



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

Israeli Prime Minister, Naftali Bennett's visit to India has been postponed as he tested COVID-19 positive. Meanwhile, owing to a spate of terror attacks in Israel, Defence Minister Benny Gantz too has postponed his New Delhi visit. Condemning terror attacks in Israel, Indian Defence Minister, Rajnath Singh stressed that "terrorism is a global menace that has no place in today's civilized world".

Amidst growing fears of a food crisis in the Middle East created by the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, Egypt is planning to import wheat from India. Meanwhile, to avoid humanitarian disaster in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Qatar are reportedly planning to invest USD 20 billion into the Egyptian economy.

Continuing deepening India-Saudi Arabia partnership, Saudi Culture Minister visited India to meet the country's prominent film actors including Akshay Kumar, Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan, and Saif Ali Khan. He explored possibilities of "knowledge partnerships" and "exchange opportunities" that would support film production infrastructure in the Kingdom in line with 'Saudi Vision 2030'.

In another development, the President of India, Ram Nath Kovind, during his visit to Turkmenistan, highlighted the importance of India developed 'Chabahar Port (Iran)' in improving trade between India and land locked Central Asia.

Israeli Foreign Minister, Yair Lapid, hosted a meeting of the foreign ministers of UAE, Bahrain, Egypt, and Morocco, and stressed that "the new architecture of shared capabilities that we [Israel, the US, and Arab partners] are building will intimidate and deter our common enemies, first and foremost Iran and its proxies". Reportedly, during the Summit, Bahrain, Morocco, and UAE expressed a desire to buy Israel's 'Iron Dome Missile Defence System'. Meanwhile, Israel and UAE signed a free trade agreement (FTA) hailed as a "historic and a significant milestone".

US National Security Advisor, Jake Sullivan, issued a statement on Washington's diplomacy in the Middle East as a combination of "deterrence against adversaries" and "diplomacy wherever possible" to reduce tensions in the region and de-escalate ongoing conflicts.

Amidst skyrocketing crude prices, President Biden announced the largest ever release from the 'US Strategic Petroleum Reserve'. "The US will release 1m barrels

per day for six months starting May 2022". Owing to this, WTI (West Texas Intermediate) crude prices fell below USD 100/barrel, while Brent crude came down to around USD 104/barrel. Even as the West continues to shun Russian oil and gas, UAE insisted that "Russia will always be part of the OPEC+ alliance" and warned that it will be "difficult to replace Moscow's 10 million barrels production capacity".

As the Russia-Ukraine conflict entered the second month, the two sides held talks in Turkey. It was claimed in some reports that Moscow reportedly, agreed (verbally) to Kyiv's proposals such as "dropping aspirations to join NATO with security guarantees from the West ", "not to host any foreign bases", and "temporarily put aside the question of Crimea and two breakaway territories in eastern Donbas region". Further, reports claimed that in case basic framework of resolution was agreed, Presidential Summit between Zelenskyy and Putin could be on the cards. Rejecting this, Russian Presidential aide, Vladimir Medinsky, clarified that it was too early for a top-level meeting on ending the conflict. "The Ukrainian side has become more realistic in its approach to issues related to the neutrality (not joining NATO) and non-nuclear status of Ukraine, but the draft agreement is not yet ready for submission to a summit meeting", Medinsky added.

Ahead of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, Houthi rebels of Yemen and the Saudi-led coalition have agreed to a two-month ceasefire brokered by the UN.

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

Bahrain

[Statement by US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan on Diplomacy in the Middle East Region](#)

April 01, 2022, The White House

NSA Sullivan underscored that the diplomatic efforts are central to President Biden's agenda of forging a more secure and integrated Middle East region through a combination of deterrence against adversaries and diplomacy wherever possible to reduce tensions and de-escalate ongoing conflicts.

[Bahrain, UAE, Morocco Apply to Buy Israel's Iron Dome Missile Defence System](#)

March 30, 2022, Middle East Monitor

During the recent meeting of the Israeli and American foreign ministers with some of their Arab counterparts, it has been revealed that the UAE, Bahrain and Morocco officials sought to buy Israel's Iron Dome missile defence system.

Egypt

[Egyptian Delegation to Visit India to Discuss Wheat Imports](#)

March 30, 2022, Mint

A delegation from Egypt will visit India in the first week of April to facilitate wheat imports as part of efforts to secure supplies and tide over shortages.

[The War in Ukraine is Making Egypt's Food Crisis Worse, So Neighbouring Countries Are Pouring \\$20 Billion Into Its Economy to Try to Avoid Disaster](#)

April 01, 2022, Business Insider

Egypt imports most of its wheat from Russia and Ukraine, and Russian visitors make up a large swath of its tourism industry – or at least, they used to. To help out, Qatar allotted \$5 billion to Egypt this week, the UAE \$3 billion, and Saudi Arabia \$15 billion.

[Russia-Ukraine War: Egypt Introduces Austerity as Conflict Wrecks Economy](#)

April 01, 2022, Middle East Eye

Egypt is introducing a series of austerity measures at the beginning of April to cope with the economic fallout from the war in Ukraine. The government has already sent notices to different ministries and government agencies asking them to reconsider their spending.

Iraq

[Ukraine Wins West's Boundless Sympathy, But Did They Forget Iraq?](#)

April 01, 2022, Middle East Eye

Unlike Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Iraq War was met with no sanctions or diatribes, receiving hardly a fraction of the condemnation we hear today.

[Iraq Says March Oil Exports Stand at \\$11bn, Highest in 50 Years](#)

April 02, 2022, AL Jazeera

Iraq's oil ministry says it exported \$11.07bn of oil in March, the highest level in 50 years, as crude oil prices soared in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

[Ukraine War: After Burning Fingers in Iraq and Afghanistan, US Shuns Regime Change Strategy in Russia](#)

March 29, 2022, South China Morning Post (SCMP)

The United States says it is not seeking a "regime change" in Russia, hasty clarification that shows the strategy once popular among neoconservatives has become a hot-button issue after negative experiences in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya.

Iran

[President Kovind Pitches for Chabahar Port for Trade Ties with Central Asia](#)

April 02, 2022, Business Standard

President Ram Nath Kovind said that the Chabahar port built by India in Iran could be used to improve trade relations between India and the Central Asian countries.

[Iran Says Parties 'Close' To Agreement in Vienna Nuclear Talks](#)

April 03, 2022, The Times of Israel

Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said an agreement is "close" in paused negotiations to restore the 2015 nuclear deal between the P5+1 and Iran.

[Iran's Raisi Says Those Supporting US, Israel Will Face 'Muslim Wrath'](#)

April 03, 2022, Iran International

Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi says those countries that give in to the hegemonic goals of the United States and Israel will suffer the wrath of their nations.

Israel

[Israeli PM Naftali Bennett's India Visit Postponed](#)

March 29, 2022, The Indian Express

Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's trip to India has been postponed as he tested positive for COVID-19, the PM's media adviser in Jerusalem said.

[Israel Mourns 5 Killed by Palestinian; PM Bennett Warns of Terror 'Wave'](#)

March 30, 2022, Voice of America

Israelis mourned five people killed by a Palestinian gunman, the third deadly attack in a week, as Prime Minister Naftali Bennett warned of a "wave of murderous Arab terrorism."

[Recent Terrorist Attacks in Israel Undermine 'Prospects for Peace': UN Secretary General Guterres](#)

March 30, 2022, UN News

Secretary-General António Guterres condemned recent terrorist attacks in Israel that have claimed the lives of at least 11 Israeli citizens.

[Defence Minister Rajnath Singh Holds Telephonic Conversation with Israeli Defence Minister](#)

March 29, 2022, The Economic Times

"Had a telephonic conversation with the Defence Minister of Israel, Mr. Benjamin Gantz. Shared my condolences on loss of innocent lives due to terror attacks in Israel. Terrorism is a global menace which has no place in today's civilised world," Singh said in a tweet.

[Israel's U.S., Arab Partners Close Ranks on Iran, Urge Palestinian Talks](#)

March 28, 2022, Reuters

Concluding two days of discussions at a desert retreat where its founding father David Ben-Gurion is buried, Israel said the event would be repeated and expanded as it builds up commercial and security ties with like-minded Sunni Arab states.

[US Ambassador Says Israel's 'Hands Not Tied' on Iran, Even If Nuclear Deal Signed](#)

March 31, 2022, The Times of Israel

US Ambassador to Israel Tom Nides said Israel won't be faced with any American restrictions if it wishes to act against Iran, whether or not a nuclear deal is signed between Tehran and world powers.

Jordan

[Jordan and Israel Leaders Urge Calm After Historic Meeting Following Spike in Violence](#)

March 30, 2022, Reuters

Jordan's King Abdullah called for calm following a historic summit with Israeli President Isaac Herzog after the sharpest spike in street violence in years stoked fears of a wider escalation ahead of the holy Muslim month of Ramadan.

[Jordan King: Israel Must Respect Muslim Rights at Al-Aqsa](#)

March 29, 2022, AL Jazeera

Jordan's King Abdullah has called on Israel to respect Muslim rights at the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, in a meeting with Israeli Defence Minister Benny Gantz in Amman.

[Jordan's Prince Hamzah bin Hussein Renounces His Title](#)

April 03, 2022, AL Jazeera

Prince Hamzah says he made the decision because his convictions cannot be reconciled with the 'approaches, policies and methods of our [current] institutions'.

Kuwait

[Kuwait's KPC and Japan's Nippon Sign Pact to Fund Projects Worth \\$1bn](#)

March 31, 2022, The National News

Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) has signed a preliminary agreement with Japan's Nippon Export and Investment Insurance to fund various projects worth \$1 billion.

[Readout of Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III's Call with Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, H.E. Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah](#)

April 01, 2022, US Department of Defence

Secretary Austin congratulated the minister on his recent appointment and praised the enduring strategic relationship between the United States and Kuwait.

Lebanon

[Pace of Electoral List Announcements Accelerates in Lebanon as Deadline Approaches](#)

April 02, 2022, Arab News

Parties standing in the May 15 parliamentary elections in Lebanon are hurrying to draw up their candidate lists ahead of the deadline for registration.

Oman

[India-Norway JV to Develop Green Hydrogen Megaproject in Oman](#)

March 23, 2022, Global Construction Review

The 50:50 joint venture between Norway's Scatec and India's Acme Group will design and build the plant in the Duqm Special Economic Zone, about 400km south of Muscat.

Qatar

[Chinese FM Meets Qatari Counterpart](#)

March 31, 2022, The Print

Wang Yi said Qatar has participated in the political settlement of a number of hotspot issues and made great contributions to international peace and cooperation. China supports countries in the Middle East to strengthen their unity and development and build a collective security structure in the region.

[Egypt-Qatar Reconciliation Drive 'Energised' by Lavish Investments](#)

April 02, 2022, Middle East Eye

Egypt and Qatar will establish a new panel to push forward their cooperation, in an apparent turnaround in relations between the two countries after years of tension.

Saudi Arabia

[Saudi Culture Minister Concludes Talks with Indian Filmmakers](#)

April 03, 2022, Arab News

Saudi Culture Minister Prince Badr bin Abdullah bin Farhan Al-Saud concluded talks with Indian filmmakers and marquee actors aimed at bringing their knowledge and expertise to the Kingdom.

[Oil Slumps 7 Percent as U.S. Plans Record Crude Reserve Release](#)

April 01, 2022, Reuters

U.S. oil prices fell 7 percent to close just above \$100 as President Joe Biden announced the largest ever release from the U.S. Strategic Petroleum Reserve and called on oil companies to increase drilling to boost supply.

[Saudi Aramco Further Tightens Its Ties to China](#)

March 31, 2022, Oilprice.com

Saudi Arabia's state-owned oil giant, Saudi Aramco, is looking at several opportunities to expand its downstream dealings with China, according to recent comments from the company's chief executive officer, Amin Nasser.

Syria

[UN Human Rights Council Adopts Resolutions Against Israel's Human Rights Violations in Syria's Golan](#)

April 02, 2022, Press TV

The United Nations Human Rights Council has adopted a resolution denouncing Israel's human rights violations against the people in Syria's occupied Golan Heights, calling on the Tel Aviv regime to stop its repressive measures.

[Russian Ambassador to Syria: Israel is Provoking us to React](#)

March 24, 2022, The Jerusalem Post

Russian Ambassador to Syria, Alexander Efimov, warned that Israeli strikes in Syria are "provoking" Russia to react, in one of the strongest Russian condemnations of Israeli operations in Syria.

Turkey

[Zelenskyy-Putin Summit in Turkey in Sight as Russia, Ukraine Largely Agree on Draft](#)

April 02, 2022, Daily Sabah

The prospect of a peaceful resolution to the war in Ukraine grew as a top negotiator for Kyiv said Moscow largely agreed to their proposals, at least "verbally," with the draft document having reached the stage where it is to be discussed by the countries' respective leaders.

[Russian Negotiator Says Too Early for Top Meeting on Ukraine](#)

April 03, 2022, The Moscow Times

Russia's lead negotiator in peace talks with Ukraine said it was too early for a top-level meeting between the Presidents of Russia and Ukraine on ending the conflict.

[Turkey Juggles Relationships with Russia, Ukraine Amid Economic Crisis](#)

March 31, 2022, France 24

Turkey has played a major role in the search for an end to the Ukraine war as the host for talks between Moscow and Kyiv – the product of an ambivalent stance experts say is largely rooted in the troubled Turkish economy's deep links to both countries.

UAE

[Russia Will 'always' be a Part of OPEC+, UAE Energy Minister Says](#)

March 28, 2022, CNBC

The United Arab Emirates' energy and infrastructure minister has insisted that Russia will always be a part of OPEC+ even as governments across the globe shun the oil exporter over its war in Ukraine.

[A Historic Milestone': Israel and UAE Sign Free Trade Agreement](#)

April 01, 2022, The Times of Israel

After five months of negotiations, Israel and the United Arab Emirates signed a free trade agreement between the two countries, hailed as a "significant and historic milestone."

[Iran Talks Key in Shaping Middle East's New Order, Says Dr Anwar Gargash](#)

March 29, 2022, The National News

Dr. Anwar Gargash, diplomatic adviser to the UAE President, said the UAE was reaching out to all sides in the region in a bid to reduce tensions.

[Joint Statement on the UAE-U.S.-Israel Religious Coexistence Working Group to Advance Interfaith and Intercultural Dialogue and Counter Religious Intolerance and Hatred](#)

March 29, 2022, US Department of State

The United Arab Emirates, United States, and State of Israel have launched an ambitious agenda to promote interfaith and intercultural dialogue and counter religious intolerance and hatred at the inaugural meeting of the Trilateral Religious Coexistence Working Group in Dubai.

Yemen

[Yemen's Warring Parties Agree Two-Month Truce in Major Breakthrough](#)

April 02, 2022, Reuters

The U.N.-brokered deal between a Saudi-led coalition and the Houthi group aligned with Iran is the most significant step yet towards ending a conflict that has killed tens of thousands and pushed millions into hunger.



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India

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