



Delhi Policy Group

# DPG WEST ASIA REVIEW



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## **DPG WEST ASIA REVIEW**

### **Volume 2, Issue 15**

#### **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**

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# Contents

Bahrain.....	1
Egypt.....	2
Iraq.....	3
Iran.....	4
Israel.....	5
Jordan.....	6
Kuwait.....	7
Lebanon.....	8
Oman.....	9
Qatar.....	10
Saudi Arabia.....	11
Syria.....	13
Turkey.....	14
UAE.....	15
Yemen.....	16

## Bahrain

### [Shops Reopen in Bahrain as Government Rolls Back Restrictions](#)

April 09, 2020, Al-Monitor

Bahrain allowed shopping malls and some stores to resume business on April 09, becoming one of a handful of countries to roll back measures intended to curb the spread of coronavirus.

## Egypt

### [Egypt to Test Japanese Anti-viral Drug Avigan in Clinical Trials](#)

April 12, 2020, Egypt Today

Egypt is getting ready to conduct clinical trials on samples of the Japanese anti-viral drug Avigan as a treatment for COVID-19, Advisor to the Minister of Higher Education for International Relations and Agreements for Scientific Research Affairs, Dr. Mohamed Al-Shennawy, said.

### [\\$8.5 Billion in Foreign Investment Left Egypt in 3 Months](#)

April 10, 2020, Middle East Monitor

Egyptian Minister of Finance Mohamed Maait revealed that around \$8.5 billion in foreign investments in government debt instruments have left the country during the last three months.

## Iraq

### [Iraqi Oil Minister Says Big Oil Cut Deal Will Help to Stabilize Oil Market](#)

April 13, 2020, Reuters

Iraq's oil minister said late on Sunday (April 12) that the big oil cut deal reached at an OPEC+ meeting would help stabilize the market. Thamer al-Ghadhban said in a statement that the "massive oil cut deal will help lower oil inventories and boost prices."

### [US Officials: Patriot Missile Defense Systems Now Operating in Iraq](#)

April 12, 2020, Military.com

Patriot missile launchers and two other short-range systems are now in place at al-Asad Air Base, where Iran carried out a massive ballistic missile attack against U.S. and coalition troops in January, and at the military base in Irbil, Iraq.

### [Intelligence Chief Mustafa Kadhemi Named Iraq's Third PM-designate This Year](#)

April 10, 2020, India Today

Iraqi President Barham Saleh nominated spy chief Mustafa Kadhemi on Thursday as the country's third prime minister-designate this year, moments after predecessor Adnan Zurfi ended his bid to form a government.

### [Islamic State Seeks Comeback Under Cover Of Coronavirus](#)

April 09, 2020, Al-Monitor

The Islamic State (IS) is seeking to take advantage of Iraq's preoccupation with the coronavirus pandemic and the global coalition's suspension there of military operations against IS.

### [US Offers \\$10m for Information on Hezbollah Commander in Iraq](#)

April 11, 2020, Al Jazeera

The United States has offered up to \$10m for information on Hezbollah commander Sheikh Mohammad al-Kawtharani, who was an associate of slain Iranian General Qassem Soleimani.

## Iran

### [India to Use Chabahar Port in Iran to Send Assistance to Afghanistan](#)

April 13, 2020, The Hindu

An Indian ship on Sunday began its journey to Iran's Chabahar port, carrying a major consignment for Afghanistan of wheat and anti-malarial drug hydroxychloroquine, which is being used in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

### [Iran's Coronavirus, Sanctions-hit Economy Slowly Reopens](#)

April 11, 2020, France 24

Iran allowed small businesses outside the capital Tehran to reopen Saturday (April 11), arguing the sanctions-hit economy in the country with the deadliest coronavirus outbreak in the Middle East cannot stay in lockdown.

### [Coronavirus: Iran Appeals for \\$5bn IMF Loan as Deaths Near 4,000](#)

April 09, 2020, BBC News

Iran has urged the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to approve a \$5bn (£4bn) emergency loan to help fight the coronavirus, as its death toll neared 4,000. President Hassan Rouhani warned that "there should be no discrimination" in approving requests.

### [US to Block Iran's Request for \\$5bn IMF Loan to Fight Coronavirus](#)

April 08, 2020, Middle East Eye

The United States plans to block Iran's request for a \$5bn emergency IMF loan to respond effectively to the country's coronavirus outbreak, claiming that the funds would be used to support its "adventurism abroad, not to buy medicine for Iranians".

### [916,000 in Iran Have Coronavirus: Expert](#)

April 09, 2020, The National Interest

Iran is undercounting the coronavirus death toll by an "order of magnitude," Professor Hazhir Rahmandad said at a video conference hosted by the Middle East Institute.

## Israel

### [Israeli President Denies Gantz More Time to Form Government](#)

April 12, 2020, The Times of Israel

Israel's President on Sunday (April 12) rejected parliament speaker Benny Gantz's request for more time to form a government, as talks persist on a possible interim alliance with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

### [Israel Said Willing To Take Steps toward Prisoner Swap with Hamas](#)

April 12, 2020, The Times of Israel

Israel has relayed its willingness to Hamas, by way of Egyptian mediators, to take steps toward a prisoner exchange deal with the Gaza-ruling terror group, the Al-Araby Al-Jadeed newspaper reported.

### [Israel Fuming at Palestinian Authority Accusations of Spreading Covid-19 in West Bank](#)

April 13, 2020, The Times of Israel

The Palestinian Authority has reportedly been mounting a "campaign of incitement" for the past week, accusing Israel of "spreading the virus" in Palestinian areas of the West Bank.

### [Netanyahu Thanks India for Delivering Hydroxychloroquine to Israel](#)

April 10, 2020, Outlook India

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday thanked his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi for rushing a five-tonne cargo of medicines, including anti-malarial drug hydroxychloroquine, seen as a possible cure for COVID-19.



## Jordan

### [Covid-19: Jordan Extends Closure of Government Offices until End of April 30](#)

Jordan on Sunday (April 12) extended a month-long lockdown that has closed schools, universities and government agencies until the end of the month to stem the spread of coronavirus, the government spokesman said.

### [Jordan Military Arrests TV Executives for Airing Coronavirus Related Complaints](#)

April 10, 2020, Al Jazeera

The Jordanian military has arrested the owner of Roya TV and its news director after it aired a news segment showing a crowd of labourers complaining about their inability to work because of the government-imposed coronavirus lockdown.

## Kuwait

### [Rapid Response Team from India Reaches Kuwait to Combat Covid-19](#)

April 11, 2020, Gulf News

A rapid response team comprising 15 doctors and health care professionals from India reached Kuwait on Saturday (April 11) to assist the Kuwait government in its fight against coronavirus, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said.

## Lebanon

### [Lebanon's Draft Rescue Plan Seeks \\$10-15bn in Aid and More](#)

April 09, 2020, Al Jazeera

Lebanon will seek \$10bn to \$15bn in external financing and officially devalue its currency by half by 2024 in an effort to address the deepest financial crisis in its history, according to a leaked government plan.

## Oman

### [PM Modi Speaks To Sultan Of Oman On Covid-19 Crisis](#)

April 07, 2020, Times of India

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday (April 07) spoke to Sultan of Oman Haitham Bin Tariq and discussed about the impact of Covid-19.

## Qatar

### [Qatar to Pay Private Sector Salaries as Covid-19 Cripples Business](#)

April 12, 2020, Bloomberg News

Qatar will temporarily pay some private sector salaries as policies meant to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus keep most businesses shuttered. Privately owned companies incorporated in Qatar can apply for three months of salary support for their workers. If accepted, employees will receive money directly in their Qatari bank accounts under a program administered by Qatar Development Bank

## Saudi Arabia

### [Oil Climbs After OPEC, Russia End Price War By Agreeing To Record-sized Production Cut](#)

April 12, 2020, Business Insider

The multiweek oil-price war between Russia and its OPEC allies has finally been resolved. The international consortium agreed on Sunday to cut global crude oil production by almost 10%. OPEC+ announced it will slash production by 9.7 million barrels a day for May and June.

### [20 Saudis Charged in Jamal Khashoggi Murder](#)

April 12, 2020, Middle East Monitor

A Turkish court on Saturday (April 11) accepted an indictment on the 2018 killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul. The 117-page indictment prepared by Istanbul prosecutors accusing 20 Saudi nationals of involvement in the gruesome premeditated murder was accepted by Istanbul's Heavy Penal Court No. 11.

### [Saudi Arabia Extends Coronavirus Curfew Indefinitely](#)

April 12, 2020, The Economic Times

Saudi Arabia's King Salman extended a nationwide curfew until further notice due to the spread of the new coronavirus, the interior ministry said on Sunday, after the kingdom reported more than 300 new infections on each of the last four days.

### [Saudi Arabia is Preparing to End The War in Yemen](#)

April 12, 2020, Al Jazeera

The two week ceasefire announced by KSA is an indication that Riyadh may be preparing to end its involvement in the war and sue for peace. This dovetails with the United Arab Emirates' decision in July 2019 to withdraw its troops, leaving southern Yemen in the hands of its allies in the Southern Transitional Council (STC) and forces loyal to President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi.

### [Canada Lifts Suspension of Arms Exports to Saudi Arabia](#)

April 10, 2020, Al Jazeera

The Canadian government is lifting a suspension on arms exports to Saudi Arabia and has renegotiated a controversial multibillion-dollar contract that will see an Ontario-based company sell light armoured vehicles (LAVs) to Riyadh.

### [150 Members of The Saudi Royal Family Have Coronavirus: Report](#)

April 09, 2020, The Hill

Up to 150 members of Saudi Arabia's royal family have contracted the coronavirus. Prince Faisal bin Bandar bin Abdulziz al Saud, the governor of Riyadh and a nephew of King Salman, was confirmed to have tested positive by two doctors.

### [India to Use Low Priced Oil from Saudi Arabia, UAE And Iraq To Fill Strategic Reserves](#)

April 08, 2020, Firstpost

Capitalising on low global oil prices, India will fill its underground strategic oil reserves with oil from Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Iraq as it shores up supplies to meet any supply or price disruption.

### [India Drops Saudi Arabia From Anti-dumping Probe](#)

April 07, 2020, Middle East Monitor

India has dropped Saudi Arabia from an investigation into the dumping of chemical products into the Indian market but will continue its probe into the UAE, Kuwait and Oman.

## Syria

### [OPCW Report Finds Syrian Government Forces Responsible For 2017 Chemical Attacks](#)

April 08, 2020, CNN International

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) has concluded the Syrian government forces were responsible for a series of chemical attacks on a Syrian town in late March 2017.

### [Syria condemns 'misleading' Chemical Arms Watchdog Report](#)

April 09, 2020, Al Jazeera

The Syrian government has condemned a report by the global chemical weapons watchdog OPCW blaming President Bashar al-Assad's forces for a series of toxic gas attacks in 2017, even as the European Union welcomed the findings and said it was willing to mull expanding sanctions against Damascus.



## Turkey

### [Covid-19 Crisis Threatens to Double Turkey's Unemployed](#)

April 09, 2020, Al-Monitor

The coronavirus crisis appears bound to leave Turkey with some 10 million people out of work, doubling the country's pre-pandemic unemployment count. Even more alarmingly, many of those losing jobs remain without any welfare coverage from the state.

### [Turkey Won't Seek Loan from IMF, Erdogan's Spokesman Says](#)

April 12, 2020, Bloomberg News

Turkey ruled out seeking a loan from the International Monetary Fund just days after the fund's chief said the institution has a "constructive engagement" with Ankara, quashing speculation that it would reach out for financial assistance.

## UAE

### [Lakhs of Indians Face Uncertain Future as UAE, Kuwait Plan 'Restrictions' on Countries Reluctant to Take Back Nationals](#)

April 13, 2020, News18

Spelling trouble for Indian workers, the UAE plans to impose strict restrictions on countries reluctant to take back their nationals working in the Gulf country in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak and restructure its cooperation and labour relations with them, a state-run media report said on Sunday (April 12).

### [UAE offers Assad \\$3bn to strike Turkey-backed troops in Syria](#)

April 09, 2020, Middle East Monitor

The Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi attempted to convince Syria to break the Idlib ceasefire as part of an elaborate plot to tie Turkey down in the area, sources have revealed to the London-based Middle East Eye.

## Yemen

### [COVID-19 in Yemen: Saudi Coalition Ceasefire Declared in a bid to Contain Coronavirus](#)

April 09, 2020, The United Nations News

A ceasefire declaration by Saudi Arabia in war-shattered Yemen that was due to come into effect on Thursday (April 08) has been welcomed by United Nations chief António Guterres as a way to promote peace and slow the advance of COVID-19.

### [Houthis to Not 'stop fighting' After Ceasefire](#)

April 09, 2020, Al Jazeera

Yemen's Houthi rebels have told Al Jazeera they will not stop fighting while the country is under siege. That comes after the Saudi-UAE military coalition that is battling the rebels announced a two-week unilateral ceasefire.

### [Clashes Continue in Yemen Despite Ceasefire](#)

April 12, 2020, Middle East Monitor

At least 38 Houthi rebels were killed on Saturday (April 11) in clashes with government forces despite a truce reached earlier in the week, according to local media.



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