



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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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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Abstract

Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, is scheduled to hold a virtual meeting with the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, in the coming week. The two leaders are expected to sign the 'Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement' (CEPA), further strengthening India-UAE trade relations. UAE's Ambassador to India stressed that "Abu Dhabi treasures its partnership with India" and the signing of a free trade agreement "would unleash a new golden era in the bilateral relations". Further, he underscored that "West Asia Quad comprising UAE, US, Israel, and India, will focus more on technology and security issues to address complex global threats".

Indian External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar, met his Qatari counterpart in Doha. The two leaders discussed a "broad-based bilateral political, economic, digital, and security partnership; Dr. Jaishankar appreciated Qatar's interest in expanding trade and investments in India". They also "exchanged views on global and regional developments, including Afghanistan". Meanwhile, continuing the deepening defence cooperation with Muscat, Oman's Navy Chief will visit India in the week beginning February 14.

India's Basmati rice exports to Iran hit a four-year low as Tehran slashed imports owing to its dwindling INR reserves.

On the energy front, OPEC's share in India's oil imports fell in 2021, to its lowest in 15 years. Meanwhile, continuing its efforts to diversify the economy away from oil, Saudi Arabia transferred four percent of Aramco shares (valued at USD 80 billion) to Public Investment Fund (PIF).

As Vienna talks on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) to curb Iran's nuclear program entered the final stage, opposition to US return to the agreement is growing in Washington. 33 Republican Senators led by 'Ted Cruz' pledged to thwart a new agreement if the Biden administration fails to present its terms to the Congress for approval. Senators argued that "considering the gravity of the agreement to the US National Security, it would be similar to a treaty requiring the advice and two-thirds consent in the Senate". "A similar demand was made by the Republicans in 2015, the Democrats under then-President Barack Obama reportedly used "filibuster" mechanism to block Iran nuclear deal's passage in the US Congress". On his part, Iranian President Raisi maintained that "Tehran never had [any] hope in these talks".

Further, open-source intelligence reports pointed toward, the Biden administration's belief that "even with a restored nuclear agreement, Iran can amass sufficient fissile material for a bomb in less than a year, a shorter time-

frame compared to the one that underpinned JCPOA 2015". Israeli officials believe US return to the JCPOA will put Iran's nuclear breakout time to around four to six months. Meanwhile, amidst growing regional tensions, Iran unveiled ballistic missile 'Khaibar-buster' with a range of 1450 km, putting the US and Israeli bases within range.

Amidst continuing Houthi attacks targeting UAE and Saudi Arabia, US F-22 Raptor fighter jets arrived in the United Arab Emirates. In another development, Russia expressed "deep concerns" over the ongoing Israeli airstrikes in Syria underscoring that it could escalate tensions while endangering commercial flights.

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

Bahrain

[Bahrain's Investcorp Leads \\$55m Investment in Indian Warehousing Major](#)

February 09, 2022, Arabian Business

Bahrain-based Investcorp has announced that it has led a \$55 million investment in NDR Warehousing Private Limited, one of the largest Indian warehousing platforms.

[Bahrain Confirms Appointment of Israeli Navy Officer](#)

February 13, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Bahrain confirmed that an Israeli Navy officer will be stationed in the Gulf state. In a statement, the Bahraini Foreign Ministry said the appointment of the Israeli officer is related to an international coalition "to secure the freedom of navigation in the region."

[Bahrain Buys Israeli Radars, Anti-Drone Systems](#)

February 10, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Israel will sell radars and anti-drone systems to Bahrain, BATS, a subsidiary of Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) said.

Egypt

[US CENTCOM General Visits Egypt for Talks After Military Aid Cuts](#)

February 13, 2022, Israel Hayom

A top US general emphasised "very robust" military assistance to Egypt as he flew into Cairo in the wake of a decision by President Joe Biden's administration to cut \$130 million in military aid to the country over human rights concerns.

Iraq

[Indian Oil Raises Iraq Oil Supplies to Offset Mexico Cuts: Report](#)

February 08, 2022, The Times of India

Indian Oil Corp (IOC), the country's top refiner, will increase crude purchases from Iraq by 11.5 percent in 2022 to 390,000 barrels per day (bpd), partly to make up for a shortfall from Mexico and a possible supply cut from Kuwait, two sources familiar with the matter said.

[OPEC's Share of Indian Oil Imports Falls to Lowest in At Least 15 Years](#)

January 21, 2022, The Hindu

OPEC's share of Indian oil imports fell in 2021 to the lowest in more than a decade despite a 4 percent rebound in annual crude purchases by the world's third-biggest oil importer, data obtained from industry sources showed.

[Why Iraqi Lawmakers Failed to Elect a New President](#)

February 08, 2022, AL Jazeera

Iraqi lawmakers have failed to elect a new president as key factions blocked the process by boycotting Monday's (February 07) parliament session. A two-thirds quorum of the legislature's 329 members is required for an electoral session.

[Iraq Makes Final Reparation Payment to Kuwait for 1990 Invasion](#)

February 09, 2022, UN News

More than 30 years after the UN Compensation Commission (UNCC) was created to ensure restitution for Kuwait following the Iraqi invasion of 1990, the reparations body announced that it had processed its final claim, amounting to \$52.4 billion in total.

Iran

[India's Basmati Rice Exports Hit 4-Year Low as Iran Trims Buying](#)

February 11, 2022, The Economic Times

India's basmati rice exports plunged a fifth from a year ago to the lowest level in four years in 2021 as top buyer Iran slashed purchases after its rupee reserves dwindled, government and industry officials said.

[Iran's President Raisi Says Tehran 'Never Has Hope' in Vienna Talks](#)

February 11, 2022, Arab News

"We put our hopes on the east, west, north, south of our country and never have any hope in Vienna and New York," President Raisi said in a televised speech commemorating 43 years since Iran's Islamic Revolution.

[US Republicans Call for Review, Vote on Any Iran Nuclear Deal](#)

February 08, 2022, AL Jazeera

Thirty-three Republicans in the United States Senate have pledged to thwart a new Iran nuclear deal if the administration of President Joe Biden does not present its terms to Congress for approval.

[As Iran Nuclear Talks Enter Final Stretch, Opposition Grows in US Congress](#)

February 09, 2022, AL Jazeera

Intensifying US debate over Iran nuclear agreement shows that reviving the pact is 'in sight'.

[Iran's National Security Advisor Accuses US of Incoherence at Nuclear Talks](#)

February 09, 2022, Middle East Monitor

"Voices from the US government show that there is no coherence in the country to make political decisions in the direction of advancement in the Vienna Talks," NSA Ali Shamkhani said, adding that the administration of US President Joe Biden "cannot pay for its internal disputes by violating Iran's legal rights."

[Biden Administration Believes It Has Until End of Month to Salvage Iran Nuclear Deal](#)

February 09, 2022, CNN

The Biden administration believes it has until the end of February 2022 to salvage the Iran nuclear agreement, otherwise the US will have to change track and launch aggressive efforts to prevent Tehran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

[U.S. Sees Iran's Nuclear Program as Too Advanced to Restore Key Goal of 2015 Pact](#)

February 03, 2022, The Wall Street Journal

The Biden administration expects a restored nuclear deal would leave Iran capable of amassing enough nuclear fuel for a bomb in significantly less than a year, a shorter time frame than the one that underpinned the 2015 agreement.

[Israel Puts Iran Nuclear Breakout Time at 4–6 Months with Deal](#)

February 09, 2022, Axios

Israeli government experts believe that a U.S. return to the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran will set the amount of time Tehran needs to produce the amount of highly enriched uranium needed for a nuclear bomb to four to six months.

Israel

['Agriculture Most Relevant Sector for India-Israel Collaboration in Drone Tech'](#)

February 12, 2022, The Week

Jonathan Zadka, Consul General of Israel in Bengaluru, sees exciting possibilities for drones, including in agriculture and personal transport.

[Iran Unveils New Missile Said to Put Israel, US Regional Bases Within Range](#)

February 09, 2022, The Times of Israel

Iran unveiled a new missile named "Khaibar-buster", with a reported range that would allow it to reach both US bases in the region as well as targets inside Israel.

[Pentagon: Iran's Ballistic Missiles Designed for Offensive Purposes](#)

February 11, 2022, Asharq AL-Awsat

"They (Iranians) are advancing a ballistic missile program that is designed for offensive purposes to inflict harm and damage potentially lethal on other states, other peoples, and our allies and partners," said the Pentagon Press Secretary.

[If Israel Strikes Iran, What Happens Next? - A Simulation Based Analysis](#)

February 13, 2022, The Jerusalem Post

A simulation examining what happens when Israel strikes Iran, featuring some of the world's top Middle East experts, gives us a look at the year after such a development.

[US House Speaker Pelosi to Visit Israel on Wednesday \(February 16\)](#)

February 13, 2022, The Times of Israel

Pelosi is considered a staunch supporter of Israel, maintaining close relations with the US Jewish community. In remarks to the press ahead of her meeting with Foreign Minister Yair Lapid during his visit to Washington last October, Pelosi said that "Israel has always been bipartisan in the Congress of the United States, and it continues to be so."

[Palestinian Central Council Suspends Recognition of Israel](#)

February 09, 2022, Middle East Monitor

The Palestinian Central Council (PCC) suspended its recognition of Israel until Tel Aviv recognises a Palestinian State based on the pre-1967 border.

[Sheikh Jarrah Clashes: 'Israel Playing with Fire,' Hamas Warns](#)

February 13, 2022, The Jerusalem Post

Violent clashes broke out between Arabs and Jews as Otzma Yehudit head MK Itamar Ben-Gvir set up a temporary office in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of east Jerusalem and Palestinian factions warned of an escalation.

Jordan

[Jordan: Hundreds of Phones Hit by Israeli Hack, Including Royal Court Members](#)

February 11, 2022, Middle East Eye

At least 200 phones in Jordan, including some belonging to members of the Royal Hashemite Court, have been hacked by Israeli spyware 'Pegasus'.

Kuwait

[Kuwait, UAE, Iraq Urge Nationals to Leave Ukraine Amid Tensions](#)

February 13, 2022, Middle East Monitor

The United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kuwait, and Iraq advised their nationals against travelling to Ukraine as tension continues to escalate between Russia and the West.

Lebanon

[Lebanon Commemorates Rafik Hariri Assassination Amid Political Dispute](#)

February 13, 2022, Arab News

Former Prime Minister of Lebanon, Fouad Siniora, said: "The moment Hariri was assassinated on Feb. 14, 2005, the project to destroy Lebanon was launched, aiming at creating multiple powers and disrupting the state's pillars. "The attempts to sabotage Lebanon's parliamentary democratic system are ongoing, intending to change Lebanon's identity and append it to the well-known regional project."

[Politicians Mobilise in Lebanon's Sunni Districts After Saad Hariri Suspends Political Career](#)

February 13, 2022, AL Jazeera

There is a political "void" for the Sunni community that represents one-third of the population, in a country governed by a fragile sectarian power-sharing system.

[Lebanon PM Signals Difficulty in Agreeing Financial Recovery Plan with IMF](#)

February 11, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Prime Minister, Najib Mikati, indicated difficulties in agreeing to a financial recovery plan critical to steering Lebanon out of its devastating economic collapse, calling it a "Kamikaze operation".

Oman

[Commander of Oman Navy Al Rahbi on India Visit from Monday \(February 14\)](#)

February 13, 2022, WION

The Commander of Royal Navy of Oman (CRNO) Rear Admiral Saif Al Rahbi will be on India visit from 14 to 18 February as both sides increase military engagement.

Qatar

[Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar Meets Qatari Counterpart; Holds Productive Talks](#)

February 09, 2022, The Economic Times

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar held productive talks with his Qatari counterpart Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani and discussed the broad-based political, economic, digital and security partnership.

[Qatar Investment Authority Commits \\$1.5bn To Bodhi Tree for Indian Investments](#)

February 13, 2022, The Peninsula Qatar

Lupa Systems Founder and CEO James Murdoch and Uday Shankar, the former Chairman and CEO of Star India and the former President of Walt Disney Asia Pacific, announced that they are forming a new venture, "Bodhi Tree," an investment platform that will be financially supported by the Qatar Investment Authority (QIA).

Saudi Arabia

[Saudi Arabia Transfers 4 Percent of Oil Giant Aramco to Investment Fund](#)

February 13, 2022, Business Standard

Saudi Arabia said it will transfer 4 percent of the stock in the state-run oil giant Aramco to a sovereign wealth fund (PIF), an infusion valued at nearly \$80 billion as the kingdom tries to overhaul its energy-dependent economy.

[President Biden, Saudi Arabia's King Salman Talk About Oil Prices](#)

February 10, 2022, Oilprice.com

President Joe Biden and Saudi Arabia's King Salman spoke this week about energy prices, with both saying their countries were committed to stability on the energy market. The talks come amid high oil—and fuel—prices in an election year for the American administration.

[President Biden Pledges US Support Against Houthi Attacks to Saudi King](#)

February 09, 2022, AL Jazeera

Joe Biden has reaffirmed the United States' "commitment to support" Saudi Arabia against attacks by Yemen's Houthi rebels, the White House said, as the US President spoke by phone with Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

[4,355 Indians Died of Covid-19 in 88 Countries, Highest Number in Saudi Arabia](#)

February 10, 2022, Hindustan Times

A total of 4,355 Indians died due to Covid-19 in 88 countries around the world, with the highest number of deaths being recorded in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

[12 Hurt as Drone Targets Saudi Airport; Yemen's Iran-Backed Houthis Blamed](#)

February 10, 2022, The Times of Israel

The Saudi-led coalition fighting in Yemen said that 12 people were wounded in a drone attack on an airport in the southern Saudi region of Abha, near the kingdom's border with Yemen.

[Pakistan, Saudi Arabia Discuss Security Concerns, Bilateral Ties](#)

February 08, 2022, Gulf News

Saudi Interior Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Naif bin Abdulaziz visited Islamabad where he met Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan and reaffirmed close ties between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

Syria

[Russia Cites 'Deep Concern' Over Ongoing Israeli Strikes in Syria](#)

February 11, 2022, The Times of Israel

Russia has expressed "deep concern" over Israel's ongoing strikes in Syrian territory, saying they could escalate tensions in the area and endanger commercial flights.

[Ukraine War Would Spill Over into The Middle East, Potential Top US General Says](#)

February 09, 2022, Middle East Monitor

In his hearing for the nomination to be next head of the US Central Command, Lt. Gen. Michael E. Kurilla, told the Senate Armed Services Committee that "If Russia does invade Ukraine, they would not hesitate to be able to act as a spoiler in Syria as well".

Turkey

[Former Chairman of Turkish Airlines Ilker Ayci is Air India's New CEO](#)

February 14, 2022, The Economic Times

Former chairman of Turkish Airlines Ilker Ayci has been appointed Air India's new CEO and MD, the erstwhile national carriers' new owners the Tata Group announced.

[Turkey, Israel Foil Iran-led Assassination Attempt on Businessman in Istanbul](#)

February 11, 2022, Arab News

Intelligence agents from Turkey and Israel have thwarted an Iran-led plot to kill an Israeli-Turkish tycoon following a monthslong surveillance operation.

[Israel's President Herzog Leads Rapprochement with Turkey](#)

February 11, 2022, AL Monitor

Israeli diplomats are dubious but pleased at the burgeoning romance between Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Israeli President Isaac Herzog. Erdogan is not very popular in Israel, to put it mildly, while Herzog in his first seven months in office is shaping up as an active, influential, moderating and popular figure, venturing out of the confines of his largely ceremonial post.

UAE

[PM Modi, UAE Counterpart to Hold Virtual Meet; Trade Pact to Be Signed](#)

February 13, 2022, WION

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his UAE counterpart are expected to hold a virtual meeting in the coming week with the key outcome being the signing of the much-awaited free trade pact.

[India-Israel-US-UAE 'West Asian Quad' Crucial to Address Complex Global Threats, Says UAE Envoy](#)

February 10, 2022, The Print

"Signing of the historic Abraham Accord has not only opened up new opportunities for strategic cooperation between the UAE, the US, India and Israel," UAE 's Ambassador to India said, adding that this 'West Asian Quad' will focus more on technology and security.

[United States F-22 Raptor Fighter Jets Arrive in UAE After Yemen's Houthi Attacks](#)

February 13, 2022, South China Morning Post

United States F-22 fighter jets arrived in the United Arab Emirates, part of an American defence response to recent missile attacks by Yemen's Houthi rebels targeting the country.

Yemen

[Saudi-led Coalition Strikes Target Satellites Station in Yemen's Sanaa](#)

February 14, 2022, Reuters

The Saudi-led coalition fighting in Yemen destroyed a Houthi telecommunication system used to control drones, after the coalition asked civilians in Yemeni ministries in the capital Sanaa to immediately evacuate.

[Yemen: 5 UN Staff Abducted by Suspected Militants](#)

February 13, 2022, The Indian Express

Five United Nations staff were abducted by suspected al-Qaeda militants in southern Yemen, Yemeni officials said. They were taken in the province of Abyan while returning to Aden, Yemen's temporary capital, after a field mission, the UN confirmed.



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