



# 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](mailto:sanket@dpg.org.in).

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## Abstract

To curb increasing menace of terrorism, Saudi Arabia has banned the ‘Tablighi and Da'wah group’ (Tablighi Jamaat) terming it as “danger to society” and “one of the gates of terrorism”. India-based Islamic seminary ‘Darul Uloom Deoband’ the ideological fountainhead of Tablighi Jamaat expressing shock and anger at Riyadh’s decision termed it as a “western plot” that wants to “cripple Saudi Arabia’s centuries-old affiliation with global Muslim community”.

Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, is likely to visit UAE and Kuwait in January 2022 to further strengthen strategic partnerships. During the visit, PM Modi could announce ‘India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement’ (CEPA). Meanwhile, addressing the 14th edition of India-Israel forum, Israeli President, Isaac Herzog called for “expanding cooperation in a range of fields including health, trade, defence, environment, and combating COVID-19 pandemic”. He also spoke about the “potential of an alliance of countries committed to peace, progress and prosperity from the Mediterranean to the Arabian Sea, from the Indian Ocean to the Bay of Bengal”. In another development, Israeli Prime Minister Bennett expressed condolences at the “tragic loss” of India’s Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) Gen. Bipin Rawat.

On US-Iran relations, Washington has moved to further tighten enforcement of sanction against Iran. A US delegation will shortly travel to UAE to warn private firms and banks that they “face extreme risks” if they continue trading with Iran. Meanwhile, Indian External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar informed the country’s parliament that US sanctions on Iran have no bearing on India’s Chabahar port project.

As the outcome of Vienna talks on Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) aimed at curbing Iran’s nuclear program remains uncertain, G7 urged Tehran to “stop its nuclear escalation and seize the opportunity to conclude a deal, while it is still possible”. On its part, Iran remained critical of E3, claiming that, “European parties failed to come up with any initiatives to resolve differences over the removal of sanctions”. Amidst growing regional tensions, Israel and United States reportedly discussed possible military drills to target Iranian nuclear sites. On the other hand, UAE’s National Security Adviser visited Iran and met country’s President and NSA to overcome long-standing differences between the two nations.

Marking a historical milestone, Israeli Prime Minister Bennett embarked on first-ever visit to UAE where he will meet Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed al-Nahyan.

US senate rejected a resolution that would have prohibited proposed sale of 280 advanced medium range air-to-air missiles worth USD 650 million to Saudi Arabia. Importantly, Riyadh has called on US to supply it more 'patriot missiles' as it is running out of air-defence missile stock. In another development, Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince, Mohammad Bin Salman, concluded his Gulf tour described as a "new start for cooperation in the region". It also reaffirmed Riyadh's "keenness to preserve GCC unity" while "expanding strategic partnerships".

As reported in earlier issue of West Asia Review, Abu Dhabi, under intense US pressure, had halted construction of secret military facility inside a Chinese built shipping port in UAE. The project has now been shut down at Washington's behest. Anwar Gargash, Diplomatic Adviser to UAE's leadership, however, does not believe that "the facility was intended for any military or security uses".

US Central Command (CENTCOM) announced that it has completed its transition to a non-combat mission in Iraq. CENTCOM's new mission is to "advise, assist, and enable the Iraqi forces". CENTCOM commander Gen. McKenzie stressed that "US will keep the current 2,500 troops in Iraq for the foreseeable future", while warning of "increased attacks on US and Iraqi personnel by Iran-backed militias in Iraq".

On the energy front, Halliburton CEO believes that "world is entering a period of oil scarcity following years of underinvestment in development of fossil fuel".

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

## Bahrain

### [Saudi Crown Prince's Bahrain Visit Puts A Time-Tested Relationship In The Limelight](#)

December 10, 2021, Arab News

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's visit to Bahrain, his latest stop on a tour of the Gulf states, is expected to cement ties between the two kingdoms, with both witnessing strong reciprocal trade and a burgeoning tourism sector.

## Egypt

### [Israeli Foreign Minister Lapid Visits Egypt To Boost Ties](#)

December 09, 2021, AL Jazeera

Israel's foreign minister has arrived in Cairo on a diplomatic visit aimed at strengthening ties and shoring up a tenuous ceasefire between Israel and Gaza's Hamas rulers.

### [Egypt, Russia Conclude 'Friendship Bridge-4' Naval Exercises](#)

December 11, 2021, Daily News Egypt

The Egyptian and Russian naval forces concluded the activities of their joint naval exercise "Friendship Bridge-4", which was carried out over the past few days in the territorial waters of the Northern Fleet in the Mediterranean Operations Theatre.

## Iraq

### [US Combat Role in Iraq Complete; Invitation From Iraq Reaffirmed To Advise, Assist, Enable](#)

December 09, 2021, US Central Command (CENTCOM)

Combined Joint Task Force – Inherent Resolve, the international force charged with maintaining the enduring defeat of Daesh (ISIS), announced that it has completed its transition to a non-combat mission before year's end as agreed. The new mission is to advise, assist, and enable Iraqi forces.

### [CENTCOM General Says US Troops To Remain in Iraq, Warns of Increased Attacks From Iran-backed Militias](#)

December 10, 2021, India Today

The top US commander for the Middle East has said the United States will keep the current 2,500 troops in Iraq for the foreseeable future, and he warned that he expects increasing attacks on US and Iraqi personnel by Iranian-backed militias determined to get American forces out.



## Iran

### [US Sanctions on Iran Have No Bearing on India's Chabahar Port Project: Government](#)

December 10, 2021, The Indian Express

The US sanctions on Iran have not affected India's Chabahar port project, External Affairs Minister Dr. S Jaishankar told Lok Sabha.

### [India Sends Life-Saving Medicines To Afghanistan in Aid](#)

December 11, 2021, Hindustan Times

India sent its first tranche of humanitarian aid, including 1.6 metric tonnes of life-saving medicines, to Afghanistan since its takeover by the Taliban in August.

### [U.S. Moves to Tighten Iran Sanctions Enforcement as Nuclear Talks Stall](#)

December 09, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

The Biden administration is moving to tighten enforcement of sanctions against Iran, according to senior U.S. officials, the first sign of Washington increasing economic pressure on Tehran as diplomatic efforts to restore the 2015 nuclear deal falter.

### [Iran Critical of European Countries' Stance on Nuclear Deal](#)

December 12, 2021, Reuters

Iran said that European countries had failed to offer constructive proposals to help to revive a 2015 nuclear deal, after Britain said there was still time for Tehran to save it but that this was the last chance.

### [US, Iran Differ over Iran's Frozen Assets](#)

December 11, 2021, Asharq AL-Awsat

Tehran accused the US administration of waging a "psychological war," a day after Washington denied releasing \$3.5 billion of Iran's frozen funds abroad.

### [G7 Urges Iran To Agree Nuclear Deal, Warns Russia Against Invasion of Ukraine](#)

December 12, 2021, France 24

The G7 said time was running out for Iran to agree a deal to curb its nuclear ambitions, and warned Russia of "massive" consequences if it invades Ukraine.

[Iran Prepares For Space Flight Amid Increasing Tensions With Israel, US Over Nuclear Talks](#)

December 12, 2021, The Times of Israel

Iran appears to be preparing for a space launch as negotiations continue in Vienna over its tattered nuclear deal with world powers, according to an expert and satellite images.

## Israel

### [General Rawat Was A True Leader, True Friend of Israel: Prime Minister Bennett](#)

December 09, 2021, The Economic Times

Describing General Bipin Rawat as a "true leader and true friend" of Israel, the country's top leadership has expressed condolences to the government and people of India at the "tragic and shocking loss" of its first Chief of Defence Staff who died in a helicopter crash.

### [India, Israel Can Jointly Lead World In Innovation: President Herzog](#)

December 10, 2021, The Economic Times

India and Israel are two ancient nations, two proud democracies and two creative peoples. Together, they can lead the way in developing innovation for the benefit of two nations and the entire world, suggested Israeli President Isaac Herzog at the 14th edition of India-Israeli Forum.

### [Israel, US To Discuss Military Drills To Prepare For Worst-Case Iran Scenario, US Says](#)

December 09, 2021, The Times of Israel

Israeli and American military leaders are set to discuss possible military drills to practice destroying Iranian nuclear facilities in a potential worst-case scenario, a senior US official said.

### [Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz Presents Iran Attack Timeline To US Officials](#)

December 11, 2021, The Jerusalem Post

Defense Minister Benny Gantz updated American officials that he has set a deadline for when the IDF will need to complete preparations for an attack against Iran. The Americans did not voice opposition to the Israeli preparations when presented with the date by Gantz.

### [Israel Consulted With US Before Covert Strikes on Iran Missile, Nuclear Sites](#)

December 11, 2021, The Times of Israel

Israel reportedly consulted with the United States before carrying out covert strikes on an Iranian nuclear facility and a missile base earlier this year.

[Israeli PM Naftali Bennett Begins First Official Visit To UAE](#)

December 12, 2021, AL Jazeera

Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett has arrived in the United Arab Emirates to meet the Gulf state's de facto ruler, in the first-ever visit to the UAE by an Israeli prime minister. PM Bennett will meet Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed al-Nahyan.

[IMF, 10 Countries Simulate Cyberattack on Global Financial System](#)

December 09, 2021, Reuters

Israel led a 10-country simulation of a major cyberattack on the global financial system in an attempt to increase cooperation that could help to minimise any potential damage to financial markets and banks.

[We Know Who is Attacking Israel and We Know How To Get Even, Says Israel's Cyber Defense Chief](#)

December 04, 2021, CNN

Head of Israel's National Cyber Directorate Yigal Unna illustrates how cyberwarfare can be just as devastating as bombs and missiles. "You just need a couple of smart kids with an understanding, [and they can] cause damage worse than Hiroshima ... you can melt down nuclear power plants," Unna said.

[Shin Bet: Palestinian Authority Suffering Difficult Political, Economic Situation](#)

December 11, 2021, Middle East Monitor

Head of Israeli Shin Bet intelligence agency Ronen Bar revealed last week that the Palestinian Authority (PA) is suffering a political and economic crisis, warning that this could lead to its collapse. "Israel has to work on strengthening the PA," pointing out that this would reinforce stability and weaken Hamas in the occupied West Bank.

## Jordan

### [Jordan MPs Walk Out of Session on Israel Electricity-For-Water Deal](#)

December 09, 2021, Middle East Monitor

Jordanian MPs walked out of Parliament yesterday in protest against the signing of a water and energy deal with Israel.

## Kuwait

### [PM Modi May Visit UAE, Kuwait in January 2022 To Strengthen Ties](#)

December 08, 2021, Hindustan Times

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to open his foreign visit calendar in 2022 with trips to the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait, both trusted allies, early in January.

### [Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman's Kuwait Visit Reaffirms a Historic Friendship](#)

December 12, 2021, Arab News

Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's visit to Kuwait marked the final leg of his tour of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries in the lead-up to the annual GCC Summit, to be held in Riyadh on Dec. 14.

### [China Willing To Help Kuwait on Port Development](#)

December 07, 2021, Kuwait Times

A Chinese official said his country is willing to assist Kuwait in developing its ports given the significance of such facilities in international maritime trade.

## Lebanon

### [Lebanon: Blast Rocks Palestinian Camp, Causes Casualties](#)

December 10, 2021, AL Jazeera

A large explosion rocked a Palestinian camp in the southern Lebanese port city of Tyre, causing a number of casualties. The explosion took place at a suspected Hamas weapons depot in the Burj al-Shemali camp.

### [Hamas Blames Fatah For Killing Members in Lebanon Refugee Camp](#)

December 13, 2021, TRT World

Fatah rejects allegations that its gunmen shot dead four Hamas members during a funeral at the refugee camp of Burj al-Shemali in southern Lebanon.

## Oman

### [Indian Navy a Preferred Security Partner For Its Maritime Neighbours: President of India](#)

December 08, 2021, Business Standard

The Indian Navy is looked upon as a preferred security partner by the country's maritime neighbours and it has a huge role to play in furthering India's foreign policy in protecting the national interests, President Ram Nath Kovind said.



## Qatar

### [Indian Ambassador Underlines Depth of Historical Qatar Ties](#)

December 12, 2021, Gulf Times

In a statement to Qatar News Agency (QNA) on the occasion of the National Day, Indian Ambassador said Qatar and India enjoy historical ties that are based on the strong foundations of close people-to-people contacts, noting that the leadership of the two countries have nurtured multifaceted cooperation.

### [GCC Summit Aims To Consolidate Ties Between Qatar and Gulf States, Experts Say](#)

December 12, 2021, The National News

Gulf leaders will meet this week in Saudi Arabia to kick off the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit with the hope of keeping a united front and consolidating ties with Qatar.

### [China Suntien Green Energy in 15-Year LNG deal with Qatar Energy](#)

December 08, 2021, S&P Global

A China Suntien Green Energy subsidiary will sign a sale and purchase deal with Qatar Liquefied Gas for 1 million mt/year of LNG for 15 years, the Hong Kong- and Shanghai-listed company said.

## Saudi Arabia

### [Saudi Arabia Bans Tablighi Jamaat, Calls It 'One of The Gates of Terrorism'](#)

December 12, 2021, The Economic Times

Saudi Arabia has banned the Tablighi Jamaat, terming it a "danger to society" and "one of the gates of terrorism".

### [Muslim Bodies Say Saudi Arabia's Statement Against Tablighi Jamaat 'Unjust'](#)

December 12, 2021, The Economic Times

Muslim organisations have termed Saudi Arabia's decision to reiterate its ban on India-based Islamic movement Tablighi Jamaat as "unjust" and violative of the principles of Islam.

### [Saudi Crown Prince's Gulf Tour: A New Start for Cooperation](#)

December 12, 2021, Asharq AL-Awsat

The final statements on the five stops of the tour confirmed the common points agreed upon by the leaders of the six countries to enhance the security and stability of the Gulf region, develop their economies, and achieve Gulf visions.

### [US Congress Allows Saudi Arabia Weapons Sale To Proceed](#)

December 08, 2021, AL Jazeera

The United States Senate has blocked a resolution that would have banned a \$650m sale of missiles and missile launchers to Saudi Arabia.

### [Saudi Arabia Pleads for Missile-Defense Resupply as Its Arsenal Runs Low](#)

December 07, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

Saudi Arabia is running out of the ammunition it uses to defend against weekly drone and missile attacks on its kingdom and is urgently appealing to the U.S. and its Gulf and European allies for a resupply, U.S. and Saudi officials said.

### [Saudi Arabia Expects 2022 Budget Surplus After Years of Deficit](#)

December 13, 2021, Reuters

Saudi Arabia said it expected to post its first budget surplus in nearly a decade next year, as it plans to restrict public spending despite a surge in oil prices that helped to refill state coffers hammered by the pandemic.

[Halliburton Says The World is Entering a Period of Oil Scarcity](#)

December 06, 2021, Reuters

Oilfield services firm Halliburton said the world was headed for a period of oil scarcity following years of underinvestment in fossil fuel development.

## Syria

### [Israel Struck Weapons Shipment Meant for Iranian Militias in Syria's Latakia](#)

December 07, 2021, Haaretz

Syria said Israeli planes attacked the Latakia port, with no casualties reported, in what a source said was the first time Israel had attacked the facility on Syria's Mediterranean coast.

### [With Ties Warming After Decade-Long War, Syria To Host 2024 Arab Energy Conference](#)

December 10, 2021, The Times of Israel

Syria will host an Arab energy conference in 2024, the country's energy ministry said, the latest sign that Arab countries are moving to re-engage with the government of Syria's embattled President Bashar al-Assad.

## Turkey

### [Turkey's Erdogan Says Social Media a 'Threat To Democracy'](#)

December 11, 2021, AL Jazeera

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan described social media as one of the main threats to democracy. Erdogan's government plans to pursue legislation to criminalise spreading fake news and disinformation online, but critics say the proposed changes would tighten restrictions on free speech.

### [Turkey To Follow China's Economic Growth Strategy: President Erdoğan](#)

December 03, 2021, Hurriyet Daily News

"We have started a new era to break the grip of interest rates and achieve economic growth based on production. We will lure foreign investors. This is how the Chinese economy has grown with its young population, industry and production...Turkey has more advantages compared with China, we are closer to the market," the president said.

### [Why China, Russia 'Should Keep a Close Eye' on Upgraded Turkic Council](#)

November 28, 2021, South China Morning Post

China and Russia should monitor a Turkey-led move to upgrade Turkic-speaking states' cooperation into a political unit that could weaken Beijing and Moscow's influence in Central Asia.

### [Turkey-US Trade Enjoys Double-Digit Growth Despite Challenges](#)

December 09, 2021, Daily Sabah

Turkey's trade with the United States is approaching record high figures since the beginning of 2021, as a sign of recovering pace after several challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a trade official.

## UAE

### [U.A.E. Shut Down China Facility Under U.S. Pressure, Emirates Says](#)

December 09, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

The United Arab Emirates recently ordered work halted on a Chinese facility in the country after American officials argued that Beijing intended to use the site for military purposes, a top U.A.E. official said.

### [PM Modi Could Announce India-UAE CEPA in Jan 2022 During Proposed UAE Trip](#)

December 10, 2021, The Economic Times

Prime Minister Narendra Modi could announce India's Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with the UAE during his proposed visit to the Gulf country early January.

### [US Officials To Discuss Tightening Iran Sanctions Compliance on UAE Trip](#)

December 09, 2021, Middle East Monitor

The United States will send a senior government delegation to the United Arab Emirates next week to meet with banks over concerns about Iran sanctions compliance, a State Department spokesperson said.

### [Gulf Arab States That Opposed The Iran Nuclear Deal Are Now Courting Tehran](#)

December 12, 2021, The Washington Post

Gulf countries that once vociferously opposed the nuclear deal with Iran now say they support its revival, even as they have embarked on their own efforts to engage with Tehran during a period of uncertainty about U.S. staying power in the region.

### [UAE Security Official Pays Rare Visit To Iran To Discuss Ties, Regional Issues](#)

December 06, 2021, Reuters

The United Arab Emirates' senior national security adviser met his Iranian counterpart and President Ebrahim Raisi in a rare visit to Iran, a move aimed at overcoming their long-standing differences and increasing cooperation.

## Yemen

### [US Reveals Its Largest-Ever Grab of Weapons Shipment by Iran's Guards](#)

December 08, 2021, The Times of Israel

"Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), a designated foreign terrorist organization, orchestrated the arms shipments, which were destined for Houthi militants in Yemen," the US Justice Department statement said.

### [Yemen, US Officials Accuse Iran of Imperilling Peace Efforts in Yemen](#)

December 04, 2021, Arab News

Yemeni and American officials have accused the Iranian regime of perpetuating the war in Yemen through arming and training the Houthis, renewing demands that the Houthis abandon military activities and comply with peace efforts.



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