



# Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



## DPG WEST ASIA REVIEW



Volume IV, Issue 2 | January 10, 2022

**Delhi Policy Group**

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

[www.delhipolicygroup.org](http://www.delhipolicygroup.org)



# Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power

## DPG WEST ASIA REVIEW Volume IV, Issue 2

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

© 2022 by the Delhi Policy Group

#### Delhi Policy Group

Core 5A, 1st Floor,  
India Habitat Centre,  
Lodhi Road, New Delhi- 110003.  
[www.delhipolicygroup.org](http://www.delhipolicygroup.org)

# DPG WEST ASIA REVIEW

## Volume IV, Issue 2

### Contents

Abstract .....	i
Bahrain.....	1
Egypt .....	2
Iraq .....	3
Iran.....	4
Israel.....	6
Jordan.....	8
Kuwait.....	9
Lebanon.....	10
Oman .....	11
Qatar .....	12
Saudi Arabia.....	13
Syria.....	14
Turkey.....	15
UAE .....	16
Yemen.....	17

## Abstract

Indian External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar, exchanged New Year greetings with strategic partners across the globe, including Foreign Ministers of UAE, Israel, Egypt, and Iran. He “discussed bilateral and plurilateral cooperation with Israeli FM and looked forward to marking 30 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries”. In his discussion with UAE’s Foreign Minister, Dr. Jaishankar “appreciated notable progress in relations during 2021 and appreciated Abu Dhabi’s deep commitment to taking relations to a higher level”. It is to be noted that UAE has assumed responsibilities as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council (UNSC) along with Albania, Brazil, Gabon, and Ghana. Meanwhile, New Delhi and Tehran discussed “challenges in Afghanistan”, “prospects of Chabahar”, and “complexities of Iranian nuclear issue”. Reportedly, Iran has offered to transfer Indian wheat and medicines to Afghanistan as part of India’s humanitarian aid to the war-torn country.

As regards trade and economy, Mumbai-based Tata Communications has entered into a partnership with telecom service provider Zain KSA to bring smart city solutions to Saudi Arabia. In another development, as noted in last week’s West Asia Review, Kuwait’s ‘Haitham Al-Ghais’ has been appointed as the next Secretary-General of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

Amidst violence in Kazakhstan - one of China’s main energy suppliers, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) delegation involving Foreign Ministers of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain, and GCC Secretary-General embarked on a visit to China beginning January 10. Besides exploring ways to deepen energy cooperation, “Beijing and GCC could take forward negotiations over China-GCC Free Trade Agreement (FTA)”.

Marking the 2<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the targeted killing of IRGC Quds Force Commander Gen. Qassem Soleimani, Iran announced sanctions against more than 50 Americans including Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark Milley and former US National Security Adviser Robert O’Brien. In the backdrop of uncertainty surrounding the Vienna talks, Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei shed light on reasons for Washington’s hostile stance towards the Islamic Republic. Khamenei stressed that “America is a sworn enemy of the Islamic system [of Iran] as it is based on religion and the epitome of nation’s religious belief”. “In enemy’s thinking [US] martyrdom of Soleimani was supposed

to deter us; however, the Muslim Iranian nation turned this into an opportunity". "The resistance movement has not been extinguished, rather it has only increased", Khamenei added.

With open-source intelligence reports pointing toward "nuts and bolts of a new arrangement between Iran and the United States now primarily in place", the Israeli Foreign Minister spoke with French President Macron to increase pressure on Tehran. Meanwhile, Israeli PM Naftali Bennett asserted that his country was not against a deal between the P5+1 and Iran, insisting that Tel Aviv wants a "good" agreement. PM Bennett, nonetheless maintained that "Israel will not be bound by any nuclear deal with Iran and would consider itself free to act with no constraints". Amidst the rising regional tensions, IRGC claimed that "Iran's military drills had acted as a deterrent to Israel's empty threats of attack".

Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah reportedly described King Salman of Saudi Arabia as a "terrorist" while accusing Riyadh of "exporting Islamic extremism". Lebanon's President, Prime Minister, and several other political leaders have condemned Hezbollah chief's statement. Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to Beirut described Hezbollah as a "threat to Arab security" while expressing hope that "Lebanon's political parties will end Hezbollah's terrorist hegemony over every aspect of the state".

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

## Bahrain

### [China To Host Ministers From Oil-Rich Gulf States As Kazakhstan Unrest Heightens Energy Security Fears](#)

January 10, 2022, South China Morning Post

The visit to China by a delegation from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) comes amid violent unrest in one of Beijing's main energy suppliers - Kazakhstan.

### [Unprecedented GCC Group Visit May Greatly Enhance FTA Negotiation Progress: Analysts](#)

January 09, 2022, Global Times

The first-ever group visit of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries may make breakthroughs in the negotiations over a China-GCC Free Trade Agreement (FTA), analysts said, ahead of a scheduled visit to China by the foreign ministers of four Middle East countries, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman and Bahrain, as well as GCC secretary general from Monday (Jan 10 -14).

## Egypt

### [Egypt Conducts Naval Exercises with Saudi Arabia, US in Red Sea](#)

January 10, 2022, Daily News Egypt

Egyptian and Saudi Arabian armed forces are conducting a joint military training, dubbed Tabuk-5, which is expected to continue for several days in Saudi Arabia. Additionally, the Egyptian navy and US forces carried out a cross-border naval exercise in the Red Sea.

### [Egypt, Sinovac Agree To Speed Up Vaccine-Production Technology Transfer](#)

January 08, 2022, Arab News

Egypt's Ambassador to China Mohamed El-Badri discussed with Sinovac CEO and founder Weidong Yin accelerating the timetable for transferring COVID-19 vaccine-production technology.

### [Palestinian Authority President Abbas Arrives in Sharm el-Sheikh to Meet Egypt's President Sisi](#)

January 09, 2022, The Times of Israel

"Abbas's meeting with Sisi will address the latest developments on the Palestinian arena, efforts to advance the peace process, and efforts to end the Israeli occupation".

## Iraq

### [Chaotic Scenes As Iraq's New Parliament Holds First Session](#)

January 09, 2022, AL Jazeera

Iraq's new parliament has re-elected its speaker for a second term, the first step towards forming a new government after a general election whose results have been contested by powerful Iran-backed factions.

### [Iraq's Sadr Says 'No Place For Militias' in New Government](#)

January 08, 2022, Middle East Monitor

"Today, there is no place for sectarianism or ethnicity, but a national majority government where the Shias will defend the rights of minorities, the Sunnis and Kurds," al-Sadr said on Twitter.

### [President Biden Nominates Iraq War Veteran Lt. Gen. Michael Kurilla to Head US CENTCOM](#)

January 08, 2022, France 24

President Joe Biden is nominating Lt. Gen. Michael Kurilla to lead the US Central Command, which oversees military operations in the Middle East, the Pentagon announced.

### [Iran-backed Militants Probably Behind Attacks Targeting U.S. Troops In Iraq and Syria, Pentagon Says](#)

January 05, 2022, The Washington Post

A spate of attacks this week on bases housing U.S. troops in Iraq and Syria were probably conducted by Iran-backed militias, the Pentagon said, stopping short of directly implicating Tehran.

### [1m Sign Petition Asking Former UK PM Tony Blair's Knighthood Rescinded](#)

January 07, 2022, Middle East Monitor

More than one million people have signed an online petition asking that former British Prime Minister, Tony Blair's newly announced knighthood be rescinded. The petition was created by Angus Scott at change.org as soon as the New Year Honours were announced on 31 December.



## Iran

### [Iran Offers To Transfer Indian Wheat To Afghanistan](#)

January 09, 2022, WION

Iran has offered to transfer Indian wheat to Afghanistan. The proposal was made by Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian during his telephonic conversation with India's Minister of External Affairs S. Jaishankar.

### [Cheap Iranian Import Now Threatening Stored Himachal Apples](#)

January 08, 2022, Hindustan Times

"The cheap imports from Iran have killed the market for Kashmiri apples and conventional cold-stored apples from Himachal as Iranian apples are also bound to impact the controlled atmosphere stored apples, making the trade unviable and non-remunerative," said Lokinder Singh Bisht, president, PGA Progressive Growers' Association.

### [Ayatollah Khamenei Sheds Light On U.S. Hostility Toward Iran](#)

January 09, 2022, Tehran Times

In his televised speech, Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Khamenei, delved into the raison d'être of the U.S. hostile, aggressive stance toward the Islamic Republic of Iran, offering a clear-eyed glimpse of the current state of play between Tehran and Washington.

### [Iran Sanctions 52 Americans on Anniversary of Soleimani Killing, Drawing US Rebuke](#)

January 09, 2022, The Times of Israel

Iran announced sanctions against more than 50 American individuals including Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Mark Milley and former US National Security Adviser Robert O'Brien, over the killing of Tehran's top general Qassem Soleimani, drawing a strong rebuke from Washington.

### [Iran Ups The Ante In Search of Vienna Nuclear Negotiations Advantage](#)

January 09, 2022, Arab News

As the talks progress, albeit painstakingly, Iran's officials have been increasingly upbeat, believing it is on the verge of salvaging a deal that would ease crippling US sanctions on its financial institutions and political bodies.

[If No Iran Deal is Reached This Month, U.S. 'Likely To Pull The Plug'](#)

January 08, 2022, CGTN

Time appears to be running out for a breakthrough in what is now the eighth round of Iran talks in Vienna. While U.S. and EU diplomats have repeatedly warned that there are only weeks, not months, left to revive the JCPOA – the deadline now appears to be the end of January.

## Israel

### [External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar Holds Talks With Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid, Countries To Mark 30 Years of Diplomatic Ties](#)

January 07, 2022, ANI

EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar spoke with Foreign Minister of Israel where the two leaders discussed bilateral and plurilateral cooperation.

### [Iran Says Military Drills Are Acting As Deterrent Against Israel's 'Empty Threats'](#)

January 08, 2022, The Times of Israel

IRGC Spokesperson Brigadier General Sharif claimed that Israel had subdued its rhetoric against Iran in the wake of military drills held by Tehran.

### [Israel Urges France To Pressure Iran As Diplomats Speak of Progress](#)

January 08, 2022, The Jerusalem Post

"I talked at length tonight with the President of France Emmanuel Macron," Lapid tweeted. "The conversation dealt with the regional challenges, the nuclear talks, Israel's demand to put pressure on Iran and Israeli-EU relations."

### [Israel Not Bound By Any Nuclear Deal with Iran, PM Bennett Says](#)

January 10, 2022, Reuters

Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said that Israel would not be bound by any nuclear deal with Iran and would continue to consider itself free to act "with no constraints" against its arch-foe if necessary.

### [Israel is Not Against A 'Good' Nuclear Deal With Iran: PM Naftali Bennett](#)

January 04, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Israel is not against a deal between Iran and world powers, but it wants a "good" one, Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said last week.

### [Return To Iran Nuclear Deal Better Than No Deal, Israeli Military Intelligence Official Says](#)

January 05, 2022, Middle East Monitor

A return to the Iran nuclear deal is better than not having a deal, the Jerusalem Post reported Chief of Israeli Military Intelligence, Aharon Haliva, saying.

[When Israel Bombs Syria, Russia Turns A Blind Eye](#)

January 03, 2022, The Arab Weekly

It is an open secret that Moscow, an ally of Syria's President Bashar Al Assad, allows Israel to conduct air strikes against both the Syrian army and Iranian militias operating in the country. Russia's supremacy over Syria's airspace helped turn the conflict in Al Assad's favour, so why does it allow Israel to carry out its operations unimpeded?

[Israel in Talks To Establish Diplomatic Ties with Maldives, Comoros](#)

January 05, 2022, Middle East Monitor

The Muslim-majority islands of Comoros and Maldives could be next on the list of countries who are set to normalise ties with Israel. According to diplomatic sources, though talks are ongoing, there are no indications that an announcement was expected anytime in the near future.

[Hamas: No Reconciliation in Light of Palestinian Authority's Security Ties with Israel](#)

January 04, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Hamas will not reconcile with anyone who believes in security cooperation with Israel, a member of the organisation's political bureau said.

## Jordan

### [Jordan's King, German Minister Discuss Defense Cooperation](#)

January 08, 2022, Xinhua

King Abdullah II of Jordan received visiting German Minister of Defense Christine Lambrecht and exchanged views on advancing mutual defense cooperation.

## Kuwait

### [OPEC Taps Kuwait's Haitham Al-Ghais As Its Next Public Face](#)

January 03, 2022, AL Jazeera

Al-Ghais – a multilingual technocrat whose three-decade oil industry career includes stints in Beijing and London – will become Secretary-General in August, taking over from Mohammad Barkindo, according to a statement from the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

## Lebanon

### [Lebanese Leaders Denounce Hezbollah Chief's Anti-Saudi Arabia Speech](#)

January 04, 2022, Arab News

Lebanese President Michel Aoun, Prime Minister Najib Mikati and several politicians have condemned threats made by Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah against Saudi Arabia.

### [Lebanon Goes Dark After Bungling Protesters Disable Key Power Plant](#)

January 09, 2022, Arab News

The Lebanese population was subjected to collective punishment after protesters stormed a key power station and tampered with the electrical equipment, inflicting power cuts on the whole country for hours.

### [Lebanon Currency Slumps To New Low As Economic Crisis Deepens](#)

January 04, 2022, The Times of Israel

Lebanon's currency hit a new low, sinking to 30,000 pounds to the dollar on the black market, as an economic meltdown continued with no solution in sight.

## Oman

### [Pakistani Businessmen Invited To Avail Benefit of Oman's FTA with US](#)

January 09, 2022, The Nation

Oman is one of a few countries having a Free Trade Agreement with the United States. It is also an exceptional opportunity for Pakistani businessmen as their products can be re-exported to the US from Oman.



## Qatar

[Turkish FM Çavuşoğlu, Qatari FM Discuss Kazakhstan, Afghanistan](#)

January 09, 2022, Daily Sabah

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu discussed developments in Afghanistan and Kazakhstan with his Qatari counterpart Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani in a phone call.

## Saudi Arabia

### [Tata Communications, Zain KSA To Develop Smart City Solutions for Saudi Arabia](#)

January 04, 2022, Mint

Mumbai-based Tata Communications and Saudi Arabian telecom services provider Zain KSA have entered into a strategic engagement to bring smart city solutions to Saudi Arabia, the companies said in a joint statement.

### [Saudis Say Hezbollah a Threat to Arabs After Nasrallah Calls King Salman a 'Terrorist'](#)

January 07, 2022, The Times of Israel

Saudi Arabia's ambassador to Lebanon said that Hezbollah was a threat to Arab security after the leader of the Iran-backed Lebanese movement branded King Salman a "terrorist."

### [Saudi Arabia May Run Out of Interceptor Missiles in 'Months'](#)

January 09, 2022, AL Jazeera

Saudi Arabia could run out of interceptor missiles for its US-made Patriot air-defence system in "months", according to a senior US official, prompting Riyadh to appeal to regional allies for help to replenish the stock.

### [US Naval Commander Discusses Maritime Security With GCC Head](#)

January 05, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Nayef Al-Hajraf, met with Commander of the US Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT), Lieutenant-General Charles Cooper, to discuss ways of strengthening the security and safety of waterways and marine navigation in the region.

## Syria

### [Syrian Ambassador To China: China's Great Success Leaves America Embarrassed and Frustrated](#)

January 07, 2022, CGTN

"The relations (between Syria and China) are far beyond warm. They are very, very solid, strong relations," said Syrian ambassador to China.

### [UN Accuses Syria of Failing To Answer For Chemical Weapons Program](#)

January 07, 2022, AL Monitor

The United Nation's top representative for disarmament told the Security Council that Syria has failed to provide complete answers on its history with chemical weapons. Damascus' transparency record remains incomplete, Izumi Nakamitsu told the international body.

### [Syria Hands Over ISIS Militants To Iraq](#)

January 08, 2022, Middle East Monitor

In a statement, the Iraqi Defense Ministry said the Iraqi suspects were arrested inside Syrian territories and were handed over to Iraq through the Rabi'a border crossing with Syria.

## Turkey

### [US, Turkey To Hold Talks Soon on F-35 Jets: Turkish Defence Minister](#)

January 09, 2022, The New Arab

Turkish and US officials will soon meet to discuss F-35 fighter jets, Turkish Defence Minister Hulusi Akar said.

### [Turkey Pursues New Mechanism with US To Consolidate Ties](#)

January 10, 2022, Arab News

Turkey has announced that it has been working on the details of a new mechanism to establish a positive and common agenda with the US.

### [Turkey's Erdogan Says He Will Visit Saudi Arabia in February](#)

January 03, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said he will make a visit next month to Saudi Arabia, whose ties with Ankara have been strained in recent years.

### [Turkish Inflation Surges To Highest Level Since 2002](#)

January 03, 2022, AL Jazeera

Turkish inflation surged to a 19-year high in December, propelled by a slump in the lira and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's push for cheaper borrowing.

### [Pakistan-Turkey Train Arrives in Istanbul, First in a Decade](#)

January 06, 2022, Middle East Monitor

The first train carrying goods from Pakistan to Turkey arrived in Istanbul, completing first such journey in a decade.

## UAE

### [UAE Joins Four Others To Take Seat At UN Security Council](#)

January 05, 2022, Middle East Monitor

The UAE along with four other countries – Albania, Brazil, Gabon and Ghana – have assumed responsibilities as non-permanent members of the UN Security Council.

### [Israel's Elbit Systems To Supply Airborne Defense Systems To The UAE Air Force's Tanker Aircraft](#)

January 03, 2022, The Jerusalem Post

Israeli defense company Elbit Systems announced that its subsidiary in the United Arab Emirates was awarded a contract to supply airborne defense systems for the UAE Air Force tanker aircraft.

### [External Affairs Minister Jaishankar Speaks To His Counterparts From Six Countries](#)

January 06, 2022, The Economic Times

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar held separate telephonic talks with his counterparts from Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Singapore, United Arab Emirates and Nigeria on further expanding bilateral ties.

### [Arab States Condemn Houthis' Seizure of UAE-Flagged Ship](#)

January 04, 2022, Middle East Monitor

A number of Arab states and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) condemned the seizure of a UAE-flagged cargo ship heading to the Saudi port of Jizan by Yemen's Houthis.

## Yemen

### [Iran 'Likely' Smuggling Weapons To Yemen: UN Report](#)

January 09, 2022, AL Jazeera

The United Nations found thousands of weapons recently seized in the Arabian Sea likely came from a single port in Iran, evidence Tehran is exporting arms to Yemen and elsewhere.



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

[www.delhipolicygroup.org](http://www.delhipolicygroup.org)