

[Israel's UN Ambassador Tells AIPAC Bernie Sanders Is An 'Ignorant Fool'](#)

March 01, 2020, Times of Israel

Israel's ambassador to the United Nations on Sunday assailed US Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders as an "ignorant fool," two days before a key test for the Jewish frontrunner when primaries will be held in 14 states in Super Tuesday.

[Israel Approves Nearly 1,800 New Settler Homes Before Poll](#)

February 28, 2020, Channel News Asia

Israel approved nearly 1,800 new settler homes in the occupied West Bank on Thursday (Feb 27), the country's defence minister announced, four days ahead of a general election.

[Israeli Helicopters Said To Attack Syrian Army Posts Along Border](#)

February 28, 2020, Times of Israel

Israeli aircraft attacked Syrian army positions in the Golan Heights, Syrian state media said late Thursday, as tensions rose along the border following an earlier reported strike.

[Israel's Iran Confrontation Is Pointing The Way To The Future Of War](#)

February 26, 2020, The Hill

Iran is shipping sophisticated surface-to-air missiles, drones and other missiles to its allies across the Middle East. A seized shipment, revealed by U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) on Feb. 19, included drone and cruise missile components reportedly linked to an attack on Saudi Arabia's Abqaiq oil facility last September. To confront the threat, Israel rolled out a new multi-year plan to transform its armed forces' ability to both fight a multi-front war and to confront Iran.

Jordan

[Netanyahu: West Bank Annexation Has Started, PA And Jordan Threats Don't Matter](#)

February 29, 2020, Middle East Monitor

Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, announced that he is not concerned with the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Jordan's threats as his government has already begun the annexation of the West Bank.

Kuwait

[Kuwait Market Plunges Before Suspending Trade](#)

March 01, 2020, Gulf News

Kuwait's bourse — trading after a three session break — on Sunday plunged 11 per cent to its biggest ever fall in a single day, the hardest hit among all other GCC markets.

[Kuwait's Coronavirus Cases Rise To 43](#)

February 27, 2020, Anadolu Agency

Kuwait confirmed more cases of the coronavirus Thursday taking the toll to 43, according to its Health Ministry. All infected people had returned from Iran. They are currently receiving treatment at three medical quarantine centers, it added.

Lebanon

[Lebanese Banks Hold Line Against Default, Urge Bond Swap Instead](#)

March 01, 2020, Bloomberg

Lebanon's banking lobby made a last-ditch appeal to the government to avoid a debt default and instead offer a swap into new notes for all bondholders.

[Lebanon Health Ministry Confirms Third Case Of Coronavirus](#)

February 27, 2020, Reuters

Lebanon confirmed the country's third case of coronavirus on Thursday, after a man arriving from Iran on Feb. 24 tested positive, the health ministry said.

Oman

[UK Foreign Minister to visit Oman, Saudi Arabia To Boost Post-Brexit Ties](#)

March 02, 2020, Middle East Monitor

British Foreign Minister Dominic Raab will on Monday begin his first official visit to the Gulf for talks with leaders in Saudi Arabia and Oman, expected to cover trade, human rights issues and climate change.

Qatar

[India Welcomes US-Taliban Deal In Qatar, MEA Reiterates Need To Bring Peace And Stability In Afghanistan](#)

February 29, 2020, India Today

In a guarded reaction to the peace deal between the US and the Taliban, India on Saturday said its consistent policy has been to support all opportunities that can bring peace, security and stability in Afghanistan and ensure the end of terrorism.

[Qatar Postal Blockage Ends As Regional Rivals Restore Service](#)

February 25, 2020, Al Jazeera

A postal blockage against Qatar has ended with Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Egypt restoring services after mail links were severed in 2017 as part of a campaign to isolate Doha, the UN postal agency said.

Saudi Arabia

[European Commission Clears \\$69 Billion Saudi Aramco Sabic Acquisition](#)

March 02, 2020, Oil and Gas Middle East

The European Commission cleared Saudi Aramco's acquisition of a 70% stake in SABIC from the Public Investment Fund (PIF) for \$69 billion, according to the Saudi exchange (Tadawul).

[Saudi Arabia Aims For Additional Cuts As Oil Plunges Below \\$50](#)

February 28, 2020, Oilprice.com

Faced with a slump in demand and plunging oil prices, OPEC's top producer and de facto leader Saudi Arabia is asking members of the OPEC+ group to consider an additional collective cut of 1 million bpd when the coalition meets in Vienna next week, Financial Times reports, citing five people with knowledge of the talks.

[Saudi Arabia's Non-oil Economy Grows At Fastest Pace In Six Years](#)

March 01, 2020, Arab News

Saudi Arabia's non-oil economy grew by 3.3 percent last year, its fastest rate since 2014, even as the energy sector contracted and slowed overall growth.

[Saudi Arabia Launches E-system To Refund Umrah Fees](#)

March 02, 2020, Middle East Monitor

Saudi Arabia yesterday announced launching a new electronic system to enable Umrah pilgrims, whom trips have been cancelled, to get refunds on their visa fees, as well as fees of other services associated to their trips.

[Saudi Arabia Closes Two Holiest Shrines To Foreigners As Coronavirus Fears Grow](#)

February 27, 2020, The Guardian

Saudi Arabia has closed the two holiest shrines of Islam to foreign travellers and banned pilgrims from entering the country as fears surrounding the coronavirus outbreak continue to grow in the Middle East.

[14 Saudi Oil Companies Incur Heavy Losses](#)

February 26, 2020, Middle East Monitor

Saudi Arabia's Capital Market Authority (CMA) has given companies listed on the country's stock exchange, known as Tadawul, until the end of March to disclose its annual reports for 2019. Local media recently reported that Saudi Aramco –

world's largest oil producer – was yet to announce its business and financial reports, while most of the country's energy companies have incurred heavy losses.

[Saudi Monarch Hosts Israeli Rabbi In Royal Palace](#)

February 25, 2020, Middle East Monitor

The Saudi monarch hosted David Rosen, a rabbi born in Britain who moved to Israel a number of years ago to become the member of the Israeli Chief Rabbinate's Commission for Interreligious Dialogue.

Syria

[Syria Says 2 Warplanes Downed By Turkey As Tensions Soar](#)

March 01, 2020, Politico

Syria's official news agency said two of its warplanes were shot down by Turkish forces inside northwest Syria, amid a military escalation there that's led to growing direct clashes between Turkish and Syrian forces.

[Syria War: Turkish Drone Strikes 'kill 19 Syrian Soldiers'](#)

March 02, 2020, BBC News

Nineteen Syrian soldiers have been killed in Turkish drone strikes on Idlib, a UK-based monitor has said. According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), the attacks targeted a military convoy and an army base amid increasing violence.

[Russia And Turkey's Conflict In Syria Escalates](#)

February 27, 2020, Newsweek

Russia and Turkey's conflict over an insurgent-held province of northwestern Syria has witnessed a major escalation in hostilities recently, with new reports of Turkish military casualties incurred by airstrikes.

[Syria War: 33 Turkish Troops Killed In Airstrike In Idlib](#)

February 28, 2020, BBC News

At least 33 Turkish soldiers have been killed in an air strike by Syrian "regime forces" in north-western Syria, a senior Turkish official has said.

Turkey

[Erdogan, Putin Agree To Meet Face To Face: Turkish Official](#)

February 28, 2020, Anadolu Agency

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in their phone conversation agreed to meet face to face soon, Turkey's communications director said on Friday. Fahrettin Altun had a meeting with media representatives in Ankara on latest developments after Thursday night's attacks on Turkish soldiers by Assad regime forces in Idlib, northwestern Syria.

[Turkey-Russia Clashes in Syria Spell Trouble for Erdogan's Political Future](#)

March 02, 2020, Haaretz

Fifty Turkish soldiers were killed in February in clashes with Syrian forces in Idlib. Of these, 36 were killed on Thursday in a Russian air force strike and Syrian government shelling. It seems that the Turkish-Russian alliance running the campaign in northern Syria is about to come crashing down.

[Turkey Declares Major Offensive Against Syrian Government](#)

March 01, 2020, The New York Times

Turkey said on Sunday that it was launching a major counteroffensive against the Syrian government, for the first time openly declaring war on the government of Bashar al-Assad and steeply escalating Ankara's involvement in Syria's nine-year war.

[Russia Sends Warships as Turkish Troops Killed in Syria](#)

February 28, 2020, The Moscow Times

Russia is sending two warships equipped with Kalibr cruise missiles to the Mediterranean Sea toward the Syrian coast amid mounting tensions between Russia, Turkey and Syria over the Syrian province of Idlib, the Russian Navy said Friday.

[Turkey Readies For Conflict With Russia In Syria](#)

February 27, 2020, Washington Examiner

Confronted with a Syrian-Russian attack on Thursday that killed dozens of Turkish soldiers, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is likely to launch a counteroffensive in Syria's contested Idlib governorate this weekend. This is likely to end the burgeoning Russia-Turkey alliance and lead to increased bloodletting.

[Erdogan Condemns 'massacres' Committed Against Muslims In India](#)

February 28, 2020, The Siasat Daily

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan hit out Thursday against "massacres" of Muslims in India after communal riots in New Delhi left at least 38 dead.

UAE

[21 Confirmed Cases Of Coronavirus In UAE](#)

February 29, 2020, Khaleej Times

The UAE has so far reported 21 cases of the new coronavirus since January 28, five of whom have recovered, the Ministry of Health and Community Protection has announced.

[UAE Banks Lay Off Hundreds, Close 49 Branches Due To Slow Economic Growth](#)

February 24, 2020, Middle East Monitor

The English-speaking Emirati Khaleej Times newspaper reported that in the third quarter of 2019, the merger of two local banks caused licensed commercial banks to drop to 59, including 21 national banks and 38 foreign banks.

Yemen

[UN Security Council Approves Resolution Renewing Yemen Sanctions](#)

February 26, 2020, Middle East monitor

The UN Security Council approved a resolution yesterday which will extend its sanctions on Yemen for another year. The sanctions were initially set to expire today, including extensions of the mandate of UN experts who monitor the arms embargo imposed in 2015 in addition to asset freezes and travel bans on targeted individuals.

[Yemen's War Is Escalating Again](#)

February 26, 2020, Brookings Institution

After five months of de-escalation, the war in Yemen is heading back in the wrong direction. Fighting is escalating on the ground. The Houthi rebels have resumed missile attacks on Saudi Arabia and the Saudis have resumed air strikes on Sana'a. If the war escalates further, there is a danger it will expand and draw in Iran and America more than previously.

[Officials Say Yemen's Rebels Seize Strategic Northern City](#)

March 02, 2020, Al Jazeera

Yemen's Houthi rebels have wrested control of a strategic city in the country's north, officials said, in a major blow to the internationally recognised government and the Saudi-led coalition that backs it.

[Houthis Unveil Four New Air Defence Systems](#)

February 24, 2020, Middle East Monitor

The Houthis announced on Sunday in the Yemeni capital, Sanaa, the unveiling of four new air defence systems.



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