ABOUT US

Founded in 1994, the Delhi Policy Group (DPG) is among India’s oldest think tanks with its primary focus on strategic and international issues of critical national interest. DPG is a non-partisan institution and is independently funded by a non-profit Trust. Over past decades, DPG has established itself in both domestic and international circles and is widely recognised today among the top security think tanks of India and of Asia’s major powers.

Since 2016, in keeping with India’s increasing global profile, DPG has expanded its focus areas to include India’s regional and global role and its policies in the Indo-Pacific. In a realist environment, DPG remains mindful of the need to align India’s ambitions with matching strategies and capabilities, from diplomatic initiatives to security policy and military modernisation.

At a time of disruptive change in the global order, DPG aims to deliver research based, relevant, reliable and realist policy perspectives to an actively engaged public, both at home and abroad. DPG is deeply committed to the growth of India’s national power and purpose, the security and prosperity of the people of India and India’s contributions to the global public good. We remain firmly anchored within these foundational principles which have defined DPG since its inception.

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.
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahrain</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuwait</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oman</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qatar</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UAE</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Abstract

India and Israel held 15th meeting of the Joint Working Group on defence cooperation. Two nations agreed to form a task force that will build a 10-year cooperation plan to identify new areas of cooperation including defence procurement, production as well as research and development. In another development, even as the “New Quartet” of India, US, Israel and UAE emphasised that it is not against any specific country, Israeli Ambassador to India spoke about Iranian threat in the Middle East bringing Quad countries together. Reacting sharply, Iran described these remarks as “Childish” while slamming Israel’s aggression against the Palestinians.

As regards trade and economy, New Delhi will host India International Trade Fair (IITF) from November 14 to 27. UAE and Bahrain, India’s two key trade partners in West Asia reportedly confirmed their participation in the IITF. Further, Indian Minister of State for External Affairs V. Muraleedharan addressed Abu Dhabi Dialogue where he spoke about the importance of “re-integrating migrant workforce into labour system impacted by the pandemic”. In another development, Oman has approved India’s Covaxin coronavirus vaccine.

Amidst rising crude prices, Saudi Aramco posted net income of USD 30.4 billion for the third quarter of 2021; company’s net income stood at USD 11.8 billion for the same period in 2020. “Increased economic activity in key markets and a rebound in energy demand are being cited as the major reasons for Aramco’s exceptional third quarter performance”. Meanwhile, Goldman Sachs warned about oil prices hitting USD 110 per barrel mark in 2022. In light of this, India, Japan, US, and other major oil consuming countries are running an intense closed doors campaign to urge OPEC+ to increase crude production.

With regard to developments in Afghanistan, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met Taliban representative in Qatar. Taliban was urged to “demonstrate openness and tolerance, unite all ethnic groups and protect the rights of women and children”. FM Wang Yi expressed hope that “Taliban would crackdown on East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) and other terrorist organisations that pose risks to China’s national security”. In light of these developments, Hu Shisheng, a scholar associated with China’s state-affiliated think tank ‘China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations’ (CICR) asserted that “China will not be the first government [within the international community] to recognize Taliban’s rule
in Afghanistan. Beijing will only recognize the Taliban government in a coordinated move with Pakistan, Russia and Iran”.

Lebanon’s Information Minister George Kordahi’s critical remarks on Saudi Arabia and UAE’s role in Yemen war has dragged Beirut in a major diplomatic spat with Gulf countries. Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, and Bahrain have asked Lebanese Ambassador to leave their country. Arab League expressed concern over deterioration of Lebanon–Gulf relations; Beirut meanwhile has sought US help in resolving the crisis.

Future of Vienna talks and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA) still remains uncertain. After a meeting with EU’s senior diplomat Enrique Mora in Brussels, Iran’s Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani announced that “negotiations [in Vienna] will resume by the end of November”. As Tehran speculated about possible dates for resumption of nuclear talks, US, Germany, France, and UK expressed “grave and growing concerns” over Iran after a meeting on the side lines of G20 Summit in Italy. US and E3 remain convinced that “if Iran changes course, it is still possible to quickly reach and implement an understanding on return to full compliance with the JCPoA”.

Amidst growing regional tensions, US Treasury sanctioned Iran’s unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) program including Brig. Gen. Saeed Aghajani who leads the Islamic Revolutionary Guards’ UAV Command. Washington stressed that “Aghajani was behind a 2019 drone attack on an oil refinery in Saudi Arabia as well as the July 29, 2021 attack on the Mercer Street commercial ship operated by an Israeli-owned firm”. US also accused Iran of destabilising the region by supplying drones to Hamas, Hezbollah, and Yemen’s Houthi rebels. Meanwhile, US and Bahrain for the first time conducted naval exercises using unmanned ships.

Israel continued its hawkish approach towards Iran. Israel Defence Forces (IDF) will reportedly begin practicing for a possible strike on Iran’s nuclear program beginning next year. In another development, Tehran suspected Israel and US of carrying out cyber-attack on Iranian gas stations that disrupted national gasoline supply.

Qatar had shown interest in purchasing ‘MQ-9 Reaper Drones’ worth USD 500 million from the US. Reportedly, whilst, Pentagon favours sale of the drones, the State Department remains wary. Qatar appears to be leveraging the help it provided during the U.S. evacuations from Afghanistan to convince Washington to sell Reaper Drones.
Links to major developments in West Asia of strategic relevance to India, compiled from open source media, can be found below.
Bahrain

India To Join US-led Combined Maritime Force in Bahrain
October 27, 2021, Times Now
India has decided to join the 34-member Combined Maritime Force based in Bahrain, headed by an American Navy Vice-Admiral, also commander of the US Navy 5th Fleet.

US, Bahrain Conduct Naval Exercises Using Unmanned Ships For First Time
October 27, 2021, Middle East Monitor
United States and Bahrain have conducted joint naval exercises in the Gulf waters, in which they integrated unmanned ships and systems into existing maritime tactics for the first time in the region.
Egypt

Indian Ambassador Hails Egypt’s Decision To Lift State of Emergency

October 26, 2021, Daily Egypt News

Ambassador of India to Egypt, Ajit Gupte said that President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi’s decision to lift the nationwide state of emergency is a very positive step. Amb. Gupte indicated that Indian investors are already confident in Egypt’s investment climate and stability, even before the decision.
Iraq

ISIL Attack on Iraqi Village Kills 11 ‘Defenceless Civilians’

October 27, 2021, AL Jazeera

At least 11 people have been killed and others wounded in an ISIL (ISIS) attack on a village in Diyala province in Eastern Iraq.
Iran

China, Pakistan, Iran and Russia Will Together Recognise Taliban Some Day: Chinese Scholar
October 30, 2021, WION

China will not be the first state to recognise the Taliban government as the official command of Afghanistan, an expert from China’s state-affiliated think tank China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICR) has claimed. China will only recognise the Taliban’s government in Afghanistan in a coordinated move with Pakistan, Russia and Iran.

Iran Says Nuclear Talks With Six Powers To Resume By November End
October 28, 2021, Reuters

Iran’s talks with six world powers aimed at reviving a 2015 nuclear deal will resume by the end of November, its top nuclear negotiator said, as Western concerns over Islamic Republic’s nuclear advances grow.

US, European Leaders Express ‘Grave, Growing Concern’ Over Iran
October 30, 2021, The Times of Israel

The leaders of the United States, Germany, France and Britain expressed their “grave and growing concern” at Iran’s nuclear activities, after a meeting on the side lines of the G20 summit in Italy.

Iran Says Israel, U.S. Likely Behind Cyberattack on Gas Stations
October 30, 2021, Reuters

Iran’s civil defence chief accused Israel and the United States of being the likely culprits behind a cyberattack which disrupted gasoline sales across the Islamic Republic, but said a technical investigation was yet to be completed.

American B-1B Bomber Flies Over Mideast Amid Iran Tensions
October 31, 2021, The Economic Times

As the future of Vienna talks remains uncertain, a US B-1B Lancer bomber flew over the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf through which 20 percent of all oil traded passes. It also flew over the Red Sea, its narrow Bab el-Mandeb Strait and Egypt’s Suez Canal.
Israel

Israel, India To Build 10-Year Defense Cooperation Plan
October 31, 2021, The Jerusalem Post
Israel and India have agreed to form a task force that will build a 10-year cooperation plan to identify new areas in defense cooperation between the two countries. The plan will include defense procurement, production as well as research and development.

Quad Came Together Due to Instability Caused by Iran in the Region: Israeli Envoy to India
October 29, 2021, India Today
Israel’s Ambassador to India, Naor Gilon, has said that while the new Quad (Israel, US, UAE, India) was not against any one country, one of the major factors for the countries to come together was due to the instability caused by Iran in the region. Naor Gilon’s remarks drew a sharp response from the Iranian embassy in New Delhi.

US Slaps Sanctions on Iran’s Drone Commander Behind Attack on Israeli-Linked Ship Mercer Street
October 29, 2021, The Times of Israel
Brig. Gen. Saeed Aghajani and two companies helping the IRGC build unmanned vehicles have been put on the US Treasury blacklist; Aghajani had been named by Israeli Defence Minister Gantz in August as person planning and carrying out attacks.

Israeli Air Force to Start Training For Strike on Iran’s Nuclear Program in Coming Months
October 25, 2021, The Times of Israel
The Israeli Air Force will begin practicing for a strike on Iran’s nuclear program beginning next year, having set aside funding and updated its training schedule for the mission.

Benjamin Netanyahu’s Likud Party Offers Full Backing To Strike Iran If No Nuclear Deal is Reached
October 31, 2021, Middle East Monitor
Israel should strike Iran in a year if no nuclear deal is reached, Likud MK Tzachi Hanegbi said.
Israel Moves Ahead With Thousands of Settler Homes Despite U.S. Opposition

October 28, 2021, Reuters

Israel moved forward with plans to build some 3,000 homes for Jewish settlers in the occupied West Bank, defying the Biden administration’s strongest criticism to date of such projects.

EU Will Not Recognise New Israeli Settlements in Jerusalem

October 29, 2021, Middle East Monitor

"Settlements are illegal under international law and constitute a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-state solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace between the parties," a statement from the office of EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said.

Germany Rejects Sanctions Against Israel Over Settlement Expansion

October 29, 2021, Middle East Monitor

Germany said it would not support sanctions over Israel's ongoing settlement expansion, only a day after it issued a joint statement with 11 other European countries, reaffirming their "strong opposition" to Tel Aviv's settlement policy in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem.

US State Department Official Acknowledges Israel Must Approve Palestine Consulate Reopening

October 28, 2021, Reuters

A senior official in the US State Department told senators that Israel’s permission would be required before the United States could reopen its consulate in Jerusalem serving Palestinians.

Hamas: 'US Withdrawal From Afghanistan is Prelude To Withdrawal From Region'

October 30, 2021, Middle East Monitor

Head of Hamas Political Bureau Ismail Haniyeh announced that the US withdrawal from Afghanistan is a prelude to its withdrawal from the region. The normalisation of ties with the Israeli occupation by Arab nations will not give legitimacy to the governments and will not be a bridge for them to the Americans.
Jordan

Algeria, Iraq and Jordan Want Syria To Return To Arab League: Arab League SG

October 28, 2021, Middle East Monitor

Algeria, Iraq and Jordan have a desire for the Syrian regime to return to the Arab League, according to Secretary-General, Ahmed Aboul Gheit.

Syria and Jordan Reach Deal Over Electricity Transfer To Lebanon

October 28, 2021, Reuters

Lebanon, Syria and Jordan have reached a deal to transfer electricity to Lebanon which is suffering an acute energy crisis, ministers from the three neighbouring countries said.
Kuwait

Kuwait Based Alghanim Industries Breaks Ground on Major Steel Expansion in India’s Gujarat

October 30, 2021, Kuwait Times

Alghanim Industries, one of the largest privately-owned companies in the Middle East, recently broke ground with a new pre-engineered steel buildings (PEB) manufacturing facility located in Gujarat. The facility will increase the manufacturing capacity of Kirby Building Systems in India from 200,000 metric tons (MT) to 300,000 MT per year.
Lebanon

Arab League ‘Concerned’ by ‘Deteriorating’ Lebanon-Gulf Ties
October 30, 2021, AL Jazeera
The Arab League said it was concerned about a rapid deterioration of Lebanese-Gulf relations after critical comments from a Lebanese minister about the Saudi-led military intervention in Yemen were followed by the kingdom banning all imports from Lebanon and giving the Lebanese ambassador 48 hours to leave.

Lebanese PM Mikati Rejects Kordahi’s Remarks on Yemen
October 27, 2021, Saudi Gazette
Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati rejected the offensive remarks of Minister of Information George Kordahi on Yemen, saying categorically that it does not represent the government’s position at all.

Lebanon Seeks US Help To Resolve The Crisis With Gulf States
October 31, 2021, Gulf News
Lebanon’s Foreign Minister Abdullah Bu Habib has said Prime Minister Najib Mikati is in contact with Americans to help solve the crisis.
Oman

**Oman Adds India’s Covaxin To Approved List of Covid Vaccines**

October 27, 2021, The Indian Express

In a relief for Indians travelling to Oman, the country has now included Bharat Biotech’s Covaxin in its list of approved Covid-19 vaccinations.

**Oman Calls on Nations To Uphold ICJ’s Peace Efforts**

October 31, 2021, Muscat Daily

Diplomat Hazaa Mohammed al Reesi of Oman’s mission at the UN highlighted the sultanate’s supportive attitude, emphasising its commitment to the provisions of international law and the principles of the United Nations Charter, which supports the strengthening of relationship between the various UN organs, especially ICJ as its main judicial apparatus.
Qatar

**Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi Holds Talks With Qatari Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani**

October 27, 2021, Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Wang Yi said “China appreciates Qatar’s active mediation and the unique role it plays on the Afghan issue. China is willing to strengthen strategic communication and coordination with Qatar to jointly safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of developing countries, and contribute to regional peace and stability as well as world prosperity and development.”

**‘Demonstrate Tolerance’: China To Taliban Amid Meet in Qatar**

October 26, 2021, The Week

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with Taliban representatives during a trip to Qatar. FM Wang stressed that the Taliban should “demonstrate openness and tolerance”, unite all ethnic groups and protect the rights of women and children. He also expressed hope that they would crackdown on East Turkestan Islamic Movement and other terrorist organisations that pose risks to China’s national security.

**Pentagon Favours U.S. Sale of More Than $500 Million Worth of Armed Drones To Qatar, But State Department is Wary**

October 27, 2021, NBC News

Qatar first asked the U.S. for armed MQ-9 Reaper drones last year, but the request has languished. Now Qatar is again pushing for the sale, leveraging the help it provided during the U.S. evacuation of Afghanistan and planning a full-court press when the country’s emir visits Washington next month.
Saudi Arabia

**Saudi Arabia, Bahrain Expel Lebanese Ambassador**


Saudi Arabia ordered the Lebanese ambassador to the kingdom to leave the country within 48 hours and stopped all imports from Lebanon, a response to comments by a Lebanese minister who described the war in Yemen as Saudi “aggression.”

**Saudi Aramco Posts 160 Percent Rise in Third Quarter Profit, Chairman Calls for ‘Stable’ Energy Transition**

October 31, 2021, CNBC

Saudi Arabia’s oil giant Aramco has posted a major increase in third quarter net income to $30.4 billion, as the world’s largest oil companies continue to benefit from the reopening of the global economy and soaring oil and gas prices.

**Brent Crude Oil Price May Hit $110 Next Year: Goldman Sachs**

October 27, 2021, The Times of India

Goldman Sachs expects Brent crude oil prices to hit USD 110/barrel, a 30 percent jump from the current levels of $85/bbl.

**As Oil Races Toward $100, India, US and Japan Tell OPEC+ Enough is Enough**

October 30, 2021, Business Standard

Behind closed doors, an intense campaign is being waged by the US, India, Japan and other oil consuming countries to persuade OPEC+ to speed up its output increases, according to multiple diplomats and industry insiders involved in the contacts. The cartel, which meets virtually on Nov. 4 to review policy, is currently boosting output at a rate of 400,000 barrels a day each month.

**Five Reasons Why Global Oil Prices Have Jumped To 3-Year high**

October 11, 2021, Mint

Revival in global economic activity and high commodity prices are some of the major causes of rising crude prices.
Saudi Arabia Revives Cash, Oil Support To Pakistan
October 27, 2021, Middle East Monitor
Riyadh will immediately deposit $3 billion into the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and provide oil supplies worth $1.2 billion on deferred payments, Pakistani officials confirmed.

India’s Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav Highlights Steps Taken By India To Combat Climate Change At Middle East Green Initiative Summit
October 25, 2021, Saudi Gazette
Indian Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Bhupender Yadav spoke at the "Middle East Green Initiative Summit", inaugurated in Riyadh by Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Salman, and highlighted the steps taken by India to combat climate change.
Syria

5 Pro-Iran Fighters Said Killed in Alleged Israeli Air-Strike Near Damascus

October 31, 2021, The Times of Israel

An Israeli missile strike killed five pro-Iran militiamen near Damascus, a war monitor said, while Syrian state media said two Syrian soldiers were wounded in the attack.

Officials: Iran Behind Drone Attack on US Base in Syria

October 25, 2021, AL Jazeera

United States officials believe Iran was behind a drone attack last week at a military outpost at al-Tanf in Southern Syria where American troops are based.

Russian President Putin Asks Israel To Encourage US To Ease Syria Sanctions

October 30, 2021, Middle East Monitor

Moscow has asked Israel to encourage the US to lift sanctions imposed on Damascus to allow Russian companies to carry out reconstruction projects in Syria. Russian companies are afraid of the effect of US sanctions – the US Caesar Act – should they take part in the reconstruction of Syria.
Turkey

President Biden, Erdogan Discuss F-16 Fighter Jets and Human Rights

October 31, 2021, AL Jazeera

President Biden told Turkey’s Erdogan that his request for F-16 fighter jets had to go through a process in the United States and expressed a desire to handle disagreements between the two countries effectively.

Turkey Left 10 Western Ambassadors Out of Republic Day Ceremony

October 30, 2021, Middle East Monitor

Turkey did not invite the ten Western ambassadors who called on the release of a detainee to the Republic Day ceremony, revealing Ankara’s ongoing displeasure with the envoys.

Pakistan Reaches Out To Turkey For Assault Rifles With India Readyng To Manufacture Them At Home

October 25 2021, Times Now

Pakistan has reached out to Turkey’s state-owned ASFAT for the MPT-6 assault rifles for its army. Islamabad is also in discussions with Truvelo, a South African firm, for a transfer of technology to manufacture assault rifles.
UAE

UAE Withdraws Its Diplomats, Advises Citizens Not To Travel To Lebanon

October 30, 2021, Khaleej Times

The UAE, in solidarity with Saudi Arabia, has announced the withdrawal of its diplomats and advised citizens not to travel to Lebanon.

UAE To Participate in India International Trade Fair

October 29, 2021, Khaleej Times

The UAE will be an important participant in the India International Trade Fair (IITF), India’s Ministry of Commerce and Industry announced. The fair, described as "one of the most awaited business events in South Asia region", will be held in New Delhi from November 14 to 27.

MoS MEA V. Muraleedharan Highlights Issues Related to Migration of Labour at Abu Dhabi Dialogue

October 27, 2021, UNI

V. Muraleedharan spoke about issues of migration at Abu Dhabi Dialogue and said that it is important that migrants are re-integrated into the workforce system as the pandemic has affected them the most.

India-UAE Flights: Travel Restrictions May Ease Soon, Says Top Minister

October 28, 2021, Khaleej Times

Travel restrictions to and from India may ease in the coming days, given the significant drop in the number of positive cases, a top Indian minister said.
Yemen

Many Killed in Houthi Missile Attack on Mosque, Says Minister

November 01, 2021, AL Jazeera

A Houthi ballistic missile attack on the Yemeni province of Marib has killed and injured 29 civilians, including women and children, according to the country’s information minister.

Explosion Near Yemen's Aden Airport Kills At Least Six

October 31, 2021, India Today

An explosion near the entrance to the international airport of Yemen's southern port city of Aden resulted in at least six deaths and around 20 injured.