



Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



DPG WEST ASIA REVIEW



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Delhi Policy Group

Core 5A, 1st Floor, India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi- 110003

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ABOUT US

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DPG WEST ASIA REVIEW

DPG West Asia Review contains major developments in West Asia of strategic relevance to India, compiled from open source media. To subscribe please [click here](#).

Your comments and feedback can be addressed to Sanket Joshi at sanket@dpg.org.in.

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Abstract

In a major escalation of violence between Israel and Palestine, Islamic Resistance Movement (HAMAS) of Gaza over the past week fired more than 2900 rockets on Israel including the cities of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. In response, Israel launched "Operation Guardian of the Walls" with air-strikes on HAMAS targets inside the Gaza strip. On May 10, Indian citizen 'Ms. Soumya Santosh' died in one of the rocket attacks on the city of Ashkelon in Southern Israel. India's Permanent Representative to the UN condemned all acts of violence, including "indiscriminate rocket firings" from Gaza and the "retaliatory strikes" by Israel. India urged "both sides to show extreme restraint, desist from actions that exacerbate tensions, and refrain from attempts to unilaterally change the existing status quo, including in East Jerusalem and its neighbourhood". US President Joe Biden reacted to the Israeli bombardment of Gaza as not a "significant over-reaction". Reportedly, the United States deployed F-18 fighter aircrafts around Saudi Arabia to promote security and stability amid the escalating violence in the Middle East.

As the conflict rages, Saudi Arabia led "Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has called for an immediate halt to what it described as Israel's barbaric attacks on Gaza and blamed Tel Aviv for systematic crimes against the Palestinians". Turkey has also urged Muslim nations to take a clear stand on this issue. Further, protests have erupted across the Middle East in support of the Palestinians that is likely to test Gulf Arab states détente with Israel. As the United States blocked UN Security Council statement on Gaza conflict, China accused Washington of being "indifferent to the suffering" of Palestinians. Even as Israel and HAMAS exchange blows, the nuclear talks in Vienna continued. Reportedly Iran is preparing for a strong comeback to the oil market as the country's oil fields are going through overhaul operations and connections with oil buyers are being re-established.

India continues to receive medical aid from West Asia in its fight to contain the second wave of COVID-19. Egypt sent 30 tonnes of medical supplies, including 300 oxygen cylinders, 50 oxygen concentrators and 8,000 vials of Remdesivir. While Kuwait sent medical consignment that included three semi-trailers of Liquid Medical Oxygen (25 Metric Tonnes each) and 1000 Oxygen cylinders.

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

Bahrain

[Israel's Conflict in Gaza Tests Limits of New Detente with Arab World](#)

May 13, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

Images of buildings exploding in Gaza from Israeli airstrikes and the country's police storming Jerusalem's Al Aqsa mosque, the third holiest site in Islam, have catalysed a wave of pro-Palestinian protests across the Middle East and beyond, testing the limits of Arab governments' relationships with Israel.

Egypt

[COVID-19: Egypt Sends 30 Tonnes of Medical Supplies to India](#)

May 11, 2021, The Economic Times

As India battles a severe wave of coronavirus pandemic, Egypt has sent 30 tonnes of medical supplies, including 300 oxygen cylinders, 50 oxygen concentrators and 8,000 vials of Remdesivir.

[Egypt: Israel Hasn't Responded to Our offer to Mediate to Defuse Tensions](#)

May 11, 2021, The Times of Israel

Egypt has reached out to Israel to help calm ongoing tensions amid days of unrest in Jerusalem and rocket fire from Gaza, but has yet to receive a response, its foreign minister told an emergency Arab League meeting.

Iraq

[US Contractor Lockheed Martin Leaves Iraq Base over Rocket Attacks](#)

May 11, 2021, Arab News

US contractor Lockheed Martin has withdrawn its staff from an Iraq base where it had been maintaining the Iraqi army's F-16 fighter jets, military sources said, after a spate of rocket attacks.

[Iraqi Shiite Cleric Moqtada Sadr Mobilises Thousands against Israel](#)

May 15, 2021, WION

Thousands of supporters of hard-line Shiite cleric Moqtada Sadr rallied in Baghdad to denounce Israeli attacks on Palestinians. "Jerusalem is ours. Death to Israel," read signs they held up as they flooded Baghdad's iconic Tahrir Square.

Iran

[Iran Deal Talks Continue as Its Proxy Hamas Bombs Israel](#)

May 16, 2021, The Jerusalem Post

Talks for the US and Iran to return to the 2015 nuclear deal continued in Vienna over the weekend, even as Iranian proxies Hamas and Islamic Jihad continued to bombard Israel's cities with rockets.

[Iran Helped Hamas Develop Missiles to Strike Targets Deep Inside Israel, Western Spies Claim](#)

May 16, 2021, The Sun

In the latest attacks on Israel, Hamas has used medium-range rockets with a range of 25 miles, as well as the M-75 and J-80 rockets, with a far longer range - of between 50-60 miles. Senior commanders from the Hamas group are believed to have made regular visits to Iran, where they have undergone training in the production and operation of sophisticated weapons systems.

[Iran's Judiciary Chief Declares Candidacy for Presidential Election](#)

May 15, 2021, Arab News

Iran's hard-line judiciary chief 'Ebrahim Raisi' declared his candidacy for next month's presidential election, which is seen as a test of the legitimacy of the country's clerical rulers.

[Iran Says warned United States Navy over 'Unprofessional Behaviour'](#)

May 11, 2021, The Economic Times

Iran's Republican Guards said they warned US vessels after Washington said warning shots were fired near Iranian attack boats, the latest confrontation between the rivals in the Gulf.

[Iran Preparing for a Strong Comeback to Oil Market](#)

May 16, 2021, Tehran Times

National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) officials have stated that the country's oil fields are going through overhaul operations and connections with oil buyers are being re-established. "In the most optimistic estimates, the country could return to pre-sanctions production levels of almost four million barrels a day in as little as three months," the report said.

Israel

[Israeli Forces Hit Hamas Tunnels in Gaza as All-out War Looms; More Rockets Rain Down](#)

May 15, 2021, The Washington Post

Israel continued to press its air campaign against the Gaza Strip after a devastating overnight assault by artillery and warplanes aimed at destroying an extensive system of tunnels built by the militant Hamas group to move fighters, rockets and other weapons.

[Israeli Military Says it Bombed Home of Top Hamas Leader Yahya Sinwar](#)

May 16, 2021, Arab News

Israeli air strikes hit the home of Yahya Sinwar, head of Hamas' political wing in the Gaza Strip, the army said, but without saying if he was killed.

[India Condemns all Violence in Israel, Gaza; Supports 'Just Palestinian Cause'](#)

May 16, 2021, Hindustan Times

Amid escalating tensions between Israel and Palestinian militants, India strongly condemned all acts of violence, including "indiscriminate rocket firings" from Gaza and the "retaliatory strikes".

[Israeli Diplomat Visits Family of Kerala's Soumya Santosh, Who Was Killed in Hamas Rocket Strike in Ashkelon](#)

May 16, 2021, Republic World

On May 15, the mortal remains of India's Soumya Santosh who lost her life in the rocket strikes in Israel's Ashkelon reached the Delhi Airport. The 30-year-old caretaker had passed away on May 10 when she was on a video call with her husband as a rocket triggered by Hamas militants hit the region.

[Israeli Bombardment of Gaza not a 'Significant Over-Reaction', President Biden Says](#)

May 13, 2021, Middle East Eye

US President Joe Biden is standing firmly by his administration's defence of Israel's most recent offensive on the Gaza Strip, which he said did not represent "a significant over-reaction" on the part of Israel, as the Palestinian death toll continues to rise.

[China Accuses US of Being 'Indifferent to the Suffering' of Palestinians](#)

May 14, 2021, South China Morning Post

Beijing – which holds the rotating presidency of the UN Security Council this month – criticised Washington for a second time this week for blocking a UNSC joint statement on the situation in Palestine.

[Upsurge in Violence Could Prove Political Boon for Netanyahu and Gaza's Hamas Leaders](#)

May 13, 2021, The Washington Post

The sudden escalation of violence between Israel and the Palestinians in Gaza could offer a boon to the leaders of both camps – Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Hamas militants – who have been struggling and scraping to salvage their political standing.

[Arab World Condemns Israeli Violence but Takes Little Action](#)

May 14, 2021, The New York Times

The Arab world is unified in condemning Israeli airstrikes in Gaza and the way the Israeli police invaded Jerusalem's Aqsa Mosque, one of Islam's holiest sites. Governments have spoken out, protests have taken place, social media is aflame. But by and large the condemnation is only words, not actions.

[Israeli Air Raid Flattens Gaza Building Housing AL Jazeera](#)

May 15, 2021, AL Jazeera

Israel's bombardment of the Gaza Strip entered its sixth consecutive day, with air raids hitting a refugee camp – killing at least 10 Palestinians, including eight children – and flattening a high-rise building housing the offices of media organisations, including Al Jazeera.

Jordan

[Protesters in Jordan March to the Israeli Border in Support of Palestinians](#)

May 14, 2021, The New York Times

Thousands of protesters in Jordan, Israel's eastern neighbour, marched toward the border, chanting slogans in solidarity with the Palestinians and waving Palestinian flags as Jordanian riot police surrounded them.

Kuwait

[Kuwait Sends Medical Aid to India Amid Battle with COVID-19; Consignment Arrives in Mumbai](#)

May 15, 2021, Republic World

Amid undulating COVID-19 figures on the graph and a medical crisis witnessed by the nation, Kuwait has lent a hand of support to India's ongoing Coronavirus battle. A Kuwaiti Ship arrived at Nhava Sheva Mumbai. The consignment included 3 semi-trailers of Liquid Medical Oxygen (25 Metric Tonnes each) and 1000 Oxygen cylinders onboard.

Lebanon

[Three Rockets Launched at Israel from Lebanon, No Damage, Says Israeli Military](#)

May 13, 2021, France 24

Three rockets were launched from Lebanon toward northern Israel but landed in the Mediterranean Sea, causing no damage or casualties, the Israeli military said. The rocket firing threatened to open a new front in the escalating fighting between Israel and the militant Palestinian Hamas group in Gaza.

Oman

[Oman Sends Special Medical Assistance to Support India's Fight Against Covid-19](#)

May 12, 2021, Times of Oman

The government of Oman dispatched special medical assistance for India's fight against COVID-19 on 12th May 2021 aboard a Royal Air Force (RAFO) plane. The Government of India expresses its deep gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik and the Government & people of Oman for their support to India during the difficult time of COVID-19 pandemic.

Qatar

[Blinken Discusses Gaza in Calls with Qatari, Egyptian, Saudi Foreign Ministers](#)

May 17, 2021, Reuters

Blinken and Qatar's Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani discussed "efforts to restore calm in Israel and the West Bank and Gaza in light of the tragic loss of civilian life", the State Department said.

Saudi Arabia

[Muslim States Condemn Israel's 'Flagrant Violations' of Palestinian Rights](#)

May 16, 2021, Reuters

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, addressing a meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) as hostilities between Israel and militants in Gaza entered a seventh day, condemned what he called the violation of the sanctity of Islamic holy sites.

[Saudi Arabia Leads Arab Action in UN to Highlight Palestine Violence](#)

May 16, 2021, Arab News

Saudi Arabia's permanent representative to the UN in New York, Abdallah Al-Mouallami, has met the permanent Chinese delegation to the UN in his capacity as president of the Security Council for this month, as the Kingdom leads Arab action on Palestine.

[US Deploys F-18 Fighter Jets to Saudi Arabia as Israel-Palestine Conflict Escalates](#)

May 13, 2021, Eurasian Times

The United States Air Forces Central Command announced that F-18 fighter jets were deployed to Saudi Arabia to promote security and stability amid the escalating violence in the Middle East.

[Serum Institute Owner Poonawallas Turned Down \\$1 Billion Offer](#)

May 05, 2021, Mint

Serum Institute of India was on the verge of signing a billion-dollar agreement with a clutch of marquee global investors last year but withdrew at the last minute even as it struggled to scale up production of covid-19 vaccines due to an apparent lack of funds, said two people directly aware of the matter.

Syria

[Biden Faces Russian Test Over Aid in Syria](#)

May 11, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

The Biden administration is bracing for a showdown with Russia over the delivery of United Nations aid to millions of Syrians outside the control of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, a flow that Moscow is poised to block in July.

Turkey

['Take a Clear Stance': Turkey Rallies Muslim Nations over Israel-Hamas Conflict](#)

May 13, 2021, Hindustan Times

Muslim countries must show a united and clear stance over Israel's conflict with the Islamist Hamas movement in Gaza, Turkey's vice president, Fuat Oktay, said, criticising world powers for condemning violence without acting.

UAE

[UAE Said to Warn Hamas Planned Gaza Infrastructure Projects are in Danger](#)

May 15, 2021, The Times of Israel

The United Arab Emirates is said to have warned Hamas that its planned investments in the Gaza Strip may not move forward if the terror group does not maintain calm in the territory.

Yemen

[Houthi Calls on Saudis to Bomb Israel Regime Instead of Yemen](#)

May 15, 2021, Mehr News Agency

"Saudi Arabia should stop its airstrikes and aggression against Yemen and do so against the Zionist regime (Israel), which is bombing Palestine", said Mohammed al-Houthi, the head of the Houthi Supreme Revolutionary Committee.



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