



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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Contents

Abstract	1
Bahrain.....	3
Egypt	4
Iraq	5
Iran.....	6
Israel.....	7
Jordan.....	9
Kuwait.....	10
Lebanon.....	11
Oman	12
Qatar	13
Saudi Arabia.....	14
Syria.....	15
Turkey.....	16
UAE	17
Yemen.....	18

Abstract

International Semiconductor Consortium (ISMC) – a joint venture between Abu Dhabi-based Next Orbit Ventures and Israel's Tower Semiconductor will invest USD 3 billion to set up a chip-making plant in the Southern Indian state of Karnataka. This will be India's first Semiconductor fabrication unit that is expected to generate more than 1500 direct and 10,000 indirect employment opportunities. Meanwhile, the Israeli Ambassador to India believes, the postponed visit of Prime Minister Naftali Bennett to New Delhi due to COVID-19, now depends on the outcome of the political situation in the country.

India's multifaceted relations with the Gulf countries continue to deepen. Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF) has reportedly appointed management consulting firm, Bain and Company, to chalk out a strategy for Kingdom's investments in India's infrastructure sector. Besides trade and investment, Saudi Arabia is keen to expand its cultural partnership with India in sectors such as 'film production' in line with Riyadh's Vision 2030. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia's economy grew by around 10 percent in the first quarter of 2022 due to soaring oil prices. This is Saudi Arabia's fastest economic growth rate in a decade. In another development, UAE-India Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) came into force on May 1.

As part of deepening China-Iran strategic partnership, the Chinese Defence Minister, General Wei Fenghe, visited Tehran and met Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and armed forces Chief Mohammad Bagheri. Amidst the ongoing global turbulence, the two sides vowed to step up defence cooperation, including more military drills. Gen. Wei Fenghe also visited Oman pledging to strengthen strategic partnership as Beijing pushes for a strong presence in the Arabian sea. In addition, Iran is ramping up crude exports to China, as Beijing pulls back from importing Russian crude due to the Western sanctions on Moscow.

Following the conversation between President Biden and Israeli Prime Minister Bennett, US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan met his Israeli counterpart Dr. Eyal Hulata. The two sides discussed Tel Aviv's "security concerns over Iran and Iranian-backed proxies", "coordination through the US-Israel Strategic Consultative Group", "Israel's relations with key Indo-Pacific countries", and "Russia's war on Ukraine". It is to be noted that, Israel attended a conference hosted by the US at Ramstein Air Base in Germany to discuss supplying more weapons to Ukraine. On the other hand, continuing Turkey's push to host Putin-Zelensky

summit to mediate a ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine, President Erdogan is likely to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin this week. Earlier, Turkish Presidential Spokesperson, Ibrahim Kalin, met Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in Kyiv.

Amidst Turkey's growing economic woes, President Erdogan visited Saudi Arabia to "reactivate great economic potential" between the two countries. This was Erdogan's first visit to the Kingdom since 2017. It highlights the rapprochement between Ankara and Riyadh, as President Erdogan has softened his tone on the killing of Saudi journalist 'Jamal Khashoggi' for which Turkey had accused the "highest levels" of the Saudi government.

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

Bahrain

[Hezbollah's Nasrallah Warns Iran Will Act Against Bahrain, UAE If Israel Strikes from Their Territory](#)

May 01, 2022, Israel Hayom

In a speech marking International Al-Quds Day (Jerusalem Day) on Friday (April 29), Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah said that if Israel were to attack the Islamic Republic from the territory of a Persian Gulf country, Iran would retaliate against that Arab state.

[Bahrain Interior Minister to Evangelicals: Iran First, Second, Third Threat](#)

April 25, 2022, The Jerusalem Post

As a small country in a strategic and volatile part of the world – and with Iran just 100 miles off its eastern coast – the Kingdom of Bahrain faces an array of challenges when it comes to maintaining its security.

[India Joined Bahrain-situated Multilateral Combined Maritime Force as Associate Partner: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh](#)

April 12, 2022, DNA

India has joined Bahrain-situated Multilateral Combined Maritime Force as an associate partner, informed Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh during a joint press conference of India-US 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue.

Egypt

[Egypt Asserts Keeness on Boosting Strategic Ties with US](#)

April 28, 2022, Egypt Today

Marking the 100th anniversary of US-Egypt diplomatic relations, Cairo asserted its keenness on boosting strategic ties with the US and enhancing relations between the two peoples, Spokesman for the Foreign Ministry Ahmed Hafez tweeted.

[Egypt, US Discuss Opportunities to Enhance Cooperation on Climate Action](#)

April 30, 2022, Egypt Independent

Egypt's Minister of International Cooperation Rania al-Mashat met with David Thorne, the advisor to the US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry, to discuss joint cooperation between Egypt and the US in fighting climate change.

[Egypt, Russia Discuss Next Steps for Nuclear Power Plant](#)

April 28, 2022, AL-Monitor

Despite the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine and sanctions imposed on Moscow, a Russian delegation visited Egypt to inspect the construction work at the Dabaa nuclear plant.

Iraq

[Iran-Saudi 'Reconciliation is Near' After Years of Tensions, Says Iraqi PM](#)

April 30, 2022, The Times of Israel

Following the latest round of talks in Baghdad, Iraqi officials have sounded increasingly optimistic, talking of an imminent sixth session and even going so far as to raise the prospect of a resumption in diplomatic relations severed in 2016.

[Missile Attack on Oil Refinery in Iraq's Erbil Hit Oil Tank, Fire Erupted](#)

May 01, 2022, AL Arabiya

Six missiles targeted the KAR Group oil refinery in Iraq's northern city of Erbil on Sunday (May 01), leading to fire erupting in one of the main oil tanks, Iraq's security forces said.

[Rockets Target Ain al-Asad Military Base Housing US Forces in Western Iraq](#)

May 01, 2022, Press TV (Iran)

A barrage of rockets have reportedly landed close to an air base in Iraq's western province of Anbar, where American military forces are stationed.

[China State Construction Engineering Corporation to Begin Work on Iraq's Nasiriyah International Airport](#)

April 29, 2022, Global Construction Review

The airport is being funded by China as part of its oil-for-infrastructure deal with Iraq. In addition to the airport, plans are in hand to construct around 90,000 houses in the Baghdad district of Sadr, 1,000 healthcare facilities and an upgrade of Baghdad's sewerage system.

Iran

[China and Iran Set to Step Up Defence Cooperation](#)

April 28, 2022, South China Morning Post (SCMP)

China and Iran have vowed to step up defence cooperation, including more military drills, as the two countries move closer together under growing pressure from the United States.

[Iran Ramps Up Oil Exports as China Pulls Back on Russian Crude](#)

April 28, 2022, The Wall Street Journal

Iran is ramping up oil exports and benefiting from a rise in oil prices as its main buyer, China, pulls back on its purchases of Russian oil due to the war with Ukraine.

[US Close to Admitting Failure of Iran Nuclear Talks, Israeli Officials Claim](#)

April 26, 2022, The Times of Israel

With Israel's National Security Adviser in Washington to meet his counterpart, Israeli officials have reportedly said the chances of world powers signing a new nuclear deal with Iran are greatly diminished.

[Mossad Operates in Iran, Foils IRGC Plot to Kill Israeli Diplomat, US General](#)

April 30, 2022, The Jerusalem Post

The Mossad – operating in Iran – apprehended and interrogated an Iranian national who was leading a plot to kill an Israeli diplomat in Istanbul and a US general, sources have confirmed.

[Hamas Delegation Meets with Iranian Parliament Speaker](#)

April 29, 2022, Middle East Monitor

A senior Hamas delegation met with Iranian Parliament Speaker, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, in the Iranian capital Tehran and discussed the latest developments in Palestine.

Israel

[Israeli PM's Visit to India Depends on 'Domestic Political Situation'](#)

May 01, 2022, Business Standard

After the cancellation of his visit to India last month at the eleventh hour, Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's next visit to the country will depend on the political and security situation back home in the Mediterranean country, Ambassador Naor Gilon said.

[Abu Dhabi-Israel Group 'ISMC' to Set up USD 3 Billion Chip Making Plant in Karnataka](#)

May 01, 2022, Business Standard

International semiconductor consortium 'ISMC' will invest \$3 billion in India's southern state of Karnataka to set up a chip-making plant, the state government said.

[Readout of US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan's Meeting with National Security Advisor Dr. Eyal Hulata of Israel](#)

April 25, 2022, The White House

Mr. Sullivan emphasised that the United States is attuned to Israel's concerns about threats to its security, including first-and-foremost from Iran and Iranian-backed proxies. They also discussed Tel Aviv's relationship with countries in the Indo-Pacific, Russia-Ukraine conflict and the need to support Kyiv.

[Marking al-Quds Day, Iranian General Vows Support for Anyone 'Ready to Fight' Israel](#)

April 29, 2022, The Times of Israel

Thousands of Iranians marched in rallies in the capital Tehran to mark Jerusalem Day, with Iran's leaders and top generals railing against Israel and evoking the Jewish state's destruction.

[Hamas: 'Jerusalem Will Remain Pivot of Liberation Struggle'](#)

April 30, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Marking International Quds Day, Hamas stressed: "The Israeli occupation crimes will not lead to the implementation of the Judaisation of Jerusalem, desecrating it or dividing it."

[Israel Approves New 31-Unit Settlement Construction in Palestinian City of Hebron](#)

April 29, 2022, Middle East Monitor

The Israeli Supreme Court today approved the construction of a 31-unit six-storey settler apartment complex in the West Bank city of Hebron, known as the Hezekiah Quarter.

[Israel attends US-led Summit on Sending More Arms to Ukraine](#)

April 26, 2022, The Times of Israel

Israel is among 40 countries attending a meeting of Western countries to discuss supplying more weapons to Ukraine to help it fend off Russia's invasion of the country.

[Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov: So What if Zelensky's Jewish, So was Hitler](#)

May 01, 2022, The Times of Israel

In order to justify Kremlin's Denazification of Ukraine narrative, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Ukraine can have Nazis, even though its President is Jewish, since, he claims, Adolf Hitler had Jewish ancestry.

[Israel Says Did Its Best to Mediate Between Russia-Ukraine](#)

May 01, 2022, The Print

Amid the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine, Israel's Ambassador to India, Sri Lanka and Bhutan, Naor Gilon, said that his country did its best to mediate between the two nations at war and also provided humanitarian assistance to the people.

[Israel, UAE Ink Cooperation Agreement for Moon Mission](#)

May 01, 2022, Israel Hayom

Israeli space company SpaceIL has signed a cooperation agreement with the United Arab Emirates to carry out a joint mission to the moon scheduled for 2024.

Jordan

[India Contracts Potash from Canada, Israel and Jordan to Overcome Russia, Belarus Shortfall](#)

April 28, 2022, The Times of India

With supply of nearly half of the country's potash requirement hit due to sanctions against Russia, Indian entities have tapped Canada, Israel and Jordan to import the fertiliser to ensure that farmers aren't hit by the war in Ukraine.

[Jordan Pushing to Restore Jerusalem Mosque Status Quo - Sources](#)

April 28, 2022, Reuters

Jordan has intensified efforts to push Israel to respect the historic status quo of Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque and avoid violent confrontations that could threaten a wider conflict, Jordanian officials and Western diplomats said.

[Status Woe: Temple Mount is an Enduring Thorn in Israel's Ties with Jordan](#)

April 25, 2022, The Times of Israel

Israel nixed a US-proposed committee with Jordan to iron out disagreements on flashpoint site in Jerusalem after the 2021 war; now, those unresolved issues have come home to roost.

Kuwait

[RT-PCR Tests No Longer Required for Passengers Arriving from Kuwait](#)

April 30, 2022, Business Standard

India has added Kuwait to the list of countries from where travellers will no longer need to furnish RT-PCR test reports on arrival if they have primary vaccination completion certificates.

Lebanon

[Lebanon Halts Passport Renewals as Fears of Exodus Grow](#)

April 29, 2022, Arab News

Lebanese authorities have stopped accepting applications for passport renewals, saying they are unable to keep up with demand, as the country's worsening economic crisis pushes people to leave the country.

Oman

[Oman, India Entering New Phase of Relationship: Indian Ambassador](#)

April 27, 2022, The Times of Oman

Shedding light on the evolution of ties between both countries, Amb. Amit Narang said it was part of his mandate to ensure that the relationship is taken to the next level.

[China's Defence Minister Visits Oman as Beijing Eyes Foothold in Arabian Sea](#)

April 29, 2022, Middle East Eye

China's Defence Minister, Gen. Wei Fenghe, held talks with Omani officials in the sultanate's capital Muscat, with the two sides pledging to improve their strategic partnership, as Beijing pushes to strengthen its presence in the Arabian Sea.

Qatar

[Tata Chief N Chandrasekaran's Desert Safari Looks at Newer Strategic Alliances](#)

May 02, 2022, The Economic Times

ADQ, Mubadala, make investments in Tata Motors EV and renewables biz, Taj, Vistara, Air India plan mega expansion, manufacturing alliances likely on cards.

[Qatar is Making Big Money from Europe's Desperate Search for Natural Gas to Replace Russian Imports](#)

April 30, 2022, Fortune

In its hunt to replace Russian energy imports, Europe has found a new best friend: Qatar, the small Middle Eastern country that is rich in natural gas.

[Qatar's Military Expenditure Increased by 434 Percent](#)

April 27, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Last year military spending amounted to \$11.6 billion, with 4.8 per cent of its gross domestic product (GDP) used on defence, making Qatar the fifth largest spender in the Middle East.

[The West Has a Crucial Ally in Qatar](#)

May 01, 2022, The Wall Street Journal

With America's help, the country's natural-gas reserves can wean Europe from Russian energy.

[James Murdoch, Uday Shankar Lead ₹13,500 Cr Funding in Reliance Industries \(RIL\) Viacom18](#)

April 27, 2022, Mint

Reliance and Viacom18 announced a strategic partnership with Bodhi Tree Systems, which is a platform of James Murdoch's Lupa Systems and Uday Shankar with investment from Qatar Investment Authority, to form one of the largest TV and digital streaming companies in India.

Saudi Arabia

[Expansion of India-Saudi Arabia Cultural Partnership Offers Rewarding Prospects for the Future of Both Nations](#)

May 01, 2022, The Times of India

Running parallel to strategic investments has been Riyadh's increased focus on culture, which is an intrinsic component of Saudi Arabia's national identity in tune with Kingdom's Vision 2030.

[Bain to Draw Saudi PIF's India Investment Plan](#)

April 26, 2022, Mint

Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund, Public Investment Fund (PIF), has tasked Bain and Company to firm up an India strategy as part of its plan to exploit various investment opportunities in the infrastructure sector.

[Oil Propels Saudi GDP Growth to Near 10 Percent in First Quarter](#)

May 01, 2022, AL Jazeera

Saudi Arabia's economy has registered a nearly 10 percent rise in its first quarter compared to the same period last year thanks to high global crude prices.

[New Pak PM Secures \\$8 Billion Saudi Bailout for Cash-Strapped Country: Report](#)

May 01, 2022, India Today

Saudi Arabia has agreed to provide Pakistan with a "sizeable package" of around USD 8 billion to help the country bolster dwindling forex reserves and revive its ailing economy, reports said.

Syria

[UN Calls for Syria to Cooperate With OPCW](#)

April 30, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Syria's continued failure to remedy outstanding issues prevents the international community from confirming the elimination of its chemical weapons programme, a top United Nations (UN) disarmament official told the Security Council.

[4 Syrian Soldiers Killed in Alleged Israeli Airstrike Near Damascus](#)

April 27, 2022, The Jerusalem Post

Israeli airstrikes targeted sites near Damascus early Wednesday (April 27), killing four Syrian soldiers and wounding three others, according to Syrian state news agency SANA.

[Russia Condemns Israeli Strike on Syria, Urges End to Attacks](#)

April 29, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Speaking at a press briefing in Moscow, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, Maria Zakharova, strongly condemned the Israeli actions, stressing that they violate international law.

Turkey

[Turkey Presidential Spokesman Meets Ukrainian President Zelensky in Kyiv](#)

May 01, 2022, Kyiv Post

Erdogan is now trying to pave the way for an Istanbul summit between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Zelensky. In light of this, Turkish presidential spokesman Ibrahim Kalin met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in Kyiv.

[Turkey's President Erdogan Likely to Meet Russia's Putin This Week](#)

May 02, 2022, TRT World

Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has said that he will "most probably" have a meeting with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin this week.

[Turkey, Saudi Arabia to Revive Great Economic Potential, President Erdogan Says](#)

April 30, 2022, Moneycontrol

Turkey and Saudi Arabia have a common will to "reactivate a great economic potential" between the two countries, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said, after his first trip to the kingdom since 2017.

UAE

[India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement \(CEPA\) Comes into Force](#)

May 01, 2022, Times Now

The historic India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) which was signed between the two nations on February 18, 2022, officially came into force on Sunday (May 01).

[Eight Heavy Transport Aircraft Belonging to UAE Landed in Israel in Past Two Weeks](#)

April 30, 2022, The Jerusalem Post

It is unclear why the heavy transport aircraft were in Israel though it is believed that they were likely transporting equipment related to defence contracts signed between the two countries.

Yemen

[UN Humanitarians Say \\$4.3 Billion is Needed to Halt 'Worsening' Yemen Crisis](#)

April 30, 2022, UN News

The UN's Humanitarian Country Team in Yemen, released its Response Plan (HRP) for this year, seeking nearly \$4.3 billion to reverse a steady deterioration across the country, the grinding war there continues, despite a current pause in fighting.

[Yemeni Leader: We Are Adhering to The Truce Despite Houthi Violations](#)

May 02, 2022, Arab News

The President of Yemen's leadership council said that his government is respecting the cease-fire in the country despite the Houthi militia's disregard for it.



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India

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