



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](#).

Your comments and feedback can be addressed to Sanket Joshi at sanket@dpg.org.in.

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Abstract

Israel's Defence Minister, Benny Gantz, is scheduled to visit India this week to sign a "special security declaration" marking 30 years of Israel-India relations. Meanwhile, Iran's Ambassador to India reiterated Tehran's intent to develop bilateral relations beyond energy and petrochemical products.

To boost, India-Qatar trade partnership, Vice President, M Venkaiah Naidu, during his forthcoming visit to Doha between June 4-7, is expected to launch 'India-Qatar Start-up Bridge' linking the start-up ecosystem of the two countries. As noted in an earlier issue of West Asia Review, Abu Dhabi's International Holding Company (IHC) has completed its INR 15,400 crore investment in Adani Green Energy (AGEL), Adani Transmission (ATL), and Adani Enterprises (AEL).

Amidst Pakistan's economic crisis, Saudi Arabia and UAE, have reportedly refused to lend money to Islamabad until it secures funding from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). China has also called upon Pakistan to secure a loan from World Bank prior to approaching the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).

As China's financial capital 'Shanghai' started lifting the COVID-19 lockdown, crude prices touched USD 120/barrel mark on May 30. Concerned with high energy prices and inflation, G7 Energy Minister's called upon OPEC to raise crude production.

Maintaining a pessimistic tone on Iran nuclear talks, US Special Envoy Robert Malley, told Senate Foreign Relations Committee that "the prospects of reaching an agreement with Iran, are at best, tenuous". Meanwhile, US confiscated Iranian oil cargo held on a Russian-operated ship near Greece for breaching US sanctions. Reacting sharply, Iran seized two Greek oil tankers in the Persian Gulf. Even as US-Iran tensions simmer, Israeli Prime Minister, Naftali Bennett, warned Tehran that it will not get away with instigating terrorism and violence through proxies.

Iraqi Parliament passed a bill to criminalize "Normalisation and Establishment of Relations with the Zionist Entity (Israel)". Disturbed by the development, the US Department of State asserted that "the new Iraqi law undermines freedom of expression and promotes an environment of antisemitism". In other regional development, reports indicated US negotiating a deal between Egypt, Israel, and Saudi Arabia to transfer strategically important Red Sea Islands, 'Tiran' and 'Sanafir', currently under Cairo's sovereignty to Riyadh. It is believed that this could be a major step toward future normalisation of relations between Israel and

Saudi Arabia. Israeli Foreign Minister, Yair Lapid, stressed that any normalisation between Tel Aviv and Riyadh will be “a long and cautious process”.

The Russia-Ukraine conflict has heightened fears of a global food crisis. In light of this, Russian President Vladimir Putin in a conversation with Turkish President showed Moscow’s willingness to work with Ankara to free up maritime shipping, facilitating unhindered export of grain from Ukrainian ports.

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

Bahrain

[India, US to Expand Defence Ties in Cyber, Space Domains; New Delhi To Join West-Led Bahrain-Based Naval Force](#)

May 24, 2022, Tribune India

India crossed a Rubicon by agreeing to join the Combined Military Forces-Bahrain (CMF–Bahrain) as an associate member following a summit meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Joe Biden, who said he is committed to making India-US ties the “closest on the planet”.

[Bahrain's Investcorp Targets \\$400mln At Indian School Infrastructure, Warehousing](#)

May 26, 2022, Zawaya (Refinitiv)

Investcorp will deploy \$400 million into Indian school infrastructure and warehousing, as it seeks to expand investments in the South Asian nation, its Co-Chief Executive said.

Egypt

[U.S. Negotiating Deal Among Saudis, Israelis and Egyptians](#)

May 24, 2022, Axios

The Biden administration has been quietly mediating among Saudi Arabia, Israel and Egypt on negotiations that, if successful, could be a first step on the road to the normalisation of relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel.

[Egypt Condemns Israel After Extremists Storm Al-Aqsa Mosque](#)

May 30, 2022, Arab News

Egypt has condemned Israeli authorities for allowing extremists to storm the courtyards of Al-Aqsa Mosque under police protection.

[Egypt FM Discusses Ties with US Counterpart](#)

May 29, 2022, Arab News

Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry and his US counterpart Antony Blinken have discussed bilateral cooperation between Cairo and Washington.

[Anti-Arms Trade Campaigners Slam Pentagon's Planned USD 2.6 Billion Weapons Sale to Egypt](#)

May 27, 2022, The New Arab

The US State Department approved Egypt's planned purchase of CH-47F Chinook helicopters and other related equipment, according to the Pentagon. Anti-arms trade campaigners have slammed the potential sale of \$2.6 billion in US military equipment to Egypt.

Iraq

[5 Missiles Hit Iraqi Base, Missing US-Stationed Soldiers by Metres](#)

May 31, 2022, The Times of Israel

At least five missiles hit a sprawling Iraqi army base hosting US troops in the country's western desert on Monday (May 30), two Iraqi security officials said.

[US Disturbed by Iraqi Law Criminalising Israel Ties](#)

May 27, 2022, AL-Monitor

The Biden administration says it is "deeply disturbed" by a new Iraqi law that criminalises a range of "normalisation" interactions with Israel.

Iran

[Iran Wants to Develop Our Economic, Trade Relations Beyond Energy and Petrochemical Products: Iranian Ambassador to India](#)

May 30, 2022, The Financial Express

Amidst the ongoing Ukraine-Russia war, Iran has already said it is ready to help India meet its energy security needs. Reports indicate that the talks are going on between the countries to start importing crude from there and payment mechanisms too are being worked out.

[Iran's Top Security Official Urges the World to Stand Up Against U.S. Unilateralism](#)

May 29, 2022, Tehran Times

"The world must unite against the unilateral policies of the United States. The Islamic Republic of Iran has been subject to sanctions for the past 43 years, and has become an epitome of the ineffectiveness of sanctions imposed to dictate political will on independent countries," Iranian NSA said.

[U.S. Seizes Iranian Oil Cargo Near Greek Island - Sources](#)

May 26, 2022, Reuters

The United States has confiscated Iranian oil held on a Russian-operated ship near Greece and will send the cargo to the United States aboard another vessel, three sources familiar with the matter said.

[Iran Seizes 2 Greek Tankers in Persian Gulf as Tensions Rise](#)

May 28, 2022, Associated Press

Iran's Revolutionary Guard (IRGC) seized two Greek oil tankers in helicopter-launched raids in the Persian Gulf, officials said. The action appeared to be retaliation for Athens' assistance in the U.S. seizure of crude oil from an Iranian-flagged tanker this week in the Mediterranean Sea over violating Washington's crushing sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

[U.S. Senators Voice Frustration at Biden's Iran Policy](#)

May 26, 2022, Reuters

"We do not have a deal ... and prospects for reaching one are, at best, tenuous," U.S. Special Envoy for Iran Rob Malley told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, alluding to indirect U.S.-Iran talks in Vienna that unravelled in March 2022.

[Ex-IDF Intelligence Chief: Some Form of Nuclear Deal with Iran is 'least Bad' Option](#)

May 29, 2022, The Times of Israel

Former Military Intelligence chief Tamir Hayman said he believed a return to some form of nuclear deal between Iran and world powers was preferable for Israel to no deal at all.

[Iran Used Secret U.N. Records to Evade Nuclear Probes](#)

May 25, 2022, The Wall Street Journal

Iran secured access to secret United Nations atomic agency reports almost two decades ago and circulated the documents among top officials who prepared cover stories and falsified a record to conceal suspected past work on nuclear weapons, according to Middle East intelligence officials.

[IAEA Reports Little Progress in Standoff with Iran, Clash with West Looms](#)

May 30, 2022, AL Arabiya

Iran has done little to answer the UN nuclear watchdog's long-standing questions on the origin of uranium particles found at three undeclared sites despite a fresh push for a breakthrough.

[Iran's Enriched Uranium Stockpile is Now 18 Times 2015 Deal Limit, IAEA Says](#)

May 30, 2022, The Times of Israel

The UN nuclear watchdog IAEA said that it estimated Iran's stockpile of enriched uranium had grown to more than 18 times the limit laid down in Tehran's 2015 deal with world powers.

[Tehran-Moscow Oil Export Rivalry Flowing Fast](#)

May 26, 2022, Middle East Eye

Political allies Iran and Russia have turned into economic competitors in the global oil market since the beginning of the war in Ukraine.

[U.S. Says It Imposes Sanctions on Moscow-Backed Iranian Oil Smuggling Network](#)

May 26, 2022, Reuters

The United States imposed sanctions on what it described as a Russian-backed oil smuggling and money laundering network for Iran's Revolutionary Guards' Quds Force, even as Washington tries to revive the nuclear deal with Iran.

Israel

[Israeli Defence Minister Gantz To Make Delayed India Visit This Week, Marking 30 Years of Security Ties](#)

May 25, 2022, The Times of Israel

Defence Minister Benny Gantz is slated to travel to India this week to sign a “special security declaration” marking 30 years of security and diplomatic relations between the countries, his office said.

['Palestine Issue Doesn't Diminish India-Israel Relations'](#)

May 25, 2022, The Hindu

The unresolved Palestine issue could be a factor in India-Israel relationship, but it does not diminish or negate the partnership between the two countries, Tammy Ben-Haim, Israel's Consul General in Bangalore, said.

[Israel's 'Watergen' Helps Convert Air to Water. Their Gadgets Are Now Available in India](#)

May 27, 2022, The Indian Express

Israel-based 'Watergen' is bringing its products, which it claims can convert the air around into potable water, to the Indian market and has announced a joint venture with Delhi's SMV Jaipuria Group.

[Israeli PM Threatens Iran for Instigating Attacks Through Proxies](#)

May 30, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett threatened Iran saying it would not get away with inciting attacks through its proxies.

[Israel's NSA Set to Visit US For Talks Focused on Saudi Arabia](#)

May 27, 2022, The Times of Israel

Israel's National Security Adviser, Eyal Hulata, is due to meet with his US counterpart Jake Sullivan in Washington next week for talks that will include potential steps toward normalisation between Israel and Saudi Arabia.

Jordan

[Jordan: Illegal Israeli Practices Lead to 'ugly' Reality](#)

May 25, 2022, Middle East Monitor

There's no political horizon for resolving the Palestine-Israel conflict, said the Jordanian official. There's consolidation of the Israeli occupation by building settlements, confiscation of land and the eviction of people from their homes.

[A New Age of Industry in the UAE, Egypt and Jordan](#)

May 30, 2022, The National News

Three countries in the Middle East, the UAE, Egypt and Jordan, came together as part of a new industrial strategy to pool assets such as oil and gas, gold, silica sand and renewable energy to create one of the most profitable multilateral frameworks to come out of the region in recent years, further integrating some of the most important alliances in the Middle East.

Kuwait

[Moody's Affirms Kuwait's A1 Rating, Egypt's B2 Rating](#)

May 29, 2022, Arab News

Moody's Investors Service has affirmed Kuwait government's long-term local and foreign currency issuer ratings at A1 with the outlook remaining stable. Ratings reflect Moody's assessment that Kuwait's balance sheet and fiscal buffers will remain strong for the foreseeable future.

Lebanon

[Lebanon Questions Former Nissan Boss Carlos Ghosn Over Interpol Notice](#)

May 30, 2022, Arab News

Lebanon has questioned ex-Nissan boss Carlos Ghosn after receiving an Interpol red notice for his arrest but did not take new legal measures against him, a court official said.

[Lebanon Elections: Who Are the Major Winners and Losers?](#)

May 17, 2022, Middle East Eye

Lebanon's first elections since the country was devastated by its worst-ever economic crisis have unseated household names in Lebanese politics, shifted majority blocs, and yielded a surprising breakthrough for independents.

Oman

[Oman, Syria to Boost Bilateral Relations](#)

May 24, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Oman and Syria are to enhance bilateral relations following a meeting between Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr Hamad Al-Busaidi and Syria's Minister of Culture.

[Russia-Ukraine Conflict Needs a European Solution: FM Sayyid Badr](#)

May 29, 2022, Muscat Daily

Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, in an interview spoke about Oman's diplomatic efforts towards achieving international as well as regional peace. He spoke on the Russia-Ukraine conflict, relations with Iran, and Israeli-Palestinian issue.

[Poll Finds That Arab Street Has No Stance on Russia-Ukraine Conflict](#)

May 30, 2022, Arab News

The majority of people in the Arab world have no stance on the Russia-Ukraine conflict, a striking finding from a region that has been directly economically impacted by the war, a new Arab News-YouGov survey has found.

Qatar

[Vice President Naidu Expected to Launch India-Qatar Startup Bridge During Visit to Qatar](#)

May 27, 2022, The Print

During his upcoming visit to Qatar, Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu is expected to launch the India-Qatar Startup Bridge to link the ecosystem of the two countries.

[Vice President Venkaiah Naidu Arrives in Gabon on First Leg of His Three-nation Tour](#)

May 30, 2022, The Economic Times

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu arrived in Gabon on the first leg of his three-nation tour of Gabon, Senegal and Qatar.

[Qatar Adds New Requirement for Indians to Be Eligible for Visa on Arrival](#)

May 27, 2022, The Economic Times

Indians headed to Qatar and seeking a visa on arrival (VoA) will now have to pre-book hotel stay for the entire duration of their stay. The bookings will only be valid if they are made through Discover Qatar.

[Qatar's FM Calls on International Community to Engage with Taliban](#)

May 30, 2022, Doha News

Qatar's Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, said that the international community's engagement with the Taliban could have prevented some of the restrictions on female rights in Afghanistan.

[UK Says Qatar Set to Invest \\$12.5bn in Britain](#)

May 24, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Britain said that it had agreed on a new Strategic Investment Partnership with Qatar which will see the Gulf State invest up to £10 billion (\$12.5 billion) in the next five years.

Saudi Arabia

[Saudi Arabia, UAE Refuse to Back Pakistan's Economy Until IMF Provides Funding First](#)

May 30, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have refused to lend money to Pakistan until it secures funding from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) first, marking a new precedent in how allies treat the South Asian nation amid its lowest economic crisis.

[Brent Crude Rises Above \\$120 A Barrel as UK Fuel Prices Hit Record Highs](#)

May 30, 2022, The Guardian

Brent crude, the international benchmark, rose on Monday (May 30) to \$120 a barrel for the first time since late March, lifted by the easing of Covid-19 restrictions in Shanghai and Beijing, a move that could lead to higher demand for energy from China.

[G7 Urges OPEC To Boost Output to Cool Oil Market](#)

May 28, 2022, The News International

G7 energy ministers have called on the OPEC group of oil producing countries to pump more oil as Russia's war in Ukraine pushes crude prices to their highest levels in a decade.

[Israel's Top Diplomat Sees No Quick Breakthrough with Saudi Arabia](#)

May 30, 2022, Reuters

Reaching a deal to normalise ties between Israel and Saudi Arabia will be "a long and cautious process", but Israel believes it can happen, Foreign Minister Yair Lapid said.

Syria

[Turkiye Cannot Remain Indifferent to Developments in Syria: Russia](#)

May 27, 2022, Anadolu Agency

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov asserted that the Russian presence in Syria is in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2544 and at the invitation of the Syrian regime. Moscow will continue to help Damascus reclaim all of its territory, and pointed out that there are some “uninvited” troops in Syria.

[Russia Reinforces Troops Amid Reports of Possible Turkish Incursion in Northern Syria](#)

May 29, 2022, Ahval

The Russian military has sent fighter jets and helicopters to Qamishli airport in northeastern Syria. The airport is in the region controlled by U.S.-backed Kurdish group Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

[Russian Ship Carries 30,000 Tonnes of Grain Plundered from Ukraine to Syria, Satellite Images Show](#)

May 30, 2022, Middle East Monitor

A Russian ship reportedly carrying tens of thousands of tonnes of stolen Ukrainian grain arrived in Syria last week, satellite images have shown.

Turkey

[Turkey Can Help in Russia-Ukraine 'Observation Mechanism', Erdogan Tells Putin](#)

May 30, 2022, Reuters

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan told Russian President Vladimir Putin that Ankara is ready to take on a role in an "observation mechanism" between Moscow, Kyiv and the United Nations, if an agreement is reached in that regard.

[Russia Says Ready to Work with Turkey to Free Up Ukraine's Grain Exports](#)

May 30, 2022, Daily Sabah

Russia is ready to free up maritime shipping and facilitate the unhindered export of grain from Ukrainian ports in coordination with Turkey, its President Vladimir Putin told his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

[Turkey's Erdogan Accuses Sweden and Finland of Supporting Terrorism, Potentially Thwarting NATO Aspirations](#)

May 29, 2022, Fox News

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan accused Sweden and Finland of supporting terrorism, indicating that Ankara likely won't let up its opposition to the Scandinavian countries joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) amid Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

[Turkey Does Not Need US Permission to Fight Terror, Says Erdogan](#)

May 30, 2022, Middle East Monitor

The Turkish leader's comments came in response to journalists asking him about his country's plan for a new operation to establish a safe zone by rooting out a Syrian Kurdish militia from northern Syria.

UAE

[US-UAE Relationship on Solid Ground, Says Top Official](#)

May 30, 2022, Khaleej Times

The United States relationship with the UAE remains strong, and Washington is committed to the region's security, said Sean Murphy, Charge D'Affaires of the US Embassy in Abu Dhabi.

[Abu Dhabi's IHC Completes INR 15,400 Cr Investment in Three Adani Companies](#)

May 17, 2022, Business Standard

International Holding Company PJSC (IHC) of Abu Dhabi completed its INR 15,400 crore investment transaction in three Adani companies -- Adani Green Energy (AGEL), Adani Transmission (ATL) and flagship, Adani Enterprises (AEL), a statement from Adani said.

[Abu Dhabi's Borouge Secures Cornerstone Investors Including Adani](#)

May 23, 2022, Business Standard

Abu Dhabi-headquartered petrochemicals firm Borouge said it secured seven cornerstone investors, including India's Adani family for its \$2 billion initial public offering (IPO).

[Taliban To Sign Deal with UAE To Operate Airports](#)

May 24, 2022, Middle East Monitor

The Taliban will sign an agreement with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on operating airports in Afghanistan, the group's acting deputy prime minister said, after months of talks with the UAE, Turkey and Qatar.

Yemen

[US Secretary of State Thanks Saudi Arabia's FM For Efforts to Extend Yemen Truce](#)

May 31, 2022, Middle East Eye

The US Secretary of State Antony Blinken thanked Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan for the Kingdom's efforts to extend the truce in Yemen.



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