



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

In a major development with far-reaching impact on regional security, Israel successfully tested the "Iron Beam" Laser Interception System. Israeli Prime Minister, Naftali Bennett, declared that "Iron Beam is the world's first energy-based weapons system that uses a laser to shoot down incoming UAVs, rockets, and mortars at a cost of USD 3.50 per shot". Importantly, 'Iron Beam' will be used alongside the 'Iron Dome' as part of Israel's multi-tier air defence.

Amidst the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict and its serious impact on food security, Egypt has approved India as a wheat supplier. Reportedly, Cairo is looking to import one million tonnes of wheat from India, while Lebanon is finalizing the import of 50,000 tonnes of wheat.

Continuing the inflow of Gulf investments into India, Blackrock together with UAE's Mubadala will invest USD 525 million in Tata Powers Renewable Energy arm. On the other hand, Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA), Qatar Investment Authority (QIA), Singapore's GIC, and three Canadian pension funds have shown interest in becoming anchor investors in Life Insurance Corporation of India's (LIC) Initial Public Offering (IPO). In another development, even as the Vienna talks on Iran nuclear deal remain stalled and its outcome uncertain, India and Iran are likely to soon begin talks to explore opportunities to resume direct bilateral trade in crude oil and fertilizers.

Amidst strained US-Saudi Arabia relations, the Israeli Ambassador in Washington called on the two countries to "fix" their relations as they are "very important to the Middle East" security and stability. Meanwhile, Saudi Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Salman, spoke with Russian President Vladimir Putin to discuss issues such as joint work under the OPEC+ format, and the situation in Ukraine, and Yemen. Saudi Crown Prince also held a telephonic conversation with Chinese President Xi Jinping with a view to further deepening the comprehensive bilateral strategic partnership.

Amidst heightened tensions in Israel, the al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem was raided by Israeli police injuring over 150 Palestinians. Iran, as well as Saudi Arabia, condemned Israeli actions. Riyadh termed it as a "systematic escalation and a blatant attack on the sacredness of al-Aqsa and its place in the heart of the Islamic nation". While Tehran called on the "Muslims to stand united behind the Palestinian cause while reminding Gulf leaders that normalisation of relations

with the apartheid regime only encourages Israel to double down on its brutality". The United States, on its part, urged both "Israelis and Palestinians to exercise restraint, avoid provocative actions and rhetoric, and preserve the historic status quo on the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount".

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

Bahrain

[Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Mohamed, King of Bahrain Discuss Consolidating Bilateral Ties](#)

April 15, 2022, Khaleej Times

H.H Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, discussed with His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa of Bahrain, the prospects of further consolidating the fraternal relations between the two nations across all fields.

[India's Education Sector 'a \\$225 bn Opportunity': Bahrain's Investcorp](#)

April 06, 2022, Zawya (Refinitiv)

A white paper released by the Bahrain-based 'Investcorp' sees the industry growing at 14 percent annually over the next few years to reach an overall size of \$225 bn.

[AC Milan is The Target of Sale Talks with Bahrain-based Investcorp](#)

April 15, 2022, Reuters

Bahrain-domiciled asset manager 'Investcorp' has entered into exclusive talks to purchase Italian Serie A Giant AC Milan, in what would be the first takeover of a top Italian team by Middle East investors.

[Bahrain, UAE, and Morocco Join Condemnation of Police Actions at Temple Mount Clashes in Jerusalem](#)

April 16, 2022, The Times of Israel

The Gulf States slammed 'provocation to Muslims' during Ramadan and underscored the 'need for self-restraint,' after 185 Palestinians were injured in a crackdown on rioting at Al-Aqsa mosque.

Egypt

[Egypt Approves India as Wheat Supplier: Piyush Goyal](#)

April 16, 2022, The Economic Times

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said Egypt, which is one of the largest importers of wheat from Ukraine and Russia, has approved India as a wheat supplier. The African nation is looking to import 1 million tonnes of wheat from India and would need 2,40,000 tonnes in April.

[Russia Blocks 4 Egypt-bound Corn-loaded Ships](#)

April 15, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Ukraine accused Russia of blocking four Egypt-bound ships loaded with wheat and corn from leaving Ukrainian ports. "The Riva Wind ship is ready to bring 27,000 metric tons of corn to Egypt – enough to feed well over a million people for a month," the Ukrainian embassy in Egypt said.

[Egyptian President Sisi Receives Delegation from US Congress](#)

April 16, 2022, Egypt Independent

The US delegation visiting Cairo stressed that Egypt is a pillar of security and stability in the Middle East and the Arab world, as well as a pivotal partner for the United States in the region.

Iraq

[Iraq Summons Swedish Envoy Over Quran Burning](#)

April 17, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Iraq summoned the Swedish charge d'affaires, Hakan Rooth, to protest the burning of a copy of the Muslim holy book of Quran by activists in Sweden.

[Iraq Was Pressured to Increase Oil Output Away from OPEC: Oil Minister](#)

April 16, 2022, Reuters

Iraq was pressured to increase its oil production outside the remit of OPEC's policy on output, Oil Minister Ihsan Abdul Jabbar said.

[Iraq Maintaining Its Position in Indian Market Despite Rise in Russian Oil Imports - SOMO Head](#)

April 15, 2022, The Economic Times

Several countries including India found Russian crude oil, which is now being sold with big discounts, as an alternative to competing crude oils, but Iraq has managed to keep its high market share in India.

[Chinese Consortium Awarded \\$412m Contract for Iraqi Natural Gas Processing Facility](#)

April 06, 2022, Zawya (Refinitiv)

A consortium of China CAMC Engineering Co (CAMCE) and CNOOC Petrochemical Engineering Co. (CNOOC Petrochemical Engineering) has been awarded an engineering, procurement, and construction contract worth \$412 million by Kuwait Energy Basra Co in Basra, Iraq.

Iran

[India, Iran Likely to Begin Exploratory Talks to Resume Trade in Crude Oil, Fertilisers](#)

April 17, 2022, The Hindu Business Line

India and Iran may soon begin exploratory talks on resumption of bilateral trade in crude oil and fertilisers as the US is trying to expedite talks on reviving the Iranian nuclear deal of 2015.

[Iran Condemns 'Hypocritical, Deviant' U.S. Human Rights Report](#)

April 16, 2022, CGTN

In a tweet, Kazem Gharibabadi, the Iranian judiciary chief's deputy for international affairs and secretary of the country's High Council for Human Rights, said the United States, "as the main violator of human rights," is in no position to comment on the rights situation in other countries.

[Israel's al-Aqsa Raid: Iran Says Muslims Must Stand United Behind Palestinian Cause](#)

April 16, 2022, Press TV (Iran)

In a post on his Twitter account, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh expressed outrage over the Israeli regime's new atrocities in al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem and warned against the consequences of some Arab countries' move to normalise relations with the Tel Aviv regime.

[Iran Confirms Moving Centrifuge Facility Allegedly Hit by Israel to Underground Site](#)

April 17, 2022, The Times of Israel

Iran has confirmed it relocated a centrifuge facility to its underground Natanz nuclear site, days after the IAEA said it installed surveillance cameras to monitor the new workshop at Tehran's request.

[Iran-backed Militias in Iraq Reportedly Smuggling Weapons to Arm Russia in Ukraine](#)

April 12, 2022, The Times of Israel

Iranian-backed militias in Iraq are smuggling RPGs, anti-tank missiles, and Brazilian-designed rocket launcher systems to arm Russia in its invasion of Ukraine.

Israel

[Israel Carries Out Successful Iron Beam Laser Interception Trials](#)

April 14, 2022, The Jerusalem Post

Israel has taken a significant step toward achieving the operational capability of its ground-breaking laser system by carrying out a series of experiments, downing a variety of aerial threats at "challenging ranges," the Defence Ministry announced.

[Indian Agricultural Officers from Seven States on Israel Tour to Learn New Approaches and Techniques](#)

April 10, 2022, The Economic Times

Agricultural officers from seven different states of India are on a fifteen-day tour of Israel to learn about new approaches and technologies in the sector that can add more value to the farmers.

[Israeli Ambassador in Washington Hopes U.S. Will Mend Ties with Saudi Arabia](#)

April 14, 2022, Axios

Israeli Ambassador to the U.S. Michael Herzog said that it would be "very important for our region" if the U.S. and Saudi Arabia were to "fix" their relationship.

[Israeli Forces Raid Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, over 150 Palestinians Injured](#)

April 16, 2022, AL Jazeera

Israeli forces raided the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in East Jerusalem with medics reporting at least 158 Palestinians injured in the ensuing violence as hundreds were detained.

[Al-Aqsa Mosque Clashes in Jerusalem: US Urges Israel, Palestinians to Exercise Restraint](#)

April 16, 2022, Business Standard

After clashes broke out between Palestinians and Israeli police at the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in Jerusalem on early Friday morning (April 15), the US called on all sides to exercise restraint and urged both sides to cooperate to lower tensions.

[China Sues Israeli Government for Denying Light Rail Tender 'Under US Pressure'](#)

April 17, 2022, The Jerusalem Post

A conglomerate of Israeli and Chinese companies has sued the government in the Tel Aviv District Court for denying their bid for the giant Tel Aviv light rail project, claiming it was based on illegal US pressure.

[Israeli President Warns Against Early Elections](#)

April 15, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Israeli President Isaac Herzog warned against heading for early elections, citing turbulent security situation and political instability.

Jordan

[Jordan's King Abdullah Condemns Israeli Action at Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem](#)

April 17, 2022, The National News

Jordan's King Abdullah has condemned "provocative" Israeli actions against Muslims in Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque, as mounting violence in Palestine threatened to escalate into another war.

Kuwait

[Kuwait Mulls Hiring Domestic Labour to Ease Shortage](#)

April 16, 2022, Gulf News

Kuwait is poised to allow recruitment of foreign domestic workers as the country is experiencing a shortage resulting from coronavirus-induced restrictions that the government has recently loosened.

[Hamas Chief Briefs Arab League, Iran, Kuwait on Jerusalem Situation](#)

April 16, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Head of the Hamas Political Bureau Ismail Haniyeh briefed the Arab League, Iran and Kuwait on the latest developments and Israeli aggression on Palestinians in Jerusalem, according to separate statements.

Lebanon

[Lebanon Finalising Importing 50,000 Tons of Wheat from India](#)

April 16, 2022, The New Indian Express

Lebanon, which was largely dependent on Ukraine for wheat imports, has been struggling to procure wheat since the outbreak of the conflict following the Russian invasion. It is facing a food security crisis at present.

[Hezbollah MP Says Only \\$9 Billion Needed to Destroy Israel](#)

April 17, 2022, The Jerusalem Post

Mohammed Raad, the head of the Hezbollah parliamentary bloc in the Lebanese parliament declared that it would take a mere \$9 billion to obliterate the State of Israel.

Oman

[Oman India Joint Investment Fund II Invests INR 75 Crore in Senco Gold](#)

April 11, 2022, The Hindu Business Line

Oman India Joint Investment Fund II (OIJIF II) has invested around INR 75 crore in Kolkata-based jewellery retailer Senco Gold Ltd. OIJIF II is a fund managed by OIJIF MC, an India-focused private equity fund manager sponsored by Oman Investment Authority and State Bank of India.

Qatar

[LIC IPO: Indian Government Wooing Sovereign, Pension Funds](#)

April 16, 2022, The Economic Times

India has sounded out Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, Singapore-based GIC, three Canadian pension funds and Qatar Investment Authority among other sovereign wealth funds and pension funds on being anchor investors in Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India's initial public offer (IPO).

Saudi Arabia

[President Xi Jinping Says China Stands Ready to Develop Ties with Saudi Arabia](#)

April 15, 2022, CGTN

China gives priority to developing relations with Saudi Arabia and stands ready to work with the country to continuously deepen their comprehensive strategic partnership and to bring more benefits to the two countries and their people.

[Saudi Crown Prince Discusses Ukraine Conflict, OPEC With Russia's Vladimir Putin](#)

April 16, 2022, Arab News

During their call, the two discussed the ongoing situations in Ukraine and Yemen, with the crown prince reaffirming the Kingdom's support in finding a political solution to the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

[Twitter Shareholder Saudi Arabia's Prince Alwaleed Rejects Elon Musk's Offer to Buy the Company](#)

April 15, 2022, Outlook India

Hours after Elon Musk proposed to buy Twitter Inc, Saudi Arabia's Prince Alwaleed bin Talal, who is a shareholder of the micro-blogging site through his firm Kingdom Holding Company, rejected SpaceX and Tesla's CEO offer to acquire the company.

[Saudi Arabia Condemns Israeli Attacks on Palestinians, Al-Aqsa Mosque](#)

April 15, 2022, AL Arabiya

Saudi Arabia issued a statement condemning the Israeli forces for raiding the al-Aqsa Mosque compound in Jerusalem and attacking Palestinians who were inside praying.

[Some Indian Refiners to Cut Saudi Oil Purchase in May, Snap Up Russian Barrels: Report](#)

April 06, 2022, Business Today

At least two Indian refiners plan to buy less Saudi oil than usual in May, after the kingdom raised the official selling price (OSP) to record highs for Asia, two sources said, as India increases purchase of cheap Russian crude.

Syria

[Russia Claims Syria Intercepted Israeli Missile in Attack Near Damascus](#)

April 17, 2022, The Times of Israel

A Russian military official claimed that Syrian air defences intercepted a missile that Israeli fighter jets allegedly fired at a target near Damascus.

Turkey

[Turkey Launches New Ground, Air Offensive in Northern Iraq](#)

April 15, 2022, ABC News

Turkey has launched a new ground and air cross-border offensive against Kurdish militants in northern Iraq, Turkey's defence minister announced.

[Turkey and U.S. Work to Repair Strained Relations](#)

April 13, 2022, Axios

Turkey and the U.S. recently announced the launch of a "strategic mechanism" aimed at repairing relations and unlocking potential cooperation in areas of defence, economy and counter-terrorism.

UAE

[Mubadala and BlackRock to Invest \\$525m in Tata Power's Renewable Energy Arm](#)

April 17, 2022, Arab News

Tata Power has agreed to sell some stakes in its renewable business to a consortium led by BlackRock Real Assets, which also includes Abu Dhabi based Mubadala Investment Company.

Yemen

[Saudi Arabia Pushed Yemen's Elected President to Step Aside, Saudi and Yemeni Officials Say](#)

April 17, 2022, The Wall Street Journal

Saudi Arabia pushed Yemeni President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi to step down earlier this month, and Saudi authorities have largely confined him to his home in Riyadh and restricted communications with him in the days since.

[Yemen's Houthis Went from Ragtag Militia to Force Threatening Gulf Powers](#)

April 17, 2022, The New York Times

Iran's cultivation of the Houthis over the years of war in Yemen since 2014 has armed them with missiles and drones, endangering Washington's partners and Tehran's rivals, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.



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