



Delhi Policy Group

# DPG WEST ASIA REVIEW



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## Volume 2, Issue 18

### 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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## Bahrain

### [Bahrain's Parliament Welcomes Germany's Terror Listing of Hezbollah](#)

May 02, 2020, Gulf News

The Bahraini parliament has welcomed Germany's designation of Lebanon's Iran-allied Hezbollah group as a terrorist organisation and banning all its activities there.

### [India Appoints New Ambassadors To Bahrain, Qatar](#)

April 30, 2020, NDTV India

Deepak Mittal has been appointed India's next Ambassador to Qatar, while Piyush Srivastava goes to Bahrain in the same capacity, as per an official release of Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

### [Navy, Air Force Give Final Touches to Biggest Evacuation Plan Ever to Bring Back Indians Stranded in Gulf Nations](#)

April 29, 2020, News 18

Indian Navy is in the advanced stages of preparing at least three of its ships to evacuate thousands of stranded Indians, particularly migrant labourers, from the Gulf countries.

## Egypt

### [Islamic State Claims Responsibility For Egypt's Sinai Attack](#)

May 01, 2020, The Jerusalem Post

Islamic State on Friday (May 01) claimed responsibility for an attack on an Egyptian military vehicle in North Sinai province that killed and wounded several military personnel, the group's Amaq news agency reported.

### [Journalism Has Become a Crime in Egypt: Amnesty International](#)

May 03, 2020, Al Jazeera

Journalism in Egypt has effectively become a crime over the past four years, as authorities clamp down on media outlets and muzzle dissent, Amnesty International has said in a new report.

## Iraq

### [ISIS Extremists Step up Attacks as Iraq, Syria Grapple with Coronavirus](#)

May 03, 2020, Daily Mail

Iraq and Syria are battling resurgence in attacks from ISIS as the terror group takes advantage of the coronavirus pandemic. There are between 2,500 to 3,000 Islamic state fighters in Iraq, security official's estimate, and a further 500 have escaped from prisons in Syria, fuelling a spike in violence in the region.

### [US-Led Coalition Conducts 28 Strikes in Iraq, Syria in March 2020](#)

April 30, 2020, Sputnik International

The US-Led coalition has carried out 28 airstrikes against Daesh in March, Combined Joint Task Force - Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTF-OIR) said in a release on Thursday (April 30).

### [Coalition Aircraft Bomb Alleged Islamic State Targets in Iraqi Mountains](#)

April 29, 2020, news.com.au

US-led forces conducted airstrikes on alleged Islamic State (IS) targets in the Hamrin Mountains of northern Iraq on Wednesday, April 29, according to the Combined Joint Task Force against IS (CJFT-OIR).

## Iran

### [Iran Condemns German Ban on Hezbollah, Warns of Consequences](#)

May 01, 2020, Deutsche Welle

A day after Germany designated Hezbollah a terrorist organization, Iran has "strongly condemned" the move and threatened Germany with consequences. Iran accused Germany of pandering to the US and Israel.

### [Iran Says U.S. Push To Extend Tehran's Arms Embargo is 'illegitimate'](#)

May 04, 2020, Reuters

Iran dismissed as "illegitimate" efforts by the United States to extend the U.N. Security Council arms embargo on Tehran, an Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman said on Monday (May 04).

### [Pompeo: US Will Prevent Iranian Conventional Arms Purchases Once UN Embargo Ends](#)

April 29, 2020, i24 News

The United States Secretary of State reiterated his country's fierce opposition to Iran being able to purchase conventional weapons when a United Nations prohibition expires in October 2020.

### [Iran Warns of Nuclear Deal 'death' If Arms Embargo Extended](#)

May 03, 2020, CGTN

A top Iranian official has warned that a nuclear deal the U.S. withdrew unilaterally from would "die forever" if an arms embargo on Tehran is extended.

### [Afghanistan Investigates Reports Iran Guards Forced Migrants into River](#)

May 03, 2020, BBC News

Afghanistan is investigating reports Afghan migrants drowned after being tortured and pushed into a river by Iranian border guards.

### [Social Media Criticism in Iran as Petrol Prices Stay High](#)

May 03, 2020, Al Jazeera

The global oil slump caused by coronavirus gives Iranians renewed drive to put their foot down over the price of gas.

## [Iran's Great Virus Gamble: Mosques to Reopen Despite Soaring Death Toll](#)

May 04, 2020, Arab News

Hundreds of mosques in Iran will reopen their doors on Monday (May 04) despite a soaring death toll from the coronavirus and uncertainty over how many Iranians have been infected.



## Israel

### [Israel's High Court Hears Challenges to a Unity Government Led by Netanyahu](#)

May 03, 2020, The Wall Street Journal

Israel's high court on Sunday (May 03) heard petitions against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu forming a government while under indictment, with a potential ruling that could lead to another election as the country grapples with the coronavirus pandemic.

### [Israel Strikes Syrian Targets, State Media Says, Fourth Time in Two Weeks](#)

May 01, 2020, Haaretz

Syrian state media said Israeli helicopters fired several missiles from the Golan Heights into Syrian territory in the night between Thursday (April 30) and Friday (May 01).

### [11 European Ambassadors Warn Israel against West Bank Annexation](#)

May 01, 2020, Times of Israel

The envoys from the UK, Germany, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Sweden, Belgium, Denmark, Finland and the EU on Thursday (April 30) warned Jerusalem of severe consequences if it moves ahead with plans to annex parts of the West Bank as part of a government coalition deal.

### [Arab League Slams Israel's West Bank Annexation Plans 'a New War Crime'](#)

April 30, 2020, Arab News

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in announcing a deal to form a unity government, has said cabinet discussions will start on July 1 on extending Israeli sovereignty to Jewish settlements in the West Bank and annexing the area's Jordan Valley outright.

## Jordan

### [Jordan Ends Historic Arrangement with Israel as West Bank Annexation Tensions Rise](#)

May 01, 2020, NBC News

Israeli farmers will no longer be allowed to work their fields in an enclave of southern Jordan, ending a more than 25-year arrangement meant to shore up a historic peace agreement, Jordan's Foreign Ministry announced Thursday (April 30).

## Kuwait

### [Kuwait offers to Airlift Stranded Indians](#)

May 01, 2020, The Hindu

The Government of Kuwait on Friday (May 01) said it was willing to evacuate a large number of workers and illegal migrants from India who are stranded in its territory, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### [Sibi George to be Appointed as Indian Ambassador To Kuwait](#)

May 01, 2020, Mathrubhumi

Sibi George, a Malayali IFS officer, will soon be appointed as the Indian Ambassador to Kuwait.

### [India Green-lights UAE, Kuwait Request For Ex-military Doctors, Nurses](#)

April 29, 2020, Hindustan Times

The government has given an in-principle approval to requests from Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates to send Indian doctors and paramedics to help the two Gulf countries fight the Covid-19 pandemic.

### [Kuwait Joins Saudi-Qatar-Oman to Reject Anti-India Propaganda](#)

April 28, 2020, The Economic Times

Kuwait, after Oman, Saudi Arabia and Qatar have, rejected attempts to spoil ties with India through 'foreign sponsored' social media handles and posts.

## Lebanon

### [Germany Bans Lebanese Militant Group Hezbollah](#)

April 30, 2020, CNN International

Germany announced Thursday (April 30) it has designated the Lebanese militant and political group Hezbollah a terror organization, banning all of its activities in the country and ordering raids on sites linked to the group, police said.

### [Violent Protests Erupt in Lebanon as Pandemic Makes Financial Crisis Worse](#)

May 01, 2020, CNN International

The country's long-running financial crisis, which led to the resignation of its prime minister in October 2019, has only gotten worse because of the coronavirus pandemic. Before the pandemic, the World Bank projected that 45% of people in Lebanon would be below the poverty line in 2020. Now the government believes that up to 75% of people are in need of aid.

### [Lebanon To Seek IMF Loan, Says It Needs \\$10bn in Aid](#)

April 30, 2020, Al Jazeera

Lebanon will seek an International Monetary Fund aid package to help it recover from its worst-ever financial crisis, Prime Minister Hassan Diab announced on Thursday (April 30), after his government endorsed a financial rescue plan to pull the country out of its downward economic spiral.

## Oman

### [Oman Policy To Replace Expats Likely To Implement Next Year, Blue Collar Indian Workers Not To Be Impacted](#)

May 02, 2020, WION

The Omani finance ministry order issued earlier this week to replace expats from govt job will not be immediately implemented and could take over a year for any concrete action on the ground. WION has learnt that Omani government companies will be submitting plans to replace expats along with next year's budget proposals.

### [Oman asks State Sector Companies to Replace Expats with Locals](#)

April 30, 2020, Indian Express

Oman's Finance Ministry has asked all state-owned companies to replace foreign workers with qualified local Omanis, as part of efforts to develop the national workforce, news agency Reuters reported.

## Qatar

### [India Announces New Ambassador To Qatar](#)

April 29, 2020, The Peninsula Qatar

Indian government has appointed new ambassador to Qatar. Dr. Deepak Mittal will be the new envoy to Qatar and he is expected to take charge in a few weeks.

## Saudi Arabia

### [Saudi Arabia's Sabic Suspends All But Essential Spending](#)

May 04, 2020, Bloomberg News

Saudi Basic Industries Corp. is suspending new capital expenditure after an oil-price slump and coronavirus-related lockdowns hammered demand for chemicals and pushed the company into a 950 million riyals loss (\$253 million) in the first quarter.

### [Saudi Arabia To Take Strict, Painful Measures To Deal with Coronavirus Impact: Report](#)

May 03, 2020, India Today

Saudi Arabia will take strict and painful measures to deal with the impact of the novel coronavirus pandemic, the finance minister said in an interview with Al Arabiya on Saturday. "We must reduce budget expenditures sharply", Mohammed al-Jadaan said in comments published.

### [Donald Trump Tells Saudi Arabia To Cut Oil Supply or Lose US Military Support: Sources](#)

May 01, 2020, India Today

US President Donald Trump had told Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman that unless the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) started cutting oil production, he would be powerless to stop lawmakers from passing legislation to withdraw U.S. troops from the kingdom, four sources said.

## Syria

### [Syria Says Russian Missile Defence System 'ineffective'](#)

May 01, 2020, Middle East Monitor

The Syrian military has criticised the Russian S-300 missile defence system, saying that it is largely ineffective against Israeli air strikes, Avia.pro reported. A Syrian military source told the Russian outlet that the radar used on the S-300 and the Pantsir-S systems has proven to be incapable of detecting and hitting Israeli cruise missiles on numerous occasions.

### [Russian Media Slams Syria's Assad as 'weak'](#)

April 20, 2020, Middle East Monitor

A Russian news agency close to President Vladimir Putin criticised Syrian regime President, Bashar Al-Assad, describing him as "weak", adding he cannot rule a country ravaged by corruption.

### [Report: Russia, Turkey, Iran Agree To Remove Syria's Assad](#)

May 04, 2020, Middle East Monitor

The Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC) expects that Russia, Turkey and Iran will reach a consensus to remove the head of the Syrian regime, Bashar Al-Assad, and establish a ceasefire in exchange for forming a transitional government that includes the opposition, members of the regime and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

### [Syrian Tycoon Decries 'inhumane' Security Forces in Unprecedented Criticism](#)

May 03, 2020, Middle East Eye

Sanctions-hit Syrian tycoon Rami Makhlouf said on Sunday that security forces were arresting employees at his companies "in an inhumane way", amid pressure on him to step down from his business empire and pay millions of dollars in taxes.



## Turkey

### [US Doubles Down On Turkey S-400 Sanctions Threats](#)

April 30, 2020, AL-Monitor

The Donald Trump administration doubled down on Thursday (April 30) on threats to sanction Turkey should it activate the Russian S-400 missile defense system.

### ['Destructive Policies': Turkey Slams UAE Over Middle East, Africa](#)

May 01, 2020, Al Jazeera

Turkey's Foreign Ministry on Thursday (April 30) accused the United Arab Emirates of pursuing "destructive policies" in northern Africa and the Middle East and called on the Emiratis to abandon what it called a "hostile attitude" towards Ankara.

## UAE

### [Govt of India Concerned about Offensive Social Media Posts in Gulf](#)

May 04, 2020, Times of India

The government remains concerned about attempts to disturb communal harmony particularly in UAE where 3 more Indians have lost jobs recently and are facing action by local authorities for their Islamophobic utterances.

### [150000 Indians Register To Be Repatriated From UAE](#)

May 03, 2020, The Economic Times

As India prepares to repatriate some of its 10 million citizens from the Gulf countries this month, more than 150,000 Indians in the United Arab Emirates have registered with India's diplomatic mission to fly back home.

### [Covid-19: Indian Missions in UAE Open Online Registration for Its Citizens Who Wish To Fly Home](#)

April 30, 2020, The Economic Times

The Indian missions in the UAE have opened online registration for the expatriates who wish to fly back home after getting stuck in the country amidst the lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic.

## Yemen

### [Yemen Reports First Coronavirus Deaths, Multiple Cases](#)

April 30, 2020, Al Jazeera

Yemen has reported its first two deaths from the novel coronavirus, its health minister told Yemen TV late on Wednesday (April 29).

### [Separatist Group announces Self-rule in Southern Yemen](#)

April 26, 2020, Al Jazeera

Yemen's southern separatists have announced plans to establish a self-ruled administration in regions under their control, a move the country's internationally-backed government said would have "catastrophic consequences".



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